

Legal Aid of Arkansas

Statewide Legal Aid Conference Agenda

Dates: February 4-6, 2026

Location: Hotel Hot Springs

Theme: *Where Justice Springs Forward: One State. One Mission. Equal Justice*

Day 1 – February 4th

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM | Registration

Check-in and materials pickup

Settle in and networking

1:00 PM – 1:15 PM | Welcome & Opening Remarks

Speaker: Lee Richardson, Executive Director/Caleb Conrad, Chief of Staff

Overview of conference goals, schedule, and housekeeping notes

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM | Keynote Address (1.5 Hours CLE, Ethics)

Topic: Core Principals of Client Centered Representation

Speaker: Rachel Goldsmith, Director of Social Work for Civil Practice, The Legal Aid Society

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM | Break (Coffee, Water, Soda Available All Breaks)

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM | Workshop (1.5 Hours CLE)

Topic: Basics of AI, how can I use it and Cautionary Tales

Speaker: Marla Johnson, Tech Entrepreneur-in-Residence, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

4:30 PM – 5:00 PM | Vendor Presentation

Topic: Mutual of America Retirement Accounts

Speaker: Nick Petruzzelli, Retirement Consultant, Mutual of America

Banquet, Awards, Entertainment, and Casino Night

Time: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Food, drink, fun, and prizes (Karaoke, Casino Games).

Day 2 – February 5th

7:00 AM – 8:30 AM | Breakfast Buffett & Networking

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM | Workshop (1.0 Hours CLE)

Topic: Staff Wellness

Speaker: Rachel Goldsmith

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM | Break

9:45 AM – 11:15 AM | Workshop (1.5 Hours CLE)

Topic: Social Security Nuts and Bolts for Jane Q. Public

Speaker: Tonya Cater, Social Security Administration

11:15 AM – 11:30 AM | Break

11:30 AM- 1:00 PM | Lunch & Networking & Pictures

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM | Workshop (1.0 Hours CLE)

Topic: De-escalation = more than words

Speaker: Chris McFarlin, Staff Attorney

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM | Break

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Workshop (1.0 Hours CLE)

Topic: Wages and the Right to be Paid

Speaker: Annie Smith, Director, Civil Litigation & Advocacy, Human Trafficking Clinics, University of Arkansas School of Law

3:15 PM – 3:30 PM | Break

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM | Workshop (1.0 Hours CLE)

Topic: Environmental Law (More Engaging and Exciting Title to Come)

Speakers: Larken Yackulic & Heather Kryczka, Associates, Sher Edling LLP

Alternative for Non-Case Handlers

Topic: We Defy Orthodoxy – We may do it a certain way for a reason, but we want to hear your thoughts and suggestions. Moderators: Caleb Conrad and Andrea Walker.

Released for the Day! Enjoy Hot Springs!

Day 3 – February 6th

7:00 AM – 8:30 AM | Breakfast Buffett & Networking

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Workshop (1.5 Hours CLE)

Topic: Nuts and Bolts of Appeals (Part 1)

Speakers: Chuck Munson & Joanie Harp, Appellate Review Attorneys, Arkansas Supreme Court

Alternative for Non-Case Handlers

Topic: Technology Training and Tips

Speaker: Nick Jaeger, Arkansas Access to Justice Commission, Ginger Risner, Legal Aid of Arkansas, with Special Guest

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Break

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Workshop (1.5 Hours CLE)

Topic: Appellate Advocacy Tips & Unwritten Rules

Speakers: Bill Waddell, Martin Kasten, Kathy McCarroll of Friday, Eldredge & Clark; Joshua Ashley, Senior Counsel, Entergy Services, LLC

Alternative for Non-Case Handlers

Topic: A Fascinating Sojourn through the Geography and History of Arkansas, Speakers: Lee Richardson with very Special Guest

11:45 AM- 1:00 PM | Box Lunch & Workgroup Meetings (Consumer, Housing, Domestic Justice, Economic Justice, Intake, and Administration)

Released for the Weekend! Thank you for participating!