

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PRESIDING JUDGES AND COURT EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Ninth Annual Trial Court Leadership Academy and Conference *“Public Trust and Confidence”*

August 17–20, 2025

Hyatt Regency Bellevue
900 Bellevue Way Northeast
Bellevue, Washington, 98004

AGENDA

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17th

12:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Registration and Conference Information

2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

NAPCO Board Meeting

NAPCO’s Board of Directors meets twice during the Annual Meeting. In Washington, the initial Directors’ Meeting will be held on Sunday, August 17th from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM and the second Directors’ Meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 20th from 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM.

5:30 to 7:30 PM

Welcome Reception

Attire is business casual. Bellevue, WA weather in late August average is 77° F during the day, and 58° F in the evening.

6:00 to 6:30 PM

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Hon. John J. Russo, NAPCO Board of Directors, Chair
John Bello, NAPCO Executive Director

7:30 PM

Dinner on Your Own

Suggestions and directions to numerous restaurants, cafes and bistros near the hotel will be provided on the conference app.

By Appointment

“The Doctor Is In” Program

The National Center for State Courts provides a special on-site service at various national, regional, and state judicial/court management conferences to speak with one or more of NCSC's court service professionals on any desired court topic regarding advice, problems, or assistance from the Center. There is no charge or further obligation. Center consultants will be available throughout the Conference on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Prior to the Conference, send an email to Nikiesha Cosby at ncosby@ncsc.org to arrange an appointment.

MONDAY, AUGUST 18th LEADERSHIP ACADEMY DAY

7:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Registration and Conference Information

7:30 to 8:30 AM

Breakfast

8:30 to 9:00 AM

OPENING CEREMONIES

Introductory Remarks

Hon. John J. Russo, NAPCO Board of Directors, Chair
Presentation of the Gordon "Gordy" Griller Award

Conference Agenda and Announcements

John Bello, NAPCO Executive Director

Overview of the Interactive Leadership Academy Day Program, Learning Objectives, and Introduction of the Faculty

Hon. John J. Russo, NAPCO Board of Directors, Chair
John Bello, NAPCO Executive Director

9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY DAY

Suzanne Peterson, Ph.D.

PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

Suzanne Peterson, Ph.D., Partner of CRA | Admired Leadership will lead this year's Academy Day program through interactive presentations. The foundation of a robust justice system lies in the public's trust and confidence, which are essential for its effective functioning. When citizens believe in the integrity and fairness of institutions, they are more likely to engage with and support these systems. This trust actively encourages community participation and

cooperation with the judicial process and effective leadership plays a pivotal role in cultivating this trust and confidence.

During this engaging Academy Day, CRA | Admired Leadership workshop will focus on propelling change and the secret to inspiring others. The curriculum will touch on behaviors that help overcome inertia, manage any transition, and know how much change is too much. The second part of Academy Day will focus on how admired leaders motivate and inspire by leading honorably and respectfully. Inspiration can be crystallized into one simple idea: honor others or they fail to honor you. Traditional motivation and inspiration literature focuses on how leaders talk, encourage, and challenge others; whereas admired leadership focuses upon how leaders recognize others for their contributions, translating that recognition into everyday behaviors. This approach offers behavioral routines for offering rewards, encouragement, and praise to your employees, and inspiring them to a greater level of performance.

9:00 AM to 10:30 AM	Leadership Academy: Session One
10:30 to 10:45 AM	<i>Break</i>
10:45 AM to 12:00 PM	Leadership Academy: Session Two
12:00 PM to 1:30 PM	Lunch on Your Own
1:30 PM to 1:50 PM	Sponsor Plenary Session #1
2:00 PM to 3:00 PM	Leadership Academy: Session Three
3:00 PM to 3:15 PM	<i>Break</i>
3:15 PM to 3:35 PM	Sponsor Plenary Session #2
3:40 PM to 4:30 PM	Leadership Academy: Closing
4:30 PM to 6:30 PM	Exhibits Open <i>A special wine and cheese reception for conferees and their guests.</i>

TUESDAY, AUGUST 19th

COURT LEADERSHIP PLENARY & WORKSHOP SESSIONS

7:00 AM to 4:00 PM	Registration and Conference Information
7:00 AM to 8:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM to 2:00 PM	Exhibit Hours
8:00 AM to 8:15 AM	Quick Review of the Day's Events and Conference Announcements Hon. John J. Russo, NAPCO Board of Directors, Chair John Bello, NAPCO Executive Director
8:15 AM to 8:30 AM	2025 JUSTICE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE'S ERNEST C. FRIESEN AWARD Award Presenter: TBD Recipient: To be Announced at the Conference

PLENARY PRESENTATION

8:30 AM to 10:00 AM	PLENARY 1: Trust and Confidence in the Jury System Moderator: Hon. John J. Russo, NAPCO Board of Directors, Chair Panel: Hon. Steven Gonzalez, Justice, Washington Supreme Court, WA (Tentative) Chris Gaddis, Court Administrator, Pierce County Superior Court, WA Jawwaad Johnson, Principal Court Management Consultant, National Center for State Courts
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This session will focus on the importance of jury service in enhancing public trust and confidence in the court process, noting that diversity within jury panels is key to ensuring fair decisions. The speakers will address recent efforts aimed at increasing jury participation and diversity among jury pools and panels. Diverse jurors give better decisions, and PJ/CEO productive pairs have a responsibility to find ways to ensure that the jurors summonsed and selected are representative of the community served. Methods designed to increase juror participation and diversity will be presented along with efficacy measures.

10:00 AM to 10:45 AM	EXTENDED BREAK IN EXHIBIT AREA
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CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS: 10:45 AM to 11:45 AM

Workshop 1: Procedural Fairness

Hon. Kevin Burke, Retired Judge, Hennepin County, MN

Emily LaGratta, Principal, LaGratta Consulting, LLC

As research has shown, fairness goes beyond outcomes – it is also defined to include fair treatment and processes as experienced by the litigants going through the court system.

Led by Emily LaGratta, this session will equip participants with the essentials of Procedural Fairness, and how these practices are crucial to public trust and confidence in the courts. The session will also provide an overview of a 2024-25 SJI-funded project that provides technical assistance, education/training, and results measurement on key procedural fairness actions to 25 judicial officers in four courts: King County Superior Court (WA), LaCrosse County and Monroe County Circuit Courts (WI), Westminster Municipal Court (CO), and Boone County and Winnebago County Circuit Courts (IL). The goal of the project is to make courts fairer and measure the impact. The ways Court Executive Officers can support these efforts will also be part of the presentation.

Workshop 2: Building Public Trust and Confidence in the Courts: Conference of Court Public Information Officers (CCPIO)

Sean O’Sullivan, President, Conference of Court Public Information Officers (CCPIO)

Darren Toms, Immediate Past President, Conference of Court Public Information Officers (CCPIO)

The Conference of Court Public Information Officers (CCPIO) is an organization dedicated to assisting members in performing the duties of a court public information specialist. But did you know that your court doesn’t need to have a dedicated PIO to be part of CCPIO? It can be any court administrator or staff person assigned to deal with the media and /or the public in any capacity. CCPIO President Sean O’Sullivan and Immediate Past-President Darren Toms will discuss why having a designated person to deal with communication with the public and media is critical, and why someone on your staff should act as a public information officer.

Public confidence in the government is down, and the courts are no exception. Sean and Darren will discuss ways to build confidence in your jurisdiction, focus on message discipline, respond to a crisis situation, and prepare for a high-profile case or trial. As PIO for the Delaware State Courts, Sean has been responsible for numerous high-profile business cases, including 2023’s near-trial for Dominion voting v FOX News and several cases involving Elon Musk. Darren is the PIO for the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court in Cleveland, Ohio, and has worked on multiple felony cases of national interest. Each has negotiated media crises, allegations of judicial misconduct, and worked on outreach projects that better explain the courts to their constituents.

Workshop 3: Inspiring Public Trust in the Judiciary: A Toolkit

Hon. Lawrence King, Judge, Paradise Valley Municipal Court, AZ

Public trust in the judicial system is an important foundation for social order. Courts are there to uphold laws, settle disagreements, and make sure justice is served. The judiciary stands out for losing more U.S. public confidence than many other U.S. institutions experienced between 2020 and 2024. Even though confidence in the national government also declined, by 20 points to 26% in 2024, the decline of 24 points in judicial confidence is somewhat outsized, which is atypical.

For courts to work well, they need the public to trust them. When people trust the system, they are more likely to accept court authority, cooperate with legal processes, and respect court decisions. They are also more likely to take part in civic duties like voting and serving on a jury.

11:45 AM to 1:15 PM

Lunch in Exhibit Area

PLENARY PRESENTATION

1:15 PM to 2:45 PM

PLENARY 2: Leadership Transition

Moderator: Marcus W. Reinkensmeyer, Retired Deputy Director, Administrative Office of the Courts, AZ

Panel: Hon. Pamela Gates, Presiding Judge, Maricopa County, AZ

Raymond Billotte, Judicial Branch Administrator, Maricopa County, AZ

Hon. Sergio C. Tapia II, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, CA

David W. Slayton, Court Executive Officer/Clerk of Court, Los Angeles Superior Court, CA

Court leadership transitions can be disruptive and stressful, both for court personnel and partner justice entities. Given the many challenges facing our nation's courts, it is incumbent upon court executives to "step up" and "lead the way" amidst constant changes in presiding judges, court managers and senior staff. This interactive session will explore the organizational change dynamics unique to our judicial branch, points of vulnerability and proven strategies to bring about successful transitions in court leadership. Courts with leadership transition plans are well-positioned to address the increasingly rapid pace of change and growing customer service demands in our new post-pandemic era.

2:45 PM to 3:05 PM

Sponsor Plenary Session #4

3:05 PM to 3:30 PM

BREAK

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS: 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM

Workshop 4: How to Become Anti-Fragile – Habits for Judges

Hon. Lawrence King, Judge, Paradise Valley Municipal Court, AZ

If being fragile is to be damaged by disorder and stress, and resilience is being unaffected by disorder and stress, then anti-fragile is the ability to benefit from disorder and stress.

Judicial Officers and Court Executive can build resilience by practicing self-care through regular physical activity, mindfulness techniques, healthy eating habits, sufficient sleep, setting boundaries, seeking support from colleagues or a therapist, actively managing stress, engaging in hobbies outside of work, and participating in judicial and court wellness programs that address the unique challenges of the profession, including vicarious trauma.

Key Takeaways:

Five tips of proven ways to increase resilience and healthfully cope with the daily stressors of life on the bench and running a court system.

Workshop 5: Case Studies on Increasing Public Trust and Confidence: Court Feedback Through Surveys and Observations

Hon. Sergio C. Tapia II, Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court, CA

David W. Slayton, Court Executive Officer/Clerk of Court, Los Angeles Superior Court, CA

Thurston County Presiding Judge (Tentative), WA

Courts across the country depend on the public's trust and confidence to maintain the ability to provide access to justice. Building off the NCSC's State of State Courts poll, the Superior Court of Los Angeles County conducted a public opinion poll in February 2025 to gauge public trust and confidence in the LA courts. In addition, the Court has conducted a discovery stage and is in the process of building a mobile civic engagement center that will educate the public about the LA court and provide access to services remotely in the community. This session would provide information on these topics to attendees and give attendees a roadmap to use similar approaches in their own courts.

In addition, Thurston County District Court engaged a consultant who observed the judges and gave feedback on demeanor, tone, and procedural fairness in a confidential manner. The court will share with workshop participants information about the program and how it was useful to their judges.

Workshop 6: Digital Accessibility

Hon. Paula Carey, Retired Chief Justice, Massachusetts Trial Court, MA

Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator, Minnesota Judicial Branch, MN

Paul Patterson, Court Services Division Director, Minnesota Judicial Branch, MN

Kate Malmon, Senior Project Manager, Minnesota Judicial Branch, MN

Court websites should be accessible to people with disabilities, including those who use screen readers. This is required by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). In April 2024, the Department of Justice signed a final rule under Title II of the ADA to require that digital content and mobile applications are accessible for people with disabilities. Most Court systems must comply with this rule on or before April of 2026. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) define requirements for designers and developers to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. It defines three levels of conformance: Level A, Level AA and Level AAA. The updated rule now requires compliance with WCAG 2.1 AAA. Web accessibility helps people with disabilities to perceive, navigate and interact with the web. This means we are providing access to justice to all persons regardless of their disabilities such as visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical impairment or cognitive impairments. It is about ensuring that everyone can access information and communicate with the courts regardless of their circumstances.

You will learn the requirements to comply with WCAG 2.1 AAA and how states are approaching the process. You will also hear about the four principles of accessibility.

SOCIAL EVENT

6:00 PM

Buses depart from Hyatt Regency Bellevue

7:00 PM to 9:30 PM

Social Event: Spirit of Seattle

9:30 PM – 10:30 PM

Buses return to Hotel

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20th
COURT LEADERSHIP PLENARY AND WORKSHOPS | NAPCO ANNUAL MEETING

7:00 AM to 8:30 AM**Breakfast****7:00 AM to 8:00 AM****NAPCO Board of Directors' Breakfast Meeting****PLENARY PRESENTATIONS****8:30 AM to 9:45 AM****PLENARY 3: The Importance of Data and How to Use Effectively to Improve Judicial Systems**

Moderator: Hon. Paula Carey, Retired Chief Justice, Massachusetts Trial Court, MA

Panel: David W. Slayton, Court Executive Officer/Clerk of Court, Los Angeles Superior Court, CA
Melaine Malcolm, Deputy Director, Massachusetts Trial Court, MA
Keith Nalbandian, Case Manager, Massachusetts Trial Court, MA

The legal maxim that “justice delayed is justice denied” has long been a rallying cry to encourage judges and courts to operate more efficiently. If legal redress or fair relief are potentially available to an injured party but aren’t promptly provided or supported, that is effectively no remedy at all. Today, the need for accessible and fair judicial systems is at least as relevant as when William Penn voiced it back in the seventeenth century. Fortunately, technology is playing a key role in helping to realize the vision and improve access to justice.

This plenary will highlight the best practices in the use of technology and data to modernize court processing to increase efficiency and streamline operation. The panelists will also focus on the use of data to help identify bottlenecks challenges and problems within court operations.

9:45 AM to 10:00 AM***BREAK***

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

PLENARY 4: Well-being for You and Others: Creating Healthy Workforces

Patti Tobias, The Leifman Group

David H. Yamasaki, Court Executive Officer, Orange County, CA

The impact of secondary trauma affects performance, productivity and well-being for judges, court executives, court personnel, jurors, first responders and many others in the court and justice system. As court leaders, it is our responsibility to practice well-being strategies individually and ensure effective well-being practices throughout our workplaces.

Learn what well-being practices are being followed by other presiding judges and court executives. Understand what the research says and what are best practices. Most of all, pay attention to your individual well-being.

Following the advice from the Academy Day, “honor others or they will fail to honor you!”

11:00 AM to 11:15 AM

BREAK

PLENARY CLOSING PRESENTATION

11:15 AM to 12:15 PM

PLENARY 5: Moving from Crisis Response to Continuous Improvement

Samira Nazem, Principal Court Management Consultant, National Center for State Courts (NCSC)

During the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, state courts moved quickly to implement a wide range of operational changes. By increasing the availability of remote court proceedings and services, collaborating with community partners on eviction diversion programs, taking steps to simplify and streamline court procedures, and changing docket management and scheduling practices to allow for greater flexibility, state courts were able to meet the moment through creativity and innovation. Now, five years after the beginning of the pandemic, many courts are permanently adopting these changes to increase court access and efficiency. Learn more about how courts around the country have permanently adopted programs, policies, and practices to make permanent changes to their post-pandemic court operations.

12:15 PM to 12:30 PM

CONFERENCE ADJOURNMENT AND CLOSING REMARKS

Hon. John J. Russo, NAPCO Board of Directors, Chair

John Bello, NAPCO Executive Director