



2026 Defender Conference Agenda

June 11-12, 2026

Jack's Urban Meeting Place, Downtown Boise

Wednesday, June 10th

5:00 – 6:00 PM Welcome Reception & Networking
Hilton Garden Inn, Downtown Boise – Lobby

6:15 PM Managing/Lead Attorney Dinner*
Location Sent Separately

**By invitation only, for SPD Managing & Lead Attorneys*

Thursday, June 11th

7:00 AM Optional Walking Groups / Coffee Meet-Ups

8:30 – 9:30 AM Check-In & Breakfast

9:30 – 10:00 AM Welcome & Opening Remarks

10:00 – 11:00 AM **Opening Keynote: Leadership Kickoff**
Team Building Isn't an Event: It's an Everyday Practice
Abbey Louie, Leadership Development Coach

1.0 CLE Credit

Team building isn't an event—it's shaped in the everyday moments of how we work together. In this session, we will explore what drives strong, connected teams and how simple, practical actions shape team culture and performance. Participants will reflect on the current state of their team, learn practical ways to build trust and connection, and then work together during the following workshop time to create a clear plan to strengthen their team culture. All with an emphasis on how your team's culture—either good or bad—impacts your ability to represent your clients well.

11:00 – 11:15 AM Break



11:15 – 12:00 PM

Interactive Teambuilding Workshop
Abbey Louie, Leadership Development Coach

12:00 – 1:15 PM

Lunch & Agency Presentation
Eric Fredericksen, Idaho State Public Defender and Doug Nelson, Litigation Director

0.5 CLE Credits

As you enjoy your lunch, Eric Fredericksen and Doug Nelson will discuss agency-wide expectations for timekeeping, client communications, the importance of accurate reporting, and your responsibilities in your representation of clients.

1:15 – 1:30 PM

Break / Move to Breakout Rooms

1:30 – 2:30 PM

Breakout Sessions #1 – 1.0 CLE Credit

- **The Challenges and Pitfalls of Hybrid Representation (Ethics)**
Joe Pirtle, Idaho State Bar Counsel and Erik Lehtinen, Idaho State Appellate Public Defender

This presentation will address the potential roles of hybrid/standby counsel, the risks of conflicting ethical duties, Idaho and U.S. Supreme Court case law addressing the roles, and practice guidance for lawyers.

- **Social Media Evidence as an Investigative Tool**
Wayne S. Josleyn, G2 Research

Social media evidence can make or break a case, but only if you know how to use it strategically. This session teaches you to understand its strategic value, recognize its limitations, and know when and how to use it effectively in your defense. You will learn to detect chain of custody failures, challenge account attribution, and spot cognitive bias in expert testimony. You will also learn how to determine what evidence to request in discovery, how to preserve social media effectively, and how to identify exculpatory opportunities. The overall goal is to help you master the practical skills to navigate social media evidence strategically and protect your clients.



- **Navigating Conflict & Difficult Conversations with Confidence***
Abbey Louie, Leadership Development Coach

Handling conflict and difficult conversations is one of the most challenging and most important parts of a supervisor’s role. In this session, we will explore a practical framework for delivering feedback and navigating conflict in a way that creates clarity, builds ownership, and strengthens relationships. Supervisors will leave with language and strategies they can immediately apply in real-world situations, with special attention to the impact of conflict-avoidance on your ability to oversee client representation and the client-facing work of your team.

**We highly encourage all SPD supervisors to attend this session.*

2:30 – 2:45 PM

Break / Move to Breakout Rooms

2:45 – 3:45 PM

Breakout Sessions #2 – 1.0 CLE Credit

- **Making Sense of Cell Phone Data in Litigation: Technology, Law, and Strategy Part 1**
Lance Kepple, Retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent

By the end of this program, participants will be able to: (1) Identify the major categories of mobile and digital evidence used in litigation, including carrier records, handset extractions, app/cloud data, and vehicle data; (2) Evaluate the reliability of cellular evidence under evidentiary standards such as Daubert, including understanding methodological limitations and industry standards; (3) Apply the three foundational requirements for admissibility—authentication, foundation, and relevance—to digital evidence in courtroom settings; and (4) Develop practical litigation strategies for challenging or presenting cell phone evidence through discovery, expert testimony, and cross-examination. This program is broken up into two parts, one on each day.

- **Immigration Basics for Criminal Defense Practitioners**
Luis R. Campos, Legal Director of the Alliance of Idaho



This session will cover basic immigration law topics and concepts that are necessary for representing non-citizens in criminal proceedings. This primer will also address potential immigration consequences (such as detention and removal) of criminal arrests and adjudications. Moreover, attention will be given to the expanding criminalization of non-citizens and immigration law. Attendees will leave more familiar with basic immigration principles, concepts, as well as fundamental law and policy affecting non-citizens, particularly those who have been made subject to the criminal justice system. Please note, this course is an introduction to the topic, not an advanced course.

– **Motion Practice Focusing on Fourth Amendment Issues**
Dave Smethers, Trial Attorney Ada County Office

This session will cover all facets dealing with Idaho Criminal Rule 12(b). Attendees will walk away with the ability to review and identify Fourth Amendment issues and procedural matters. There will be discussion and instruction on some of the more practical elements like shifting the burden, writing the brief, preparing witnesses, and practice tips on conducting a hearing.

3:45 – 4:00 PM Afternoon Snack Break / Move to Breakout Rooms

4:00 – 5:00 PM **Breakout Sessions #3 – 1.0 CLE Credit**

– **Updates to Child Protection Law**
Judge Andrew Ellis, Ada County Magistrate Court

The Idaho Legislature passed a number of laws during the 2025 and 2026 sessions that modified the Idaho Child Protective Act. This session will provide an overview of those changes, highlighting the areas that most impact Child Protection cases. Attendees will leave with a greater understanding of the recent changes and will be able to counsel their clients about the impacts of the statutory changes on parents/legal guardians.

– **AI in Criminal Defense Practice: Risk-Aware Use, Smart Prompting, and Practical Verification**
Robert Thies, Senior Investigator, Federal Public Defender's Office



for Eastern District of Missouri and Co-Lead on GIDEON AI

This session focuses on risk-aware AI use in criminal defense—where accuracy, confidentiality, and accountability matter more than speed or novelty. It is built for public defenders and investigators working under real caseloads, real privilege obligations, and real consequences when a tool gets something wrong.

Drawing from defense-side AI work and current ethics authority, participants will learn how to structure prompts that reduce ambiguity, prevent fabrication, and preserve human judgment. The session covers the current AI tool landscape, confidentiality tiers and what they actually protect, hallucination and fabrication risks in legal work, and the ethical obligations triggered by AI use under the Idaho Rules of Professional Conduct and ABA Formal Opinion 512.

Attendees will be introduced to the TRACE Method—a decision-gated prompting framework built for criminal defense and other risk-sensitive settings—along with reusable prompt patterns, a verification workflow for AI-assisted research, and live demonstrations using a fictional case file. Participants will leave with concrete tools they can apply immediately in their own practice without compromising ethics, privilege, or reliability.

– **Navigating Difficult Client Conversations**

John Greene, LCSW, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

This training is designed to support attorneys—particularly public defenders—in effectively working with clients who may be experiencing mental health challenges, substance use issues, or personality-related difficulties that impact communication. The session will enhance participants' understanding of common behavioral health conditions and how these may present in legal settings, with an emphasis on recognizing barriers to effective client engagement.

Participants will develop practical, client-centered communication skills aimed at improving rapport, reducing conflict, and promoting



productive dialogue. The training will introduce evidence-informed de-escalation strategies and provide concrete tools for managing challenging interactions while maintaining professionalism and empathy. The session will conclude with guidance on safety planning and an overview of relevant local resources available to support clients in crisis. Overall, this training equips attorneys with the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate more effectively and advocate more successfully for clients experiencing complex behavioral health needs.

6:00 PM Optional Dine Arounds
Sign-up required

Friday, June 12th

7:00 AM Optional Walking Groups / Coffee Meet-Ups

8:15 – 8:30 AM Check-In & Breakfast

8:30 – 10:30 AM **Trial Skills Masterclass Panel**
David Nevin, Scott McKay, Doug Nelson, Amy Smith, and Mistie Bauscher

2.0 CLE Credits

Idaho's best are joining us for this two-hour masterclass on all things trial skills. These panelists will cover everything from trial prep to voir dire, strategies for direct and cross examinations, preservation of the record for appeal, and all the good stuff in between. This is your chance to learn from these stellar trial attorneys and take back the skills to implement in your next jury trial.

10:30 – 10:45 AM Break / Move to Breakout Rooms

10:45 – 11:45 AM **Breakout Session #4 – 1.0 CLE Credit**

- **Moving Beyond the Score: Advanced Interpretation of Psychosexual Risk**
Shelly M. Osborne, M. Coun, LCPC, Altis Counseling Associates, LLC

This session provides an exploration of psychosexual risk assessment, offering valuable insights for attorneys with varying levels of experience. Moving beyond basic evaluation components, the presentation delivers



a deep dive into the mechanics of risk formulation, specifically examining the interplay between static and dynamic factors that drive recidivism. Participants will learn to critically interpret evaluation data and translate complex findings into targeted mitigation strategies. By bridging the gap between foundational knowledge and advanced analysis, this training equips attorneys to advocate for evidence-based rehabilitation and successful client reentry.

– **Idaho State Police Forensic Services Offerings for Public Defenders**
Matthew Gamette, Idaho State Police Forensic Laboratory System Director

In this session, public defenders and other officers of the court will learn about offerings at the Idaho State Police Forensic Services (“ISPFS”; the State crime lab). ISPFS provides no-cost services such as forensic analysis, expert consultation, and expert witness testimony for public defenders in Idaho as part of the state-wide mandate outlined in Idaho Statute. ISPFS is a world-class, ISO 17025:2017 accredited laboratory system offering almost every forensic expertise and discipline. The available forensic services will be outlined and discussed. The presentation will also discuss resources available on the website, forensic science training and educational opportunities, communication with the laboratory and laboratory analysts, evidence submission and request for forensic analysis, validation and performance verification records, court discovery, subpoenas, and many other relevant topics for public defenders. Idaho is a global leader in forensic science analysis, and those resources are available to public defenders in Idaho. The goal of this session is to connect public defenders to these resources to ensure that officers of the court in Idaho have access to and knowledge of the most robust, accurate, reliable, and unbiased forensic science to present to Idaho judges and juries.

– **Making Sense of Cell Phone Data in Litigation: Technology, Law, and Strategy Part 2**
Lance Kepple, Retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent

This is part two of this program; part one was on the first day of the



conference. By the end of this program, participants will be able to: (1) Identify the major categories of mobile and digital evidence used in litigation, including carrier records, handset extractions, app/cloud data, and vehicle data; (2) Evaluate the reliability of cellular evidence under evidentiary standards such as Daubert, including understanding methodological limitations and industry standards; (3) Apply the three foundational requirements for admissibility—authentication, foundation, and relevance—to digital evidence in courtroom settings; and (4) Develop practical litigation strategies for challenging or presenting cell phone evidence through discovery, expert testimony, and cross-examination.

11:45 – 12:00 PM

Break / Move to Rooftop Deck for Lunch

12:00 – 1:30 PM

BBQ Lunch & District Public Defender Updates

1.0 CLE Credit

Find the table designated for your judicial district, or join a table you'd like to learn more about. As you enjoy your BBQ lunch on the rooftop patio deck, each District's Public Defender will provide updates on the status of public defense in their specific district, including important case updates you should know about, projects on the horizon, and the unique needs of clients in each area.

1:30 – 1:45 PM

Break / Move to Breakout Rooms

1:45 – 2:45 PM

Breakout Session #5 – 1.0 CLE Credit

- **Child Forensic Interviews: A Closer Look**
Greg Wilson, PhD, Clinical and Forensic Psychologist

This session will begin by summarizing the step-by-step methodology used to forensically interview children and adolescents. You will begin to understand some of the strengths and weaknesses in current practice, and will take a look at the key differences between interviewing children and adolescents. This presentation will identify common yet significant mistakes, omissions, and errors made by interviews and law enforcement, and will shed light on understanding and utilizing “confirmable vs. unconfirmable” utterances by children. Finally, there will be brief introduction to Scoring and Analyzing Verbal Utterances



during a forensic interview with a description of some of the key considerations in scoring/analyzing, the misuse of leading or targeted questions, “reminder prompts” by interviews at follow-up interviews, and the importance of open-ended questions.

– **Proof or Presumption? Interpreting Alcohol and Cannabis Evidence in DUI Cases**

G. Lucy Wilkening, PharmD, Idaho State University and David Delyea, Trial Attorney Canyon County Office

This presentation provides attendees with a structured framework for evaluating toxicology evidence through the application of established scientific principles, particularly for alcohol and cannabis. Participants will learn how to interpret common DUI testing methodologies—including breath, blood, and other toxicological analyses—and the roles of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics in understanding the relationship between substance concentrations and impairment. The session will also address the influence of substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders on observed behavior and their implications for the legal interpretation of impairment in DUI cases.

– **Facing the Algorithm: AI Police Reports and Machine-Generated Evidence (Updated for 2026)**

Robert Thies, Senior Investigator, Federal Public Defender’s Office for Eastern District of Missouri and Co-Lead on GIDEON AI

Machines are now helping write the evidentiary record. This session begins with AI-generated police reports: how they are produced, how to recognize them when they appear in a case file, and why they raise new reliability, authorship, and discovery concerns. Participants will learn concrete defense strategies, including what to demand in discovery, how to compare raw audio or video to the submitted report, and how to test authorship and accuracy when the original AI draft has not been retained.

The session then broadens to other forms of machine-generated evidence and concludes with a unified, court-facing approach: using a



single Rule 104(a) reliability hearing grounded in the principles reflected in Rule 707. The goal is practical—equip defense teams to litigate AI-generated evidence today while preparing courts for the evidentiary standards that are coming next. This program has been updated from a previous version to include new information for 2026.

2:45 – 3:00 PM

Afternoon Snack Break / Move to Breakout Rooms

3:00 – 4:00 PM

Breakout Session #6 – 1.0 CLE Credit

- **Sexual Offenders, Recidivism, and Surprising New Research**
Greg Wilson, PhD, Clinical and Forensic Psychologist

Recent research on sexual offenders (*e.g.*, 2023, 2024) reveals surprisingly low rates of recidivism (based on nearly 400,000 offenders) and dramatic decreases in rates of recidivism over time (ranging from 60% to 73% in samples across Canada and the United States). This session will describe the empirical results of these large scale studies and take a closer look at the differences across sexual offender typologies in terms of recidivism and treatment effectiveness. Misconceptions regarding sex offenders will be discussed, as will the power of “grooming behaviors” and the impact on children.

- **Ethics in Representing Children (Ethics)**
Jessalyn R. Hopkin, Trial Attorney Bannock County Office

This session will cover the ethics of representing kids in both juvenile and child protection cases, including sibling groups. Specifically, it will cover how different Idaho Rules of Professional Conduct apply to working with kids. You will walk away with a better understanding of confidentiality, conflicts between clients, and communication. Idaho Rule of Professional Conduct (“IRPC”) 1.14 talks about clients with diminished capacity. You will learn how to and when to apply IRPC 1.4. You will also be provided with specific examples for group work and open discussion.

- **Probationer Status: Violated... Now What?**
Abby Broyles, Trial Attorney Ada County Office, and Scott Rowley,



Trial Attorney Ada County Office

Join Abby and Scott as they go through a probation violation case. Topics for this session will include how to realistically tell your client that they messed up, how to use caselaw to your advantage, how to handle a probation violation hearing, and how to get your client that second (or third) chance on probation!

4:00 PM

Conference Concludes