



## 2026 Public Defender Spring Conference

May 6-8, 2026 | Cherokee, NC

Sponsored by the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government,  
North Carolina Office of Indigent Defense Services,  
North Carolina Association of Public Defenders

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### AGENDA

*(This conference will offer approximately 12.5 hours of CLE credit.  
All hours are general credit hours unless otherwise noted.)*

#### Wednesday, May 6 - Main Room (111/112/113)

- 11:00 am-12:00 pm    *Check-in*
- 12:00-12:10 pm    **Welcome and Announcements**
- 12:10-12:40 pm    **Opening Remarks**  
Chief Justice Bradley Letts  
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Supreme Court, Cherokee, NC
- 12:40-1:00 pm    **Chief Justice Newby's Professionalism Award**  
James "Jimbo" Perry, Executive Director  
The Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism
- 1:00-1:45 pm    **IDS Update, Recognitions, and PD Association Elections**  
Mary Pollard, Executive Director  
Office of Indigent Defense Services, Durham, NC  
Deonte' Thomas, Chief Public Defender,  
Wake County Public Defender's Office, Raleigh, NC
- 1:45-2:45 pm    **Work/Life Balance [60 mins.] [Professional Well-Being]**  
Carla Huff, IDS Training and Recruitment Coordinator  
Office of Indigent Defense Services, Durham, NC
- 2:45-3:00 pm    *Break – Main Room (111/112/113)*
- 3:00-4:00 pm    **The Missing Piece of the Puzzle: Your Client's Other Cases [60 mins.] [Ethics]**  
Timothy Heinle, Teaching Assistant Professor  
UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
- 4:00-5:00 pm    **Dealing with Capacity Issues: A Practical Approach [60 mins.]**  
John Rubin, Professor, UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC  
Dr. Robert Cochrane, Director of Forensic Services  
N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Raleigh, NC
- 5:00 pm    *Adjourn*
- 5:15 pm    **Optional Social Gathering**



**Thursday, May 7**

	<b>Track #1 – Main Room (111/112/113)</b>	<b>Track #2 – Room 107</b>
8:00-9:00 am	<i>Breakfast (provided) – Main Foyer</i>	
9:00-10:00 am [60 mins.]	<b>Federal Court for State Defenders</b> Kathleen Gleason, First Assistant Federal Defender Federal Public Defender, Middle District Greensboro, NC	<b>Admitting Evidence in District Court</b> Daniel Spiegel, Assistant Professor UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
10:00-10:45 am [45 mins.]	<b>Forensic Interviewing of Children</b> Dr. John Helminski, Forensic Psychologist Private Practice, Morrisville, NC	<b>Breath and Blood Tests</b> Belal Elrahal, Assistant Professor UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
10:45-11:00 am	<i>Break</i>	
11:00 am- 12:00 pm [60 mins.]	<b>Second Amendment Update</b> E. Gregory Wallace, Professor of Law Campbell University School of Law, Raleigh, NC	<b>Harm Reduction Law and Resources</b> Phil Dixon, Teaching Associate Professor Kirsten Leloudis, Assistant Professor UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
12:00-1:30 pm	<i>Recess for Lunch</i>	
1:30-2:30 pm [60 mins.]	<b>Excluding and Limiting Expert Witnesses</b> Vicki Jayne, Assistant Capital Defender Office of the Capital Defender, Asheville, NC	<b>Immigration Detainers</b> Kate Evans, Clinical Professor of Law Duke University School of Law, Durham, NC
2:30-3:30pm [60 mins.]	<b>For-Cause Challenges</b> Emily Coward, Director, Inclusive Juries Project Duke University School of Law, Durham, NC	<b>Pretrial Release &amp; Iryna’s Law</b> Elana Fogel, Associate Clinical Professor Director, Criminal Defense Clinic Duke University School of Law, Durham, NC
3:30-3:45 pm	<i>Break – Main Foyer</i>	
3:45-4:45 pm [60 mins.]	<b>The New Good Faith Exception</b> John Carella, Assistant Appellate Defender Candace Washington, Assistant Appellate Defender Office of the Appellate Defender, Durham, NC	<b>Litigating Fees and Fines</b> Whitley Carpenter, Senior Criminal Justice Counsel & Policy Manager, Forward Justice, Morrisville, NC Laura Holland, Director, Fair Chance Criminal Project, N.C. Justice Center, Raleigh, NC
4:45-5:30 pm [45 mins.]	<b>Litigating and Preserving Suppression for Appeal</b> Daniel Blau, Attorney Blau and Hynson, PLLC, Raleigh, NC	<b>Law Enforcement Recordings in District Court</b> Jennifer Chandler, Attorney Chandler Law, Mooresville, NC
5:30 pm	<i>Adjourn</i>	

**Lunch is on your own, except:**

- Chief Public Defenders and IDS Administration meet for lunch (*on-site* – Room 109)
- NC Forensic Consultant Network Attorneys meet for lunch (*on-site* – Selu Garden Cafe)
- Parent Defenders (*on-site* - Soco Smokehouse – The Chop)
- Juvenile Defenders (*on-site* – Selu Garden Cafe)



**Friday, May 8 - Main Room (111/112/113)**

- 8:00-9:30 am            *Breakfast (provided) – Main Room (111/112/113)*
- 9:15-10:15 am        **Artificial Intelligence and Evidence Issues [60 mins.] [Technology]**  
Timothy Heinle, Teaching Assistant Professor  
Kristi Nickodem, Assistant Professor  
UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
- 10:15-10:30 am       *Break*
- 10:30-11:30 am       **Ethical Responsibilities During Disasters [60 mins.] [Ethics]**  
Ariel Freedman, Assistant Ethics Counsel  
North Carolina State Bar, Raleigh, NC
- 11:30 am-12:30 pm   **Criminal Case and Legislative Update [60 mins.]**  
Phil Dixon, Teaching Associate Professor  
Danny Spiegel, Assistant Professor  
UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
- 12:30 pm                *Adjourn*

**CLE HOURS**

General: Up to 8.5  
Ethics: Up to 2.0  
Technology: 1.0  
Professional Well-being: 1.0  
Total CLE Hours: 12.5

*Final CLE hours are subject to change in accordance with NC State Bar Approval*