



NATIONAL DEFENDER INVESTIGATOR ASSOCIATION  
2025 REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
Baltimore, MD



“Defend with Purpose: Charm City Champions”

2025.06.12 – DRAFT AGENDA (Session Topics/Dates/Times are Subject to Change)

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm		REGISTRATION (Maryland Suites Foyer)		TUESDAY, September 2	
8:00 am – 9:00 am		REGISTRATION and COFFEE BAR (Harborview)		WEDNESDAY, September 3	
9:00 am – 9:15 am		WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS			
9:15 am – 10:30 am		PLENARY			
<div>How to be an Effective and Ethical Investigator (Working Title)</div> <div>Marquise Findley-Smith, Assistant Federal Public Defender, Office of the Federal Public Defender for the District of Maryland, Baltimore, MD Luna Garzón-Montano, Assistant Deputy Public Defender, New Jersey Office of the Public Defender, Newark, NJ Nate Mensah, Director of the Superior Court Program, Arnold &amp; Porter LLP Washington, DC Columbia/Frederick/Annapolis</div> <div>Experienced trial attorneys share their perspective on how to thoroughly investigate a case and get them the information they need to zealously and effectively represent our clients. The presenters will offer guidance on everything from how to conduct the initial case meetings, to appropriate and ethical conduct while working in the community, and beyond. The presenters will share practical advice regarding the 'do's and don'ts,' including their own experiences with investigation in both the pre-trial and post-conviction spaces. The presenters will continue to share real-world instructions for ways to maximize the impact of our work in the 101 Workshop Session that will immediately follow.</div>					
10:30 am – 10:45 am		Networking Break, Exhibits			
10:45 am – 12:00 pm		CONCURRENT SESSIONS			
<div>Understanding Youth Behavior and Using Positive Language in Cases (Working Title)</div> <div>Jimmonique Rodgers, Director of Operations, The Gault Center, Washington, DC Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Defending Veterans in Criminal Cases: A Deeper Dive</div> <div>Art Cody, Esq., Captain U.S. Navy (Ret.), Director, Center for Veteran Criminal Advocacy, Ridgewood, NJ Room</div> <div>Military Veterans undergo an experience far removed from the vast majority of those who sit in judgment of them in the criminal justice system. The military experience, particularly if it involves combat, indelibly shapes the veteran and often has significant causal or mitigating implications. At core, as mandated by <i>Porter v. McCollum</i>, 558 US 30 (2009), the defense team's role and obligation in a veteran's case is to investigate and tell that vet's story -- to translate this uncommon experience into a human narrative that not only engenders the comprehension of a prosecutor, judge, jury but also evokes their compassion. This practical instruction will assist defense team members by exploring the veteran experience, the "typical" veteran, lawyer-veteran client interaction, acquiring and interpreting military records, interview techniques, and a discussion of an archetypical veteran mitigation brief/sentencing hearing. While covering the basics of veteran representation, it will provide lessons learned from recent veteran criminal cases.</div>		<div>Session Title/Topic Pending</div> <div>Joseph Dean, Litigation Technology Paralegal, Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>	
<div>Investigation 101 Workshop One: Understanding Defense Theories and How They Shape Our Work</div> <div>Marquise Findley-Smith, Assistant Federal Public Defender, Office of the Federal Public Defender for the District of Maryland, Baltimore, MD Luna Garzón-Montano, Assistant Deputy Public Defender, New Jersey Office of the Public Defender, Newark, NJ Nate Mensah, Director of the Superior Court Program, Arnold &amp; Porter LLP Washington, DC Columbia/Frederick/Annapolis</div> <div>New Session Format: 101 Workshop Sessions are geared towards newer investigators, but will highlight best practices and anyone is welcome to attend!</div> <div>In the first workshop, attendees will review a mock fact pattern and discuss possible defense theories. There will then be a discussion of how to create an investigative to-do list, with the presenters advising on questions they would want asked - both of witnesses and the overall case itself – and will explain what is most helpful to them, as they prepare for trial.</div>					
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm		LUNCH BREAK			
1:15 pm – 2:30 pm		CONCURRENT SESSIONS			
<div>Mental Health Advocacy Related / Title TBD</div> <div>Name, Title, Agency/Office, City, NJ Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Organizing Investigations</div> <div>Kaylyn Christian, Director of Mitigation, Atlantic Center for Capital Representation, Philadelphia, PA Room</div> <div>Official Session Description Pending</div> <div>Plans to cover master documents, keeping information organized and accessible across the team, including both non-capital and capital cases.</div>		<div>Decarceration Investigation: Exploring the Roles of Investigation as a Tool to Fight Mass Incarceration</div> <div>Olinda Moyd, Director of Decarceration and Re-Entry Clinic, American University, Washington College of Law, Washington, DC Room</div> <div>Official Session Description Pending</div> <div>Plans to cover the importance of investigation after a person goes to prison to include support for various types of cases to include prisoner's rights (conditions cases), resentencing motions and court hearings, parole hearings, and reentry options (designing release plans to present to the court), focus on how critical an investigation can be to getting folks back to court or other avenues to earn their freedom.</div>	
<div>Investigation 101 Workshop Two: Identification Procedures &amp; Interviewing Preparation</div> <div>Presenter Group TBD Columbia/Frederick/Annapolis</div> <div>New Session Format: 101 Workshop Sessions are geared towards newer investigators, but will highlight best practices and anyone is welcome to attend!</div> <div>In the second workshop, attendees will learn about proper identification procedures, discuss and role play potential witness scenarios, and prepare for a witness interview. Interview preparation topics will include background research, drafting questions, rapport building techniques, what to bring (or not bring) with you into the community, and more!</div>					
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm		Networking Break, Exhibits			
2:45 pm – 4:00 pm		CONCURRENT SESSIONS			
<div>Investigations Concerning Spanish-Speaking Clients and Witnesses in an Anti-Immigrant Climate</div> <div>Bruni Marrero, Director of Investigative Services, The Legal Aid Society, New York, NY Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Social Media Related / Title TBD</div> <div>Jennifer Merrigan, Attorney, Phillips Black, Philadelphia, PA Carolyn Mehrtens, Capital Defense Investigator, Military Commissions Defense Organization, Washington, DC Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Scene Investigation (Working Title)</div> <div>Jacqueline Cadman, Partner, Brown, Goldstein &amp; Levy LLP, Baltimore, MD Sean Gordon, Managing Partner, Gordon Chiara LLP, Washington, DC Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>	

