



Certificate in Employee Benefits Law

Benefits law mistakes cost companies millions in penalties and lawsuits. In 4½ days, you'll master the ERISA, ACA, and fiduciary strategies that keep your organization compliant and protected. Real regulations, practical solutions, immediate confidence.

4½ days

DURATION

\$2,375

INVESTMENT

29.75 credits

SHRM/HRCI/CLE

IN PERSON

Program Overview

Build Benefits Law Expertise That Protects Plans and Limits Your Liability

Benefits law mistakes cost companies millions in penalties and lawsuits. In 4½ days, you'll master the ERISA, ACA, and fiduciary strategies that keep your organization compliant and protected. Real regulations, practical solutions, immediate confidence.

The Certificate in Employee Benefits Law is 4.5 intensive days where you'll build expertise in ERISA compliance, retirement plan administration, and health care reform requirements with practicing benefits attorneys, working through the complex regulations that govern 401(k) plans, health benefits, and benefits litigation.

What You'll Gain

- ✓ **Complete benefits law coverage:** ERISA fiduciary rules, 401(k) administration, nondiscrimination testing, ACA compliance, claims procedures, and DOL/IRS audit defense
- ✓ **Real-world application:** Work through plan corrections, fiduciary breach scenarios, benefits claims appeals, and the regulatory challenges you'll face Monday morning
- ✓ **Expert benefits attorney instruction:** Learn from practicing ERISA specialists who handle DOL audits, defend fiduciary liability claims, and navigate the regulations daily
- ✓ **Professional certification:** Earn your certificate plus 29.75 SHRM/HRCI continuing education credits

Your Pre-Program Consultation

Every enrollment includes a complimentary 10-15 minute consultation with our team. Before your program begins, we'll discuss your specific challenges, identify which topics will have the biggest impact for your role, and ensure you get maximum value from your investment.

Retirement Plans Mastery

Monday & Tuesday | **\$1,375**

Navigate ERISA, fiduciary rules, and plan administration with confidence

Individual blocks can be taken separately. The full program provides the best value.

Master the Regulatory Landscape

FOUNDATION ERISA fundamentals

Navigate Title I and Title II, understand the division of authority between IRS, DOL, and PBGC

ADVANCED The alphabet soup decoded

Master ERISA, ADA, COBRA, FMLA, HIPAA, and how each impacts your plans

FOUNDATION Plan qualification requirements

Learn what makes plans compliant and what triggers disqualification

ADVANCED Regulatory agency roadmap

Know which agency has jurisdiction over what and how to work with each effectively

Protect Yourself and Your Plan

ADVANCED Expense management

Learn what expenses can be paid from plan assets without triggering problems

EXPERT Investment liability

Know who's liable when investments go bad and how to protect yourself

EXPERT Service provider liability

Understand co-fiduciary rules and when providers share your risk

EXPERT Prohibited transactions

Identify violations before they happen, understand exemptions and correction procedures

EXPERT 404(c) protection

Determine if participant-directed investment is worth the compliance burden

Handle Daily Operations

ADVANCED Participant loans

Set up loan programs that comply without creating administrative nightmares

ADVANCED Blackout periods

Comply with Sarbanes-Oxley notification requirements

EXPERT QDRO processing

Handle domestic relations orders correctly the first time

ADVANCED Salary deferrals

Manage contributions and catch-up elections properly

ADVANCED Section 204(h) notices

Provide required notices without triggering participant concerns

Retirement Plans Mastery (Continued)

Pass Tests Without Headaches

ADVANCED HCE identification

Correctly identify highly compensated employees under current rules

EXPERT Coverage rules mastery

Navigate Section 410(b) testing including controlled group rules and QSLOB exceptions

EXPERT Cross-testing strategies

Use age-weighted profit sharing to maximize owner benefits legally

ADVANCED Failed test corrections

Fix problems quickly using the methods that work

EXPERT 401(k) and 401(m) testing

Handle ADP/ACP tests and know your safe harbor options

Get Money Out Legally

ADVANCED Distribution triggers

Know when participants can access funds and what restrictions apply

ADVANCED Hardship distributions

Process hardships that satisfy IRS safe harbors

EXPERT Anti-cutback rules

Navigate Section 411(d)(6) when eliminating distribution options

ADVANCED Withholding and rollovers

Handle tax withholding correctly and facilitate smooth rollovers

EXPERT Required minimum distributions

Calculate and distribute RMDs at age 70½ without errors

Fix Problems Before They Become Disasters

ADVANCED IRS audit targets

Know what triggers audits and how to avoid red flags

EXPERT Voluntary correction programs

Use EPCRS to fix errors before IRS discovers them

EXPERT Qualification preservation

Keep plans qualified even when problems arise

ADVANCED Late filing solutions

Handle late 5500 filings and minimize penalties

EXPERT DOL compliance programs

Correct fiduciary violations through VFCP

Claims, Appeals & Litigation

Wednesday | **\$575**

Handle benefit claims and protect your plan from litigation

Build Bulletproof Procedures

FOUNDATION Plan coverage determination

Know which plans ERISA covers and which are exempt

ADVANCED Reporting obligations

File Form 5500 correctly and meet disclosure deadlines

ADVANCED Documentation requirements

Maintain SPDs, SMMs, and plan documents that satisfy DOL standards

EXPERT State law navigation

Understand when ERISA preempts state requirements and when it doesn't

Make Defensible Decisions

ADVANCED Claims procedures

Establish DOL-compliant procedures that protect your appeal rights

EXPERT Decision documentation

Create the administrative record that wins in court

EXPERT Disability claims

Navigate the heightened standards for disability benefit claims

EXPERT Appeal processes

Structure appeals that satisfy regulatory requirements and build your defense

Minimize Your Liability Risk

ADVANCED Fiduciary identification

Know who the fiduciaries are and what obligations they have

EXPERT Investment duties

Understand prudent investment requirements and monitoring obligations

EXPERT Reimbursement rights

Protect your plan's right to recover overpayments and subrogation

EXPERT Anti-cutback compliance

Avoid benefit reductions that trigger participant lawsuits

Stay Ahead of Emerging Issues

ADVANCED Recent court decisions

Learn what appellate courts are saying about claims and appeals

ADVANCED DOL enforcement trends

Understand where regulators are focusing attention

ADVANCED Best practices evolution

Stay current with what courts expect from plan administrators

EXPERT Litigation hot topics

Prepare for the claims issues that are generating lawsuits now

Understand Your Strategic Advantages

EXPERT Arbitrary and capricious standard

Leverage the deferential standard of review

EXPERT No jury trials

Understand how bench trials favor plan administrators

EXPERT Limited discovery

Use the administrative record rule to control litigation scope

EXPERT Attorney fee rules

Know when courts award fees and how to minimize exposure

Welfare Benefits Plan Issues

Thursday & Friday | **\$975**

Navigate ACA, HIPAA, COBRA, and the alphabet soup of H&W compliance

Get the Basics Right

FOUNDATION Coverage determination

Know which welfare plans are subject to ERISA

ADVANCED Plan funding rules

Understand when trusts are required and what constitutes plan assets

EXPERT Fiduciary obligations

Navigate prohibited transaction rules for welfare plan assets

ADVANCED Reporting and disclosure

Handle Form 5500, SPD, and SMM requirements for welfare plans

ADVANCED Claims procedures

Establish DOL-compliant claim and appeal processes

Navigate Reform Requirements

ADVANCED Employer mandate

Understand play-or-pay rules and who must offer coverage

ADVANCED Reporting requirements

Handle Forms 1094 and 1095 correctly

EXPERT Cadillac tax planning

Strategies to avoid the high-cost plan excise tax

ADVANCED Coverage affordability

Calculate whether your coverage satisfies ACA standards

ADVANCED Compliance deadlines

Stay current with ACA implementation dates and requirements

Protect Health Information

ADVANCED Privacy rules for plan sponsors

Understand what PHI you can access and what's restricted

ADVANCED Security standards

Implement safeguards that protect electronic health information

ADVANCED Business associate agreements

Structure contracts that satisfy HIPAA requirements

EXPERT Breach notification

Know when and how to report privacy violations

Welfare Benefits Plan Issues (Continued)

Understand New Plan Designs

ADVANCED	Health Savings Accounts Structure HSA-compatible plans and handle contribution rules	ADVANCED	Health Reimbursement Arrangements Navigate HRA design and compliance requirements
ADVANCED	Flexible Spending Accounts Administer health and dependent care FSAs correctly	ADVANCED	Private exchanges Understand when private exchanges make sense for your organization
ADVANCED	Claim substantiation Handle FSA and HRA claim documentation requirements		

Handle Complex Requirements

ADVANCED	COBRA administration Master qualifying events, notices, and election procedures	ADVANCED	Cafeteria plan testing Avoid discrimination in Section 125 plans
EXPERT	Mental health parity Ensure behavioral health benefits comply with parity requirements	EXPERT	Medicare coordination Handle Medicare Secondary Payer rules correctly
EXPERT	QMCSO processing Administer qualified medical child support orders properly		

Master Multiple Laws

ADVANCED	ADEA and age discrimination Provide retiree benefits without violating age discrimination rules	ADVANCED	ADA accommodations Handle disability-related benefit issues correctly
ADVANCED	FMLA coordination Integrate FMLA leave with health benefit continuation	ADVANCED	GINA compliance Avoid genetic information discrimination in wellness programs
ADVANCED	USERRA requirements Handle military leave and benefit continuation properly		

Your Expert Instructors

Learn from practicing attorneys and industry experts who bring real-world experience to every session.



George Cicotte, Esq.

Founder, Cicotte Law Firm

George brings a rare combination to ERISA work: he started as a pension actuary before becoming an attorney. For over 30 years, he has guided employers through retirement plan design, fiduciary duties, HIPAA/COBRA compliance, and ERISA litigation defense.



Dominic DeMannies, Esq.

Partner, Thompson Hine LLP

Dominic advises on ESOPs, 401(k) plans, cash balance designs, and multiemployer plans—representing clients before the DOL, IRS, and PBGC. A former U.S. Treasury attorney-advisor, he shaped national policy on hybrid pensions and deferred compensation before returning to private practice.



Doug Hinson, Esq.

Senior Counsel, Alston & Bird LLP

Doug defends Fortune 500 companies, government entities, and nonprofits in high-stakes ERISA class actions—401(k) fee disputes, employer stock cases, and pension litigation. A seasoned mediator and arbitrator, he brings decades of courtroom experience to the most complex benefits battles.



Carolyn Tredna, Esq.

Partner, McGuireWoods

Carolyn designs and administers retirement plans—401(k), 403(b), pensions, and ESOPs—while advising on health plan compliance, COBRA, and HIPAA. She guides employers through IRS and DOL audits, M&A benefits issues, and ERISA fiduciary obligations.



John Hickman, Esq.

Partner, Alston & Bird LLP

John leads Alston & Bird's Health Benefits Practice, guiding clients through ACA compliance, HIPAA, HSAs, and consumer-driven health care. A Chambers Band 1 attorney and Best Lawyers "Lawyer of the Year," he shapes policy as head of ECFC's Technical Advisory Committee.



Leah Morgan Singleton, Esq.

Assistant Secretary & Corporate Counsel, NCR Atleos

Leah advises on executive compensation, ERISA plans, and Section 409A compliance—including stock options, deferred compensation, and change-in-control arrangements. At NCR Atleos, she guides the design and governance of retirement, health, and equity-based incentive programs.



Ashley Gillihan, Esq.

Partner, Alston & Bird LLP

Ashley advises employers, plan administrators, and financial institutions on health and welfare plan compliance and ERISA litigation. A recognized authority on benefits law, he serves on the ECFC Technical Advisory Council and is listed in Best Lawyers in America® for ERISA.

What Participants Say

"All compensation and benefits professionals should consider this seminar. There is a large volume of valuable information presented in an effective, dynamic setting. The speakers are certainly well-equipped and are very attuned to the needs of the class members."

Todd Hanson

Corporate Human Resources Manager, Printpack, Inc.

"IAML once again surpassed my expectations. The seminar was awesome and the degree of information presented to our group was so valuable. I applaud IAML for finding the experts in the various fields and making them available to us. I can hardly wait until the next seminar!"

Bianca Olivarría

HR Technician & Disability Management Specialist, Imperial Irrigation District

"I thoroughly enjoyed the seminar. I really appreciated that the instructors allowed participants to ask questions and work through our issues and concerns."

Sherry Murphy

Lead Human Resources Business Partner, Barrick Mining Corporation

"I really enjoyed the seminar. I learned a great deal and will definitely be able to apply what I learned once I'm back in the office."

Alana Tomczyszyn

Human Resources Manager, CWS Capital Partners LLC

"The instructors did a great job of keeping the participants engaged while covering material that could have been very dry."

Steven Pennell

Human Resources Director, Talent & Technology, Shurtape Technologies, LLC

"This was an excellent seminar and covered everything I'd hoped. The instructors were outstanding."

Kurt Henkel

Senior Benefits Plan Analyst, Deere & Company

"Instructors were very good and well versed in subject matter. They offered to help and provide materials outside of the seminar."

Brian Wagner

Attorney, Mateer & Harbert

"I really enjoyed the class. I appreciated Tom Schendt's teaching styles and how he involved everyone in the class and made it interactive. He certainly succeeded in making a potentially boring subject quite fun."

S. Greg Robinson

Human Resources Manager, Suominen

Upcoming Sessions

Choose the location that works best for your schedule.



Apr 19 - Apr 23, 2026

Atlanta, Georgia

IN-PERSON



Sep 13 - Sep 17, 2026

Austin, Texas

IN-PERSON

Visit iaml.com for all sessions and registration.

Program Details

Investment

\$2,375

Includes all instruction, materials, and continuing education credits

Professional Credits

29.75

SHRM, HRCI, and CLE credits included

Delivery Options

- In Person sessions available

What's Included

- Live instruction from practicing attorneys
- Complete program materials
- 12 months of quarterly updates
- \$300 alumni discount on future programs

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens after I register?

Within minutes, you'll receive an invoice email. Once payment is processed, you can schedule your complimentary pre-program consultation (10-15 minutes) to discuss your specific benefits administration challenges and identify which regulatory topics will have the biggest impact for your organization. Pre-program materials arrive one week before your session starts.

Can I attend individual blocks instead of the full program?

Yes. While most participants get the best value from the complete 4½-day program, you can register for individual blocks based on your immediate needs. Block I (Retirement Plans Mastery) is \$1,375, Block II (Claims, Appeals & Litigation) is \$575, and Block III (Health & Welfare Benefits) is \$975. The full program at \$2,375 saves you \$550 versus purchasing all blocks separately.

What continuing education credits will I earn?

The complete program provides 29.75 SHRM/HRCI/CLE credits. Plus, your enrollment includes 12 months of quarterly employment law updates (4 sessions × 1.5 credits each = 6 additional credits), bringing your total to 35.75 credits. That's more than most professionals earn in two years.

How technical is the content? Do I need a legal background?

No legal background required. The program is designed for benefits professionals who need practical compliance knowledge, not law school theory. You'll learn how to handle fiduciary obligations, pass nondiscrimination tests, process QDROs, navigate ACA reporting, and defend benefits claims. Our instructors translate complex ERISA regulations into actionable procedures you can implement Monday morning.

Does the \$2,375 program fee include everything?

Yes. Your enrollment includes all live instruction from practicing ERISA attorneys, complete program materials, 29.75 continuing education credits, pre-program consultation, 12 months of quarterly employment law updates (4 sessions, \$1,588 value), permanent access to updated benefits resources, and alumni benefits for all future programs. The only additional cost would be travel and lodging if you choose in-person format.

Will I be ready to handle benefits compliance after completing this program?

Yes. The program is designed for immediate application. You'll leave with frameworks for fiduciary decision-making, nondiscrimination testing procedures, claims administration protocols, ACA reporting checklists, and audit defense strategies. Whether you're managing a 401(k), administering health benefits, or handling COBRA and FMLA coordination, you'll have the regulatory knowledge to make confident decisions and avoid the mistakes that trigger penalties and litigation.

Take the Next Step

Join HR professionals and employment attorneys who have mastered Certificate in Employee Benefits Law. Build the legal foundation that protects your organization and advances your career.



Scan to Register

RESERVE YOUR SPOT

Visit **iaml.com** to view upcoming sessions and register

Questions?

Email: info@iaml.com | Phone: (949) 760-1700