



WINTER BARGAINING CONFERENCE

JAN 24, 2026

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AGENDA

8:30-9:00am	Check-in & Breakfast
9:00-9:10am	Welcome NEARI Leadership
9:15-10:45am	Session I Bargaining 101 (BEGINNER) Follow the Money: Financial Analysis for Stronger Negotiations (ALL LEVELS)
10:45-11:00am	BREAK
11:00am-12:30pm	Session II Mediation & Arbitration (ADVANCED) How to Get the Boss to YES (ALL LEVELS)
12:30-1:00pm	Lunch (provided)
1:00-1:55pm	Session III Unconference/Open Forum (ALL LEVELS)
1:55-2:00pm	Closing Wrap up and closing remarks

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BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Beginner

Bargaining 101

Learn the nuts and bolts of contract negotiations. Key terms, rights, timeline, how to form a team, how to develop proposals, ground rules, tentative agreements and more!

Facilitators: NEARI UniServ Director Leslie Florio, NEA Chariho President Vin Levcowich

All Levels

Follow the Money: Financial Analysis Skills for Stronger Negotiations

Practical tools for union bargaining teams to uncover hidden resources in District/Employer budgets. Analyzing budget-to-actuals, staffing data, health insurance costs, audits, and revenues can expose inflated cost claims and undisclosed savings. Participants learn how strong information requests and independent financial analysis shift bargaining from management assertions to evidence-based negotiations that strengthen union power and outcomes..

Facilitators: NEARI Deputy Executive Director of Business & Finance Bridget Almon and NEARI UniServ Director Crystal Bergantine

How to Get the Boss to YES

Explore how local unions can leverage members, strategic escalation, and political pressure to move management toward agreement at the bargaining table. Participants will learn how to build a representative bargaining team, plan and implement effective escalation strategies, identify pressure points, and engage NEARI support early – and often to get the boss to “yes.”

Facilitator: NEARI Government Relations Director Alex Lucini

Unconference Session: A group discussion

Participant-driven session to ask all your questions about negotiations and collective bargaining. Get advice, real world examples and experience and answers from NEARI staff and other union leaders.

Facilitator: NEARI Executive Director Mary Barden, NEARI Vice President Amy Mullen, and NEARI UniServ Director Amanda Scott

Advanced

Mediation & Arbitration: Overview of the Mediation and Arbitration process

When are you really at impasse? How do you prepare for Mediation and Arbitration and keep membership involved and engaged.

Panelists include: NEARI Deputy Executive Director Jennifer Azevedo, Esq.; NEARI UniServ Director Peter Gingras