

2026 Appellate Defender Training (Jackson, MS)

Mississippi College School of Law
151 James St
Jackson, MS

January 13-16, 2026

Tuesday, January 13

Time	Topic
8:45 – 9:15 a.m.	Registration/Check-In
9:15 – 9:45 a.m.	Welcome <i>Justin Heim, NLADA</i> <i>Erin Briggs, MS Office of State Public Defender</i>
9:45 – 10:45 a.m.	Why This Matters: Centering Clients in Appellate Advocacy <i>Panelists: TBD</i> <i>Moderator: TBD</i> Impacted people share their experiences, highlighting trust, communication, and client-centered advocacy principles.
10:45 – 11:00a.m.	Break
11:00a.m.– 12:00 p.m.	Brainstorming your Case: Developing a Theory and Theme <i>Travis Stearns, Washington Office of State Public Defender</i> Practical strategies for developing a persuasive theory of your case and theme, with brainstorming techniques for individuals and teams.
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)
1:30 – 3:15 p.m.	Small-Group Work: Theory, Theme and Brainstorming <i>All Faculty</i>

	Participants apply theory and theme concepts to their own cases in collaborative small-group work.
3:15 – 3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 – 4:30 p.m.	Storytelling: Bringing your Case to Life <i>David Singleton, UDC, David A Clark School of Law</i> Explores elements of effective storytelling and how to craft a narrative for briefs and oral argument.

Wednesday, January 14

Time	Topic
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Persuasive Brief Writing <i>Mikel Steinfeld, Maricopa Office of Public Defense</i> Focus on crafting appellate briefs that integrate theory, theme, and storytelling for maximum persuasiveness.
10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Small-Group Work: Storytelling and Brief Writing <i>All Faculty</i> Participants refine narratives and translate storytelling into written and oral advocacy in small groups.
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.	Creating an Editing and Review Process <i>Emily Cardy, Committee for Public Counsel Services (MA)</i> Techniques for self-editing, peer review, and systematic processes to polish appellate briefs.
2:30 – 2:45 p.m.	Break
2:45 – 4:30 p.m.	Small-Group Work: Brief Writing, Editing and Reviewing

	<i>All Faculty</i> Drafting and revising brief sections with feedback to improve clarity, organization, and persuasiveness.
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Thursday, January 15

Time	Topic
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Small-Group Work: Brief Writing, Editing and Reviewing <i>All Faculty</i> Drafting and revising brief sections with feedback to improve clarity, organization, and persuasiveness.
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.	Oral Advocacy <i>Jennifer Bourn, Connecticut Public Defender Services</i> Strategies for preparing and delivering oral arguments, with public speaking techniques for clarity and confidence.
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch (provided)
1:30 – 3:15 p.m.	Small Group Work: Oral Advocacy <i>All Faculty</i> Hands-on practice presenting arguments, responding to questions, and refining public speaking skills
3:15 – 3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 – 4:30 p.m.	Judges Panel <i>Justice Leslie D. King, Mississippi Supreme Court</i> <i>Justice Josiah Dennis Coleman, Mississippi Supreme Court</i> <i>Chief Judge Donna M. Barnes, Mississippi Court of Appeals</i>

	<i>Judge David Neil McCarty, Mississippi Court of Appeals</i> Appellate judges share insights on what makes briefs and oral arguments effective and persuasive.
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Friday, January 16

Time	Topic
9:00 – 12:30 p.m.	Unequal Justice: Strategies to Address Racial Bias in Your Briefs <i>Travis Stearns, Washington Office of State Public Defender</i> <i>Lei Young, Washington Office of State Public Defender</i> Participants apply program principles to identify and address racial bias in case analysis, briefs, and arguments.
12:30 -12:45 p.m.	Wrap Up
2:00 p.m.	<u>Optional: Friday afternoon Museum Tours</u> For those with late Friday/early Saturday morning travel plans, join us on a Guided Tour of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and the Museum of Mississippi History!