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Michelle M. McCarthy is partner and practice group leader of the Southern California-based employee benefits and executive compensation practice at Morgan Lewis. As management-appointed ERISA plan counsel, she focuses her practice on the representation of numerous multiemployer and other collectively bargained pension, health and welfare plans. McCarthy advises boards of trustees on matters regarding ERISA compliance, tax-qualification, plan design, documentation, modification and termination. She also counsels both single- and multiemployer plans on issues pertaining to plan administration and operation (including claims and appeals), participant communications, plan investments, fiduciary obligations, prohibited transactions, funding issues, service provider contracts, negotiating side letters that contain provisions that afford greater protection to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) plans that she represents, ERISA litigation (including deadlock arbitrations) and withdrawal liability matters. McCarthy frequently speaks on employee benefit plan compliance issues and has presented to the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans, the American Bar Association, Pensions & Investments, the California State Bar, the Los Angeles County Bar Association and the Beverly Hills Bar Association. Before joining Morgan Lewis, she was with the employee benefits and compensation practice of a Los Angeles-based law firm. McCarthy earned her LL.M. and J.D. degrees from the University of San Diego School of Law and her bachelor of arts degree (cum laude) from the University of California, Riverside.