



NATIONAL DEFENDER INVESTIGATOR ASSOCIATION
2026 NATIONAL CONFERENCE
New Orleans, LA



“Defend with Purpose: Best Practices in the Bayou”

2026.01.27 – DRAFT AGENDA (Session Topics/Dates/Times are Subject to Change)

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm		Registration / Check-In		TUESDAY, April 21	
8:00 am – 9:00 am		Registration / Check-In & Coffee Bar		WEDNESDAY, April 22	
9:00 am – 9:15 am		Welcome and Opening Remarks			
9:15 am – 10:30 am		PLENARY			
		<div>Ethics (Title TBD)</div> <div>Kevann Gardner, Founding Partner, K. Gardner Law, Washington, DC</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>			
10:30 am – 10:45 am		Networking Break, Exhibits			
10:45 am – 12:00 pm		CONCURRENT SESSIONS			
<div>Best Practices: Interviewing Session</div> <div>Chris Pipe, Supervisory Investigator, Military Commissions Defense Organization, Washington, DC</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div> <div>Continued series of NDIA Best Practices Sessions, virtually and at National/Regional Conferences</div>		<div>Ethics/Scenarios Breakout (Title TBD)</div> <div>Kevann Gardner, Founding Partner, K. Gardner Law, Washington, DC</div> <div>Jordan Crunkleton, Assistant Public Defender, Juvenile Division, Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Upper Marlboro, MD</div> <div>Kelsey Robinson, Assistant Public Defender, Juvenile Division, Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Upper Marlboro, MD</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Mitigation/Trauma Informed Interviewing (Session 1) (Working Title)</div> <div>Dana Cook, MSW, Director of Social Services Training and Recruitment, Philadelphia, PA</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>	
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm		Lunch Break			
1:15 pm – 2:30 pm		CONCURRENT SESSIONS			
<div>Session Description Awaiting Confirmation</div> <div>Awaiting Speaker Confirmation</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Single-Pass Discovery Review: A Case Analysis Framework (Working Title)</div> <div>Amber Kaset, Owner/Private Investigator/Mitigation Specialist, AK Investigations, TN & KY</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Working Session Description – This session will cover clear methods for reviewing and analyzing discovery to build an investigation plan, including creating investigative work product that tells a coherent story-- witness lists, timelines, records logs, identifying missing discovery, outlining possible case theories, and more.</div>		<div>Mitigation/Trauma Informed Interviewing (Session 2) (Working Title)</div> <div>Dana Cook, MSW, Director of Social Services Training and Recruitment, Philadelphia, PA</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>	
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm		Networking Break, Exhibits			
2:45 pm – 4:00 pm		CONCURRENT SESSIONS			
<div>Cellebrite Session (Pending Confirmation) Part I</div> <div>Name, Title, Agency/Office, City, State</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description</div>		<div>Session Description Awaiting Confirmation</div> <div>Awaiting Speaker Confirmation</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Veteran and Special Circumstances Representation (Working Title)</div> <div>Nick Place, Staff Attorney, Partnership for Civil Justice Fund, New Orleans, LA</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>	
4:00 pm – 4:15 pm		Networking Break, Exhibits			
4:15 pm – 5:30 pm		CONCURRENT SESSIONS			
<div>Cellebrite Session (Pending) Part II</div> <div>Name, Title, Agency/Office, City, State</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description</div>		<div>Making the Move to Private Investigations (Working Title)</div> <div>Amber Kaset, Owner/Private Investigator/Mitigation Specialist, AK Investigations, TN & KY</div> <div>Katari Lundy, Private Investigator, Good Faith Investigation, Painesville, OH</div> <div>Lauren VonWiegen, Investigator, VonWiegen Investigations, Washington, DC</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Investigating Sex Assault Cases (Working Title)</div> <div>Jan Fennell, Senior Solutions Specialist, Grand River Solutions, Washington, DC</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>	

8:00 am – 9:25 am	Coffee Bar / Opening Remarks (9:25 am)	THURSDAY, April 23
9:30 am – 10:45 am	PLENARY	
<div>Social Media 101s (Title TBD)</div> <div>Seana Holland, Director of Investigations, Levy Firestone Muse LLP, Washington, DC</div> <div>Carolyn Mehrstens, Capital Defense Investigator, Military Commissions Defense Organization, Washington, DC</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		
10:45 am – 11:00 am	Networking Break, Exhibits	



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11:00 am – 12:15 pm			CONCURRENT SESSIONS		
Working with Children, Investigating, Mitigation Narratives (Working Title) Jordan Crunkleton, Assistant Public Defender, Juvenile Division, Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Upper Marlboro, MD Kelsey Robinson, Assistant Public Defender, Juvenile Division, Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Upper Marlboro, MD Room Session Description Pending	Social Media Related (In-Depth Follow-Up) Carolyn Mehrstens, Capital Defense Investigator, Military Commissions Defense Organization, Washington, DC Room Session Description Pending	Cell Phone Records (CDRs) Part 1 (Intro) (Working Title) Joseph Sierra, Director, Forensic Services, Cornerstone Discovery, Philadelphia, PA Room Session Description Pending			
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm			Lunch Break		
1:15 pm – 2:30 pm			CONCURRENT SESSIONS		
DVO-Related Session (Title TBD) Lela Hubbard, Mitigation Specialist, Federal Public Defender, District of Mississippi, Jackson, MS Room Session Description	Best Practices: Scene Investigation Session Lauren VonWiegen, Director of Investigations and Internship Supervisor, Georgetown Law Center, Washington, DC Room Session Description Pending Continued series of NDIA Best Practices Sessions, virtually and at National/Regional Conferences	Joseph Sierra Cell Phone Records (CDRs) Part 2 (Advanced) (Working Title) Joseph Sierra, Director, Forensic Services, Cornerstone Discovery, Philadelphia, PA Room Session Description Pending			
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm			Networking Break, Exhibits		
2:45 pm – 4:30 pm			KEYNOTE		
<div>Session Pending Confirmation – Stay Tuned!</div> <div>Name, Title, Agency/Office, City, State Room</div> <div>Keynote Session Description Pending</div>					
<div>President’s Reception</div> <div>Grand Ballroom Gallery & Balcony</div> <div>4:30 pm – 6:30 pm</div>					

8:30 am – 9:15 am		Coffee Bar / Opening Remarks (9:10 am)		FRIDAY, April 24	
9:15 am – 10:30 am		PLENARY			
<div>Defending Gang, Enterprise, RICO, and VICAR Prosecutions: Evidence Architecture, Expert Challenges, and Mitigation Strategy</div> <div>Victor Torres, VMT Investigations, CA Enrique Tira, Enrique Tira Investigations, CA</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>					
10:30 am – 10:45 am		Networking Break, Exhibits			
10:45 am – 12:00 pm		CONCURRENT SESSIONS			
<div>Session Description Awaiting Confirmation</div> <div>Awaiting Speaker Confirmation</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>		<div>Defending Gang, Enterprise, RICO, and VICAR Prosecutions: Evidence Architecture, Expert Challenges, and Mitigation Strategy (Continued)</div> <div>Victor Torres, VMT Investigations, CA Enrique Tira, Enrique Tira Investigations, CA</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div> <div>Plenary is an introduction, Breakout is more in-depth</div>		<div>Records Collection (Title TBD)</div> <div>Lela Hubbard, Mitigation Specialist, Federal Public Defender, District of Mississippi, Jackson, MS</div> <div>Room</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>	
12:00 pm – 12:15 pm		Networking Break, Exhibits			
12:15 pm – 1:30 pm		CONFERENCE CLOSING SESSION			
<div>Session Description Pending</div> <div>Name, Title, Agency/Office, City, State</div> <div>Grand Ballroom 4/5</div> <div>Session Description Pending</div>					