

# Silvia Chicas and Sidnee McDonald Selected to be Class of 2025 NELC Academy Fellows

**Monday, March 24, 2025**

For the second consecutive year, Silvia Chicas and Sidnee McDonald have earned the prestigious honor of being selected as fellows of the National Employment Law Council (NELC) Academy. This recognition highlights their unwavering commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion within the field of management-side employment law.

Chosen for their exceptional potential and dedication to excellence, Chicas and McDonald continue to exemplify leadership and innovation in the legal profession. Their inclusion in the NELC Academy underscores their significant contributions to fostering a more inclusive legal community.

Chicas concentrates her practice on labor and employment. She defends employers against lawsuits in state and federal court, including disputes involving Title VII, Texas Commission of Human Rights, and other ADEA, race, age, and disability discrimination claims; state and federal trade secrets cases; and noncompete and restrictive covenant disputes. Chicas has experience handling employment litigation throughout a case's lifecycle. She drafts motions for summary judgment and motions to dismiss, sends discovery, prepares and answers discovery dispute motions, confers with opposing counsel, takes plaintiff depositions, and defends witness depositions. She has also participated in settlement discussions and mediations. Chicas represents employers in diverse industries, including grocery, financial services, retail, transportation, health care, hospitality, and energy.

McDonald concentrates her practice on labor and employment. She has experience advising and counseling clients on many employment matters, including compliance with federal, state, and local laws, and drafting independent contractor, master service, and employment agreements. She also has experience drafting position statements and motions to dismiss, responding to discovery requests, reviewing employee handbooks, and conducting workplace investigations. McDonald serves on the Young Professionals Advisory Board of the Pittsburgh Legal Diversity & Inclusion Coalition (PLDIC), is a mentor for Pursuing the Esquire and the Penn State Law Minority Mentor Program, and is an active member of the Allegheny County Bar Association serving in various leadership roles. Additionally, she was recently named to the *Pittsburgh Business Times* 2025 30 Under 30 list.

## About the National Employment Law Council Academy

The NELC Academy provides advanced skills training, exposes participants to the NELC's national network of experienced minority labor and employment attorneys, encourages mentoring relationships, promotes the NELC to attorneys who will soon be eligible for membership, and creates a pipeline for future NELC leaders. Space in the NELC Academy is strictly limited to a maximum of 30 participants and fellows are selected based on a short application, a client or partner reference, and an endorsement from a member of the NELC's Board of Directors.

## About Cozen O'Connor

Established in 1970, Cozen O'Connor has over 925 attorneys who help clients manage risk and make better business decisions. The firm counsels clients on their most sophisticated legal matters in all areas of the law, including litigation, corporate, and regulatory law. Representing a broad array of leading global corporations and middle market companies, Cozen O'Connor serves its clients' needs through 33 offices across two continents.

### Related Practice Areas

- Employment Litigation
- Labor & Employment