



NATIONAL DEFENDER INVESTIGATOR ASSOCIATION
2026 REGIONAL CONFERENCE
Scottsdale, AZ



“Defend with Purpose: Magnificence in Maricopa”

2026.07.23 – DRAFT AGENDA (Session Topics/Dates/Times are Subject to Change)

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm		REGISTRATION		TUESDAY, September 8	
8:00 am – 9:15 am		REGISTRATION and COFFEE BAR (Orangedale CD / Patio)		WEDNESDAY, September 9	
9:15 am – 9:30 am		WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS			
9:30 am – 10:45 am		PLENARY			
AI on Trial Brian Chase, Managing Director, Digital Forensics & eDiscovery, ArcherHall, Tucson, AZ Orangedale ABEF Official Description Pending – This session will focus on the challenges of dealing with AI generated/falsified evidence (photos, videos, audio, etc.) and also talk about the use of AI by law enforcement.					
10:45 am – 11:00 am		Networking Break, Exhibits			
11:00 am – 12:15 pm					
CONCURRENT SESSIONS					
Social Media Related –Title Pending Maria Sapene, Chief of Litigation Support, Federal Public Defender Central District of California, Los Angeles, CA Orangedale BE Session Description Pending 2 Sessions		Interviewing with Emotional Intelligence Lubna Debbini, Investigator, Orange County Associate Defender, Santa Ana, CA Citrus Room Investigations often succeed or fail based on the quality of human interaction. This course equips defense investigators and paralegals with the tools and communication techniques required to navigate high-stakes interviews. Participants will learn to leverage emotional intelligence (EI) to read subtle cues, manage intense interpersonal dynamics, and defuse volatile situations. Through practical frameworks and tactical communication strategies, you will master the art of uncovering pertinent details for the case. Recognize non-verbal behavior, and manage your own emotional triggers during encounters. Craft sophisticated, open-ended lines of questioning that minimize defensiveness. Master the skill of validation without confirmation, and pivot strategies when facing deflective, aggressive, or evasive responses. Build rapid, authentic trust with diverse subjects without compromising investigative boundaries or legal integrity.		Video Evidence and Scene Reconstruction Josh Cohen, Principal, Fat Pencil Studio, Portland, OR Orangedale AF Session Description Pending Repeat Session	
New Session Format: Paralegal Focused Breakout Room – but all are welcome to attend! Trial Notebooks That Make a Difference Elizabeth Coss, Paralegal, Maricopa County Office of the Public Defender, Phoenix, AZ Brittany Martin, Paralegal, Capital Unit, Maricopa County Office of the Public Defender, Phoenix, AZ Sunset Room This session is designed for legal professionals who want to streamline their trial preparation using organized and efficient trial binders. The essential components of a trial binder, including document organization, effective indexing methods, and the inclusion of key exhibits and evidence will be discussed, as well as helpful tools and software for assembling digital trial notebooks.					
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm		LUNCH BREAK			
1:15 pm – 2:30 pm					
CONCURRENT SESSIONS					
Social Media Related –Title Pending Maria Sapene, Chief of Litigation Support, Federal Public Defender Central District of California, Los Angeles, CA Orangedale BE Session Description Pending 2 Sessions		Difficult Situations / De-Escalation – Session Title Pending Jules Gagnepain, Investigator, Federal Public Defender, District of Arizona, Phoenix, AZ Citrus Room Official Description Pending – Having spent years as a Sheriff's Deputy / Hostage Negotiator, this session will cover the behavioral change stairway and how to effectively build rapport, with everyone from a client, to a witness or probation officer, or even someone in an active crisis. In our jobs, we often have to communicate difficult information, which is not always well received. This session will highlight the power of empathy and rapport building, as well as the do's and don'ts of successful de-escalation.		Awaiting Speaker Confirmation Name, Title, Agency/Office, City, State Orangedale AF Session Description Pending	
New Session Format: Paralegal Focused Breakout Room – but all are welcome to attend! Acrobat Pro 101: The Essential PDF Toolkit Elizabeth Coss, Paralegal, Maricopa County Office of the Public Defender, Phoenix, AZ Sunset Room This session covers Adobe Acrobat Pro's tools with a live demonstration. The presentation includes how to create PDF portfolios, redact, bate stamp, edit, secure files, make images readable, as well as covering other tools. This session is beginner friendly, so all skill levels are welcomed.					
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm		Networking Break, Exhibits			
2:45 pm – 4:00 pm					
CONCURRENT SESSIONS					
Mitigation Related Session Matt Silverman, Mitigation Specialist/Investigator, Silverman Mitigation, Phoenix, AZ Orangedale BE Session Description Pending		Investigating Police Witnesses and Tracking Official Misconduct Summer Farrar, M.S., Director of Partnerships & Outreach, Techtivist, Inc., Kansas City, MO Citrus Room If you're not investigating the police witnesses in your cases, then you could be missing out on critical evidence that changes the story of your case. We'll teach you how to investigate police officers' history and start tracking police misconduct using tools you already have. Attendees will learn how to collect information for pre-trial through post-conviction investigation and impact litigation. After this session, you'll feel equipped to investigate the police witnesses in your cases and contribute to holding powerful officials accountable. This training will also share practical examples of how these tools		Best Practices: Topic TBD Seana Holland, Director of Investigations, Levy Firestone Muse LLP, Washington, DC Orangedale AF Session Description Pending	



Session Description Pending.		
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm Networking Break, Exhibits		
2:45 pm – 4:00 pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS		
Mitigation Related Session Matt Silverman, Mitigation Specialist/Investigator, Silverman Mitigation, Phoenix, AZ Orangedale BE Session Description Pending	Best Practices: Video Surveillance Acquisition Matt Hanna, Training Director, NDIA, Washington, DC Citrus Room This session will cover the 101s of acquiring video surveillance footage in the community for your cases, from business entities to private homes. The discussion will include preparation, what to look for on-site, navigating proprietary players and how to work with your office's IT Department to get what is needed downloaded, converted, etc. to use for any presentation in Court.	Awaiting Speaker Confirmation Name, Title, Agency/Office, City, State Orangedale AF Session Description Pending
<u>New Session Format:</u> Mitigation/Visual Advocacy Focused Breakout Room – but all are welcome to attend! Editing (Post-Production) Doug Passon, President & Creative Director, Doug Passon Law, Scottsdale, AZ Sunset Room Session Description Pending.		