



LOUISIANA DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION

49th Annual Support Staff Training Conference

Golden Nugget Casino in Lake Charles, LA

April 30 - May 2, 2025

AGENDA

(Subject to Change)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30

11:00-5:30 **REGISTRATION**

1:00-1:15 **Welcome & Announcements**

*Honorable Stephen Dwight, District Attorney
14th Judicial District, Calcasieu Parish, LA
Mr. Jacob Johnson, 1st Assistant District Attorney
14th Judicial District, Calcasieu Parish, LA
Mr. Philip Qualls, DARS Director
Mr. Mason Terrell, Ourso Financial Group*

1:15-2:00 **SESSION #1 Thriving, Not Just Surviving: Mastering the Work-Life Wellness Dance**

*Dr. Krista Nelson, Department Chair and Associate Professor of Psychology
Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia, AR*

Join us for an insightful session on exploring practical strategies to manage stress, set boundaries, and maintain mental well-being while navigating the demands of your professional and personal life. Take away tools to help you foster a healthier work-life integration and thrive both at work and at home.

2:00-2:15 **BREAK**

2:15-3:00 **SESSION #2 Empathy in Action: Navigating the Challenges of Supporting Victims with Compassion and Care**

*Mrs. Leone Fitzgerald, President of the Victims Assistance Coordinators Board
Director, Victim Assistance Program, 1st Judicial District, Shreveport, LA*

Support staff are often the first people in the office that a victim/witness speaks with - you have the power to influence their first impression of your office and impact a victim's willingness to cooperate going forward. This presentation will provide an overview of what VAC's do, how we can work together, and how to better respond to difficult victims.

3:00-3:15 **BREAK**

- 3:15- 4:00** **SESSION #3 New Tools, New Tactics: The Latest in Investigative Courtroom Programs**
Mr. Scott Elfert, President of the DAI Board
District Attorney Investigator, 32nd Judicial District, Houma, LA
This session will showcase the most recent investigative tools being used to solve cases, discuss their benefits, and give insight into how these tools work.
- 4:00-4:15** **BREAK**
- 4:15-5:00** **BREAKOUT SESSION #4a Understanding Bond Forfeitures: A Step-by-Step Guide**
Mr. Andrew Shealy, Bail Bond and Drug Asset Forfeiture Attorney
Assistant District Attorney, 16th Judicial District, New Iberia, LA
Learn the basic rules for obtaining and enforcing criminal bail bond forfeiture judgments and the need for strict compliance with those rules. Present any bond related questions during this session, Q&A at the end.
- BREAKOUT SESSION #4b Chronic, Catnip, and Cabbage: Same Drug, New Laws on Cannabis in 2025**
Ms. M. W. Smith, Assistant District Attorney
20th Judicial District, Clinton, LA
Learn updated sentencing guidelines for possession of marijuana and paraphernalia, discover which THC gummy and beverage products can be sold and where they may be sold, understand drug court treatment options, and review medical marijuana and marijuana growing operation regulations in this session.

THURSDAY, MAY 1

- 8:00-2:00** **REGISTRATION**
- 9:00-10:00** **SESSION #5 Stop Barking Up the Wrong Tree**
Ms. Julie Couret, Strategic Planning and Executive Business Coach
Couret Leadership Lab, New Orleans, LA
In a fast-paced work environment, communication can make or break productivity. This session equips you with the tools to collaborate seamlessly, make clear requests, share critical information, and gain necessary clarifications—ensuring efficiency and alignment while managing constant deadlines. Learn how to get your message across quickly and effectively to drive results and keep work moving forward.
- 10:00-10:15** **BREAK**
- 10:15-11:00** **SESSION #6 On the Record: A Guide to Handling the Media with Confidence**
Mr. David Melancon, Chief Investigator
17th Judicial District, Thibodaux, LA
In today's social media age, opting out of conversation is not an option that organizations have. The challenge then becomes how to navigate the ever-changing sea of options, while staying professional, managing the message, and ensuring the narrative reflects the dedication poured into the fight for justice. In this session, we'll explore the best strategies and practices for those ready to take on this crucial responsibility.
- 11:00-11:15** **BREAK**
- 11:15-12:00** **SESSION #7 Behind the Scenes: Support Staff's Role in Attorney Success**
Mr. Hugo Holland, Assistant District Attorney
26th Judicial District, Shreveport, LA
Some prosecutors, especially new ones, don't know what they don't know. Pick up a few tips on helping your prosecutors get ready for trial in this presentation.

- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH - PROVIDED**
- 1:00-2:00 SESSION #8 Locked and Loaded: Practical Tips for Gun Safety and Self-Defense**
Mr. Austin Williams, District Sales Manager, United States Concealed Carry Association
17th Judicial District, Thibodeaux, LA
 Attend this session to learn about basic firearm safety and handling, as well as review the laws covering use of force, the aftermath, and the differences between “Constitutional Carry” and Permitted Carry.
- 2:00-2:15 BREAK**
- 2:15-3:00 SESSION #9 Digital Deception: Unraveling Cyber Crimes in Criminal Justice**
Mr. Randall Gohn, Detective, Concordia Sheriff's Office
7th Judicial District, Ferriday, LA
 In this block we will explore the current trends of online security risks and how to be safer online. We will also see how criminals and actors are getting more realistic in the stories that they promote to tug at your hearts and make us fall victim to their scams. We will also touch on how to be safer online with our personal information so it is not as readily available.
- 3:00-6:00 BREAK (afternoon free)**
- 6:00-10:00 LDAA MEET AND GREET – SOCIAL FUNCTION**
Take a break from working your magic in the office and spend the evening entertained by a professional illusionist! Enjoy fresh food and signature drinks! Let's make some magical memories and new connections!!

FRIDAY, MAY 2

- 7:00-11:00 REGISTRATION**
- 8:00-9:00 SESSION #10 Code of Governmental Ethics (Credit)**
Mr. Curtis Nelson, Deputy Director
Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA
 Remaining true to our ethical principles and advocating zealously for victims can be difficult to balance. Join us as we review the ethical requirements of prosecutors and explore recent developments in this area.
- 9:00-9:15 BREAK**
- 9:15-10:15 SESSION #11 New Laws in Motion: Essential Legislative Updates for 2025**
Mr. Zachary Daniels, Executive Director
Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA
 Attend an informative discussion about the legislative action for 2025 and what is on the horizon for prosecutors.
- 10:15-10:30 BREAK**
- 10:30-11:30 SESSION #12 Brady & Discovery 101: Ensuring Transparency and Compliance in the Legal Process**
Mr. Darren Allemand, Assistant District Attorney
24th Judicial District, Gretna, LA
 This session will provide an overview of how Brady obligations intersect with discovery obligations, focusing on the importance of fulfilling these obligations to ensure that justice is done in every case.
- 11:30-12:00 BUSINESS MEETING**
 Short and sweet! Do you have comments and / or suggestions on this or future Conferences? Would you like to be on the Support Staff Training Committee which

assists the LDAA in planning future agendas? We encourage you to attend this meeting and help us make some decisions.

12:00

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