



**2026 Annual Master Clerks Academies
For City and County Clerks
UNC School of Government**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2026
MMC Academy I**

7:45-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-10:30	Legislative Update Erin Wynia , Director of Government Affairs, North Carolina League of Municipalities Description: This session will explore some recently adopted and pending legislation that is of particular interest to local governments. The session will help clerks understand the ins and outs of the legislation as well as implications and potential impacts on local governments.
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	Development Moratoria Jim Joyce , Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government Description: This session will examine the legal framework surrounding development moratoria with a particular eye toward hot topics such as data centers. Clerks will learn the statutory rules and processes for development moratoria.
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:15	Drafting AI and Social Media Policies Kristi Nickodem , Assistant Professor for Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government Description: Among the many issues facing local governments, how to approach artificial intelligence and social media are two of the most pressing. This session will assist clerks in understanding the legal landscape around artificial intelligence and social media use in local governments and present some considerations for helping their agencies draft appropriate policies.
2:15-2:30	Break
2:30-4:00	New Board Member Orientation Kristina Wilson , Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government

Description: In an election year, clerks sometimes have even more responsibilities and obligations than in a typical year. One of these additional duties is orienting newly elected commissioners. This course will explore the best methods for orienting new members, including important topics and key players to involve in the orientation process.

4:00-6:00

Reception

Thursday, November 19, 2026

MMC Academy II

7:45-9:00

Breakfast

9:00-10:30

All Things Ordinance

Kristina Wilson, Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government

Description: What should an ordinance contain? How is it adopted? When does an ordinance need to be updated? This session will analyze those questions and more and prepare clerks to answer questions from their electeds about all things ordinance.

10:30-10:45

Break

10:45-11:45

“You can’t tell anyone.” - NDAs and Economic Development

Tyler Mulligan, David M. Lawrence Distinguished Professor of Public Law and Government; Lead Faculty, Development Finance Initiative, UNC School of Government

Description: A business seeking to locate in a jurisdiction will sometimes demand complete confidentiality from relevant local governments while assessing the suitability of the location. The demand for secrecy may come in the form of a nondisclosure agreement (NDA). This session will explore the purpose of NDAs and provide a framework for evaluating the legality of NDA requests.

11:45-1:15

Lunch/Concurrent Association Business Meetings

1:15-2:15

Managing Grants: Compliance, Controls, and Best Practices

Rebecca Badgett, Teaching Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government

Description: Managing grants requires navigating a complex set of rules governing how funds are spent, documented, and monitored. This session will provide an overview of key Uniform Guidance requirements for post-award grant management and offer practical strategies for strengthening grant management processes, reducing compliance risks, and preparing for audits.

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| 2:15-2:30 | Break |
| 2:30-3:45 | Clerk Panel
Moderated by Kristina Wilson , Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government
Description: Clerks will have the opportunity to learn from their peers in this interactive session. Four seasoned clerks will answer questions submitted by their fellow clerks in advance covering a variety of topics including board dynamics, the mechanics of clerking, election years, and more. |

Friday, November 20, 2026
MMC Academy II

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| 7:45-9:00 | Breakfast |
| 9:00-10:30 | The Board-Manager Relationship: Roles, Relationships, and Responsibilities
Colt Jensen , Assistant Professor of Public Administration and Government, UNC School of Government
Rebecca Fisher-Gabbard , Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government
Description: Co-taught by two faculty members, this session introduces the legal and practical foundations of the board-manager form of government. It examines the distinct roles, responsibilities, and relationships that support effective local governance. Participants will learn how elected officials set policy and strategic direction while the professional manager oversees administration and implementation. The course also explores how local government officials and staff can build productive working relationships grounded in respect, transparency, clear communication, and routine feedback. |
| 10:30-10:45 | Break |
| 10:45-11:45 | Board Disciplinary Measures
Rebecca Fisher-Gabbard , Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government
Description: Local governing boards are made up of elected officials, and elected officials are people. Sometimes people make mistakes or act badly. Perhaps a board member is violating the board's code of ethics, interfering with public meetings, threatening or sexually harassing staff members, or otherwise creating conditions substantially adverse to good governance and service to the local community. What can the board do about board member misconduct? Local elected boards have implicit and inherent power to discipline their members. The appropriateness of the disciplinary measure will depend upon the nature and severity of the member's bad behavior. This session will provide an overview of local codes of ethics, explore potential avenues for disciplining local board members, and explain the legal and practical implications for each option. |

Credit for Successful Completion of Master Clerks Academies

The School of Government of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is the International Institute of Municipal Clerks' recognized provider of city and county clerks' educational programming in North Carolina. The School's Clerks Academies may be used for credit towards the IIMC's designations of Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) and Master Municipal Clerk (MMC). The School also works cooperatively with the North Carolina Association of County Clerks and the North Carolina Association of Municipal Clerks to provide programs that earn credit under their respective state certification programs.

The School awards points for successfully completing the 2026 Master Clerks Academy I and Master Clerks Academy II. **Points are awarded separately for each Academy. To receive credit for an Academy, the student must attend all sessions as shown by the School's electronic attendance monitoring system and must complete and submit an on-line evaluation form for that event. *No partial credit can be awarded.***

Amounts of Credit Awarded

1. Persons successfully completing Master Clerks Academy I will receive 3 CMC/MMC points (6 hours).
2. Persons successfully completing Master Clerks Academy II will receive 4 CMC/MMC points (8 hours)
3. The amount of credit awarded by the NC Association of Municipal Clerks and NC Association of County Clerks in their respective state certification programs is decided by each association in accordance with its own rules. Generally, the amount of credit allowed is based on the number of classroom hours attended.

Instructors

Rebecca Badgett is a Teaching Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government at the UNC School of Government. She is an expert in local government finance and federal grants management. She teaches, advises, and publishes in the areas of internal control, local government finance, and post-award compliance with the federal Uniform Guidance. Badgett plays an integral role in the Lead for North Carolina fellowship program, mentoring and training emerging public service leaders. She also serves as lead faculty for the School's Municipal and County Administration course. She is the co-author of the book *Regulation and Taxation of Short-Term Rentals*. Rebecca Badgett joined the School of Government in 2017. She worked as a research attorney before joining the faculty in 2021. Prior to joining the School, Badgett clerked at the North Carolina Court of Appeals and worked in private practice. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees from UNC Wilmington and a J.D. from North Carolina Central University School of Law.

Rebecca L. Fisher-Gabbard is an assistant professor of public law and government at the School of Government. In her role on the faculty, her work focuses primarily on local government law, with an emphasis on municipal authority and liability. Prior to joining the School, Fisher-Gabbard was an education law associate at Tharrington Smith LLP, where she represented and advised local boards of education across the state. Before practicing education law, she served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Lucy N. Inman at the North Carolina Court of Appeals. She is a member of

the North Carolina State Bar and previously served as the Young Lawyers Division Liaison to the Education Section of the North Carolina Bar Association. Fisher-Gabbard holds a bachelor's degree from Davidson College and J.D. from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Colt Jensen is an assistant professor of public administration and government at the School of Government. His expertise and research on local government management, rural governance, trust in government and public service motivation have been published in *Public Administration Review*, *The American Review of Public Administration*, and other journals. As a member of the Center for Public Leadership and Governance, he conducts training and provides advice on leadership and management topics. Previously, Colt Jensen served as a faculty member at Georgia Southern University. Jensen received an MPA from Appalachian State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia.

James (Jim) Joyce joined the School of Government in 2020, where he teaches, advises, and researches on community planning, development regulation, and environmental topics. Before coming to the School, he practiced environmental and land use law for more than ten years at K&L Gates LLP. In addition to his practice, he wrote regular alerts and updates on environmental and zoning topics, helped train Carolina's energy industry leaders on managing regulatory compliance, and authored several articles on the development of new oil and gas regulations for the state of North Carolina. Prior to entering private practice, he served as a summer clerk and fall fellow at the School, where he co-authored *Inclusionary Zoning: A Guide to Ordinances and the Law*, with C. Tyler Mulligan (School of Government, UNC-Chapel Hill, 2010). Joyce earned a B.A. with highest honors in political science and French from UNC-Chapel Hill, a master of community planning from the University of Maryland, and a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law.

Tyler Mulligan is the David M. Lawrence Distinguished Professor of Public Law and Government at the School of Government. He counsels state and local government officials and their partner organizations regarding community economic development, affordable housing, public-private partnerships for development, and revitalization efforts. Mulligan launched and directed the School's [Development Finance Initiative](#) (DFI), which assists local governments with attracting private investment for transformative development projects. Under his leadership, DFI supported state and local governments with hundreds of public-private partnerships for development, the majority located in distressed areas, and DFI projects attracted over \$1 billion in private investment. He currently serves as Lead Faculty for the initiative. He joined the School in 2007. Previously, he practiced law in Raleigh with Womble Carlyle in the capital markets group. Prior to private practice, Mulligan served as a Navy diver and JAG Corps officer. He is a member of the North Carolina State Bar. He earned a bachelor's degree, *summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, from Duke University and a law degree from Yale University.

Kristi A. Nickodem teaches, consults, and writes about human services law, including the organization and governance of local social services and consolidated human services agencies, the responsibilities of social services and consolidated human services boards and directors, and the confidentiality of social services information. Nickodem is the author of [Local Boards of Social Services in North Carolina](#) and a faculty co-lead of the School of Government's [Adult Protection Network](#). She created and maintains [The North Carolina Human Services Hub](#), a website featuring resources for health and human services professionals in state and local government. Nickodem's work also explores how local governments use and respond to technology, including legal issues associated with social media, artificial intelligence, filming on public property, and the

First Amendment. Nickodem is a member of the UNC Generative AI Committee and the University's Faculty Information Technology Advisory Committee.

In 2024, Nickodem received the School's Margaret Taylor Writing Award for her publication "[Responding to First Amendment 'Audits' in the Local Government Context](#)" (co-authored with Kristina Wilson). Nickodem joined the School of Government's faculty in 2021. Previously, she practiced law at K&L Gates LLP, where she counseled clients, conducted internal investigations, and defended clients in litigation. Prior to entering private practice, Nickodem worked for an international nonprofit organization in Greensboro, North Carolina. Nickodem is a member of the North Carolina State Bar. She earned a bachelor's degree, *summa cum laude*, from UNC-Greensboro and a J.D. with high honors, Order of the Coif, from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Kristina Wilson joined the School of Government in September of 2021, and her work focuses on local government structure and authority, board procedures, and public records and transparency issues. Prior to joining the School, Kristina practiced as a Civil Litigation Associate at Yates, McLamb & Weyher LLP in the areas of medical malpractice and general civil liability defense. Kristina received her J.D. *cum laude* from Wake Forest University School of Law where she was a published member and Executive Online Editor of the *Wake Forest Law Review*. Kristina earned undergraduate degrees in English and Spanish *cum laude* from Georgetown University. She is a member of the North Carolina State Bar.

Erin Wynia is the Director of Government Affairs for the North Carolina League of Municipalities.