Louisiana Justice Community Conference

Crowne Plaza Executive Center Baton Rouge by IHG

4728 Constitution Ave, Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Welcome to the 23rd Annual Louisiana Justice Community Conference! The Louisiana State Bar Association is proud to host this event at no cost for Louisiana's civil legal aid attorneys and advocates. This year's theme, "Advancing Civil Legal Aid: Building Stronger Advocates and Stronger Communities," reflects our commitment to developing the skills, knowledge, and connections that make us more effective for the clients and communities we serve. Together, we'll explore new strategies, resources, and collaborations that strengthen our collective ability to serve clients and communities across Louisiana. We are also proud to honor the exceptional contributions of our public interest colleagues during the annual Civil Legal Aid Awards Ceremony. Through your dedication and commitment, we continue to make justice a reality for all.

Conference Agenda

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2026 (Pending Credit, 4 CLE credit hours)

12:00 - 12:30 PM — **Conference Check-In and Networking Lunch**

12:30 - 12:45 PM — **Welcome Remarks**
Curtis R. Joseph, Jr., *Louisiana State Bar Association President*
Charles C. "Chuck" Bourque, Jr., *Louisiana Bar Foundation Vice President*

12:45 - 1:00 PM — **Keynote Address**
Justice John Michael Guidry, *Louisiana Supreme Court*

1:05 - 2:05 pm (1.0 Prof. CLE) — **Three AI Skills Every Lawyer Needs Now -- Whether You Use AI or Not**
Tracy L. M. Norton, *Louisiana State University, Paul M. Hebert Law Center*
Generative AI is reshaping legal practice, and it will affect your work whether you use it or not. Your clients are using it to research their own legal problems. Your associates and co-counsel may be using it to draft documents you will sign. Opposing counsel may be using it to produce the briefs you are reading. Each of these scenarios creates a professional responsibility obligation that does not depend on your own AI adoption. This program grounds those emerging obligations in existing Louisiana Rules of Professional Conduct and recent case law. As AI systems become more fluent and generate fewer obvious errors, the skills that protect lawyers and clients are not

technological. They are professional: critical thinking, critical reading, and the ability to exercise judgment over a tool that has none.

2:10 - 3:10 pm **Immigration Basics for Legal Aid Practitioners**
(1.0 CLE)
Hiroko Kusuda, *Loyola University New Orleans College of Law*
This session will provide civil legal aid attorneys with practical tools for identifying immigration-related issues that arise in the context of housing and family law matters, with a focus on issue-spotting and connecting clients to appropriate referral resources.

(1.0 CLE) **Saving the Family Home: Heir Property, Tax Liens, and What Legal Aid Needs to Know**
David M. Everitt, *Acadiana Legal Service Corporation*
Adrienne K. Wheeler, *Louisiana Appleseed*
Louisiana has an estimated 175,000 parcels mired in heir property, and when those properties intersect with unpaid taxes, the stakes are high and the law just changed. This session prepares practitioners to recognize the problem however it presents, understand the January 2025 shift from tax sales to tax lien certificates, navigate notice requirements and redemption timelines under the new system, spot conflict of interest risks when legal aid organizations have existing relationships with co-owners, and identify the range of options available to clients, from partition and succession to administrative challenges and lien termination.

3:10 – 3:30 PM **Break**

3:30 -4:30 PM **Working with ASL Interpreters: Attorney Obligations and Effective Client**
(1.0 Ethics CLE) **Communication**
Barbara Lovas, *New Orleans Sign Language Services, LLC*
Caitlin P. Morgenstern, *Louisiana Supreme Court*
Attorneys have an ethical and legal obligation to communicate effectively with every client, including those who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Failing to secure a qualified ASL interpreter, misunderstanding who is responsible for doing so, or failing to understand how ASL interpretation actually works can compromise that obligation. This session will cover the ethical duties, legal requirements, and practical realities attorneys need to know when representing Deaf and hard-of-hearing clients. Topics include the attorney's duty to retain a qualified interpreter as a matter of effective client communication; the distinction between a court-appointed interpreter and an attorney's table interpreter; ADA obligations and new LCD registry requirements; and how ASL's spatial structure creates interpretation gaps that attorneys must understand to fulfill their duty of competent representation.

(**1.0 CLE)** **The Nuts and Bolts of the PSFVRA (Post-Separation Family Violence Relief Act)**
Greg L. Hughes, *Southeast Louisiana Legal Services*
Lykisha R. Vaughan, *Southeast Louisiana Legal Services*
An overview of the Post-Separation Family Violence Relief Act—an important and sometimes underutilized tool in representing survivors of domestic violence. This session will cover important elements of the Act and best practices for advocacy.

4:35 - 5:35 PM **Civil Legal Needs and Reentry: Serving Clients Returning from Incarceration**
(1.0 CLE) **Lauren T. Kirichkow**, *Justice and Accountability Center*
Debra J. Weinberg, *Disability Rights Louisiana*
Formerly incarcerated people often face a variety of civil legal issues that extend beyond the criminal legal system. This session equips civil legal aid attorneys to identify and respond to the full range of civil legal needs that arise at reentry, including public benefits restoration, driver's license barriers, and disability-related issues. Presenters will address practical strategies for issue-spotting across practice areas, discuss how incarceration affects clients' relationships with systems and institutions, and share tools for counseling clients who may be reluctant to engage with the legal system.

(1.0 CLE) **Representing Children in SSI Disability Cases**
Jesse P. Lind, *CrescentCare Legal Services*
Child SSI disability claims follow different rules than adult cases -- different standards, different evidence, and different advocacy challenges. This session covers what practitioners need to know to represent child clients effectively.

7:00 – 9:00 pm **Networking Reception and Civil Legal Aid Awards Ceremony**
Join us for a networking reception and the Civil Legal Aid Awards Ceremony on Thursday evening, sponsored by the Louisiana Bar Foundation.

(Thursday Total CLE: Pending 4.0 hours; including 1.0 hours of Prof and 1.0 hours of Ethics)

LOUISIANA JUSTICE COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

Friday, November 20, 2026

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2026 (Pending Credit, 5 CLE credit hours)

8:30 - 9:30 AM **Preserving the Record and Navigating Appeals in Civil Legal Aid Practice**
(1.0 CLE) **Hon. Tiffany G. Chase**, *Louisiana 4th Circuit Court of Appeal*
Elizabeth C. Harvey, *Southeast Louisiana Legal Services*
Sachida R. Raman, *Acadiana Legal Service Corporation*
This session will cover the fundamentals of Louisiana appellate procedure, from protecting the record at trial to navigating writs and deadlines, with a focus on family law and housing matters.

9:35 - 10:35 AM **Housing Policy Updates from Washington and Baton Rouge**
(1.0 CLE) **Hannah D. Adams**, *National Housing Law Project*
Ameca A. Reali, *Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center*
From funding shortfalls and program cuts, to new proposed work requirements, eviction rules, and immigration status restrictions, to the rollback of fair housing protections and enforcement, low-income families and unhoused people remain under attack. At the same time, Congress has passed the largest bipartisan housing legislation in nearly two

decades. This session will look at recent and pending federal legislation, rulemaking, and other HUD activity that impacts access to housing. We will also discuss new Louisiana legislation that criminalizes unhoused people and how it intersects with federal policy changes.

(1.0 CLE) **<u>From the Bench: Family Law Best Practices for Custody, Support, and Courtroom Advocacy</u>**
Hon. Bernadette G. D'Souza, Orleans Parish Civil District Court
Hon. David A. Blanchet, 15th JDC
Mandi B. Bucher, 16th JDC
This panel brings together judges and a hearing officer from across Louisiana to equip family law practitioners with practical guidance from the bench on courtroom advocacy, judicial expectations, and best practices that improve client representation and efficient resolution in domestic matters. The session covers emergency and expedited custody filings, standards for ex parte relief, financial evidence in support cases, what courts need when income is disputed or hidden, and how to make the most of hearing officer conferences.

10:40 - 11:40 AM **<u>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Updates</u>**
(1.0 CLE) **Steven D. Reed,** *Southeast Louisiana Legal Services*
Veronica H. Sizer*, Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness*
This session will provide an update on FEMA disaster recovery processes and policy changes, with practical guidance for advocates assisting clients navigating federal disaster assistance.

(1.0 CLE) **<u>The Changing Medicaid Landscape: Understanding H.R. 1</u>**
Gelila Selassie*, Justice in Aging*
H.R. 1 reshapes Medicaid through work requirements, increased redeterminations, and new restrictions on immigrant eligibility, all of which will lead to coverage loss. This session will explain the policy changes, identify who is most at risk of losing coverage, and outline practical steps legal aid attorneys can take to help clients navigate the new landscape.

11:45- 1:00 PM **<u>Lunch and Statewide Task Force Meetings</u>**
Join us for a working lunch and the meeting of the CINC, Public Benefits, Housing and Consumer Law, Family Law, and Elder Law Task Forces.

1:05 – 2:05 PM **<u>Beyond the Individual Trust: Leveraging Pooled Trusts to Access and Preserve Benefits in Elder and Disability Estate Planning</u>**
(1.0 CLE)
Jason D. Asbill*, Louisiana Guardianship Services, Inc.*
Steven E. Bain*, Louisiana Guardianship Services, Inc.*
Pooled special needs trusts represent a critical mechanism for preserving public benefits while meeting the ongoing financial and care needs of individuals with disabilities and older adults. This session will provide a detailed examination of the statutory and regulatory framework governing pooled trusts, including 42 U.S.C. §1396p(d)(4)(C), Social Security Administration interpretations, and key Louisiana Medicaid policy guidance. The discussion will highlight practical limitations, compliance

requirements, the importance of comprehensive planning, and other planning tools, such as Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts.

(1.0 Prof CLE)

What's My Line?: Overview of How to Be a Lawyer in the Courtroom
Melanie A. Bray, *Disability Rights Louisiana*
The basics of how to act like a lawyer in a courtroom are an overlooked skill, especially for attorneys in legal services and nonprofits. This session provides an overview of courtroom procedures and practical guidance for presenting to the court with confidence and professionalism — including duties to the tribunal, obligations to opposing counsel, and the attorney's role as an officer of the court. Whether you are a newer attorney building foundational skills or an experienced practitioner who doesn't find yourself in court often, you will leave with concrete, immediately applicable tools.

2:10 – 3:10 PM **Ethics**
(1.0 Ethics CLE) **TBA**
TBA

3:10 – 3:15 PM **Closing Remarks**

(Friday Total CLE hours: Pending 5.0; including 1.0 Ethics and 1.0 Prof)

Please note: Attorneys who attended the CINC Pre-Conference must submit a separate CLE form to earn credit for attending that event. Please refer to the event-specific agendas for the total hours earned. Questions regarding CLE credit for any event can be answered at the registration desk or directed to ATJ Coordinator Bridget Berins at bridget.berins@lsba.org.

Disclaimer: The LSBA's inclusion of a program in its CLE programming is not to be deemed a statement or an endorsement of the views expressed therein by the LSBA or any member of the LSBA. Speakers on LSBA programs were carefully selected for their knowledge, but neither the LSBA nor the speaker warrant that the presentations or materials were free of errors, or will continue to be accurate. Statements in the presentations and their materials should be verified before relying on them. Opinions expressed are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect opinions of the LSBA, its sections, or committees. Views expressed are those of the authors and contributors only.