

ANNUAL VAC SEMINAR

LOUISIANA DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION



***September 11-12, 2025
Baton Rouge, LA***

AGENDA Subject to Change

Day 1 (Thursday, September 11)

8:00 – 4:00 REGISTRATION

8:30 -8:45 WELCOME

Ms. Leone Fitzgerald, 2024-2025 LDAA VAC Board Section President
Ms. Wanjennia Atkins, Administrative Director/Victim Services Coordinator
Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA
Ms. Katie LeLeux, Victim Services Attorney
Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA

8:45 – 9:50 THEY WEREN'T VIOLENT UNTIL THEY KILLED

This session challenges common assumptions about domestic violence by sharing the chilling reality of two men – Kris's ex-husband and his brother – who exhibited no prior physical violence before committing unimaginable acts. One murdered Kris' daughter, Miranda, along with another woman. The other killed his own wife. This presentation exposes a dangerous misconception that the absence of physical violence means safety, urging professionals to recognize the red flags that often go unseen until it's too late.

Ms. Kris Anglin Barney, Domestic Violence Advocate/Resiliency Speaker
Miranda Faith Memorial Foundation
Mr. Justin Boardman, Former Investigator
Boardman Training & Consulting

9:50 – 10:00 BREAK

10:00 – 11:00 LAYERS, THE EXPERIENCE ~ A SURVIVOR'S STORY

This deeply personal and powerful session explores the complex layers of trauma through the lens of lived experience. Shona Chavis, a survivor and trauma educator, shares her journey through childhood adversity, intimate partner violence, and the neurological and generational impact of trauma. Participants will gain insight into how trauma shapes behavior, memory, and responses to the justice system. Through storytelling and neuroscience, this presentation challenges attendees to see beyond the surface, offering a deeper understanding of survivor behavior, the biology of trauma, and the critical need for trauma-informed approaches in legal and law enforcement settings.

Ms. Shona Chavis, Trauma Educator
a voice Awakening (avA), Baton Rouge, LA

11:00 – 11:15 BREAK

**11:15 – 12:15****UNDERSTANDING BRADY ISSUES: TRANSPARENCY, JUSTICE, & THE ROLE OF VACs**

This session will provide Victim Assistance Coordinators with a clear understanding of *Brady v. Maryland* and how legal disclosure obligations may intersect with their work. While VACs are not responsible for handling Brady material, they play a critical role in managing sensitive information and supporting victims ethically. This presentation will highlight practical considerations, confidentiality concerns, and best practices for maintaining integrity in the justice process.

Ms. W. Claire Howington, ADA Section President

Assistant District Attorney, 16th Judicial District, New Iberia, LA

12:15 – 1:30**LUNCH (ON YOUR OWN)****1:30 – 3:00****2025 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Join us as we discuss the eventful 2025 Legislative Session. This session will update you on relevant changes in the law and give a preview of what is in store for next year.

Ms. W. Claire Howington, ADA Section President

Assistant District Attorney, 16th Judicial District, New Iberia, LA

Ms. Jacqueline Sanchez, Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor

Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA

Ms. Katie LeLeux, Victim Services Attorney

Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA

3:00 – 3:15**BREAK****3:15 – 3:45****GOVERNORS OFFICE UPDATE**

Mr. Chris Walters

3:45 – 4:30**VAC BOARD GENERAL MEETING**

Mr. Zachary T. Daniels, Executive Director

Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA

Ms. Wanjennia Atkins, Administrative Director/Victim Services Coordinator

Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA

Ms. Katie LeLeux, Victim Services Attorney

Louisiana District Attorneys Association, Baton Rouge, LA

4:30**ADJOURN****Day 2 (Friday, September 12)****8:00 – 11:00****REGISTRATION****8:30 – 9:30****PARDON & PAROLE BOARD**

Mr. Francis Abbott, Executive Director

Louisiana Board of Pardons & Committee on Parole, Baton Rouge, LA



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9:30 – 9:45

BREAK

9:45 – 10:45

PATHWAY TO CERTIFICATION: PREPARING, APPLYING, & THRIVING AS A CERTIFIED VAC

This session will provide attendees with an in-depth overview of the National Advocate Credentialing Program, highlighting the benefits of credentialing for the field of advocacy and the survivors we serve.

Ms. Danielle Kitchen, NACP Senior Program Manager
National Organization for Victim Advocacy, Alexandria, VA

10:45 – 11:00

BREAK

11:00 – 12:00

RETIRING WITH PURPOSE: TRANSITIONING FROM A CAREER IN VICTIM ADVOCACY TO A NEW CHAPTER

This session will cover the key features of the Parochial Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana (PERS), including eligibility, service credit, benefit calculations, DROP, retirement options, and important timelines for members approaching retirement.

Ms. Kristi Garcia Spinosa, Administrative Director & General Counsel
Parochial Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, LA

ADJOURN – SAFE TRAVELS!