

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

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	<i>Check-in</i>
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	<i>Break – Main Room (111/112/113)</i>
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	<i>Adjourn</i>
5:15 pm	Optional Social Gathering

THURSDAY, MAY 7

	Track #1 – Main Room 111/112/113	Track #2 – Room 107
8:00-9:00 am	<i>Breakfast (provided) – Main Foyer</i>	
9:00-10:00 am [60 mins.]	Federal Court for State Defenders Kathleen Gleason, First Assistant Federal Defender Federal Public Defender, Middle District Greensboro, NC	Admitting Evidence in District Court Daniel Spiegel, Assistant Professor UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
10:00-10:45 am [45 mins.]	Forensic Interviewing of Children Dr. John Helminski, Forensic Psychologist Private Practice, Morrisville, NC	Breath and Blood Tests 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.]	Second Amendment Update E. Gregory Wallace, Professor of Law Campbell University School of Law, Raleigh, NC	Harm Reduction Law and Resources 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.]	Excluding and Limiting Expert Witnesses Vicki Jayne, Assistant Capital Defender Office of the Capital Defender, Asheville, NC	Immigration Detainers Kate Evans, Clinical Professor of Law Duke University School of Law, Durham, NC
2:30-3:30pm [60 mins.]	For-Cause Challenges Emily Coward, Director, Inclusive Juries Project Duke University School of Law, Durham, NC	Pretrial Release & Iryna’s Law 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.]	The New Good Faith Exception John Carella, Assistant Appellate Defender Candace Washington, Assistant Appellate Defender Office of the Appellate Defender, Durham, NC	Litigating Fees and Fines 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.]	Litigating and Preserving Suppression for Appeal Daniel Blau, Attorney Blau and Hynson, PLLC, Raleigh, NC	Law Enforcement Recordings in District Court <i>to be announced</i>
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* – Soco Smokehouse)
- Parent Defenders (*on-site* - Soco Smokehouse)
- Juvenile Defenders (*on-site* – TBD)

FRIDAY, MAY 8 - *Main Room 111/112/113*

8:00-9:30 am	<i>Breakfast (provided) – Main Room (111/112/113)</i>
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	<i>Break</i>
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	<i>Adjourn</i>

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*