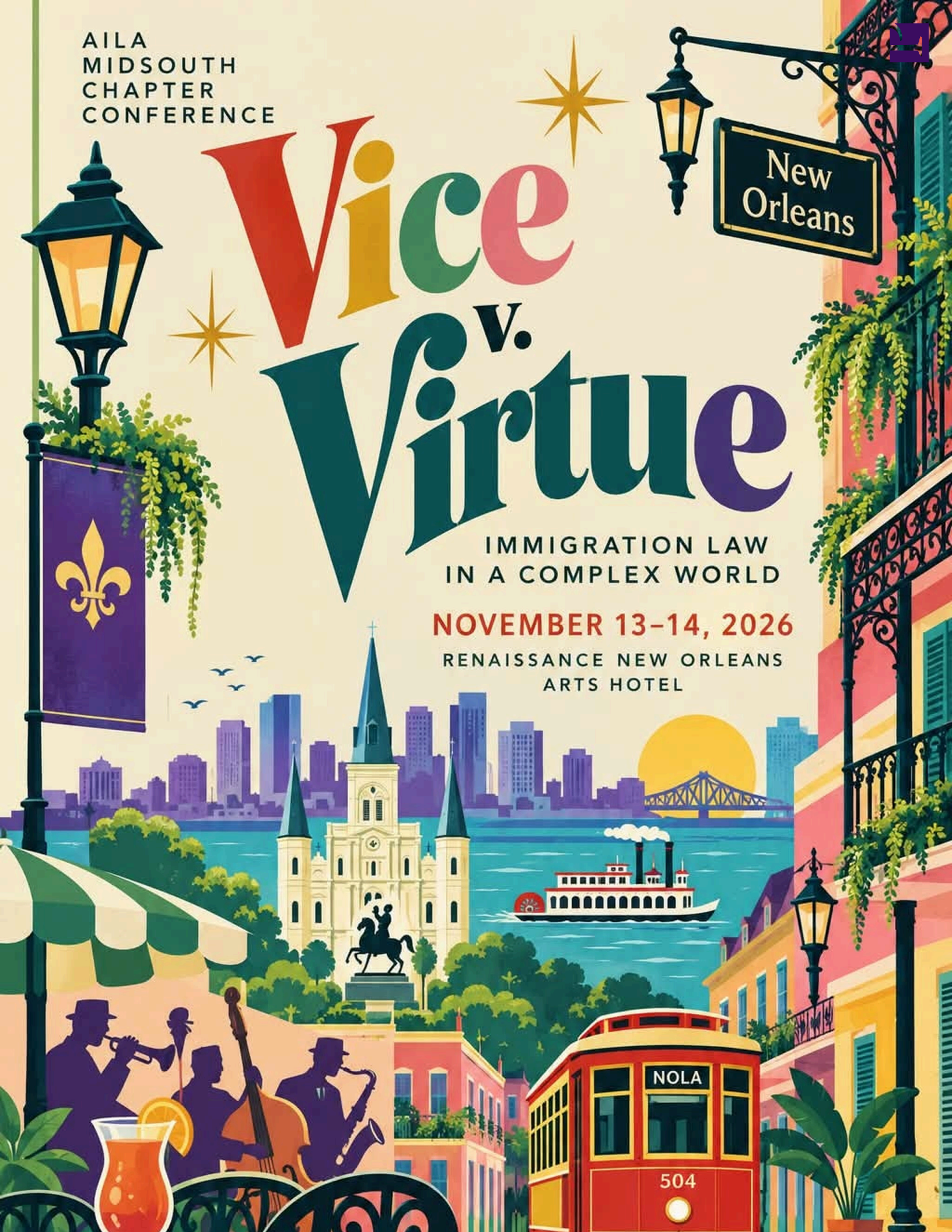
AILA
MIDSOUTH
CHAPTER
CONFERENCE

Vice v. Virtue

IMMIGRATION LAW IN A COMPLEX WORLD

NOVEMBER 13–14, 2026

RENAISSANCE NEW ORLEANS
ARTS HOTEL



Friday

NOVEMBER 13

TIME	ROOM A	ROOM B
7:30–9:00 AM	✦ *Breakfast Buffet*	
8:30–9:30 AM	01 **Saintliness Required: DOL Hot Topics** Robin O'Donoghue · Douglas Russo · Magaly Cheng · George Ernst	02 **Vice & Visas: NIV Waivers for Drugs and Morality Issues** Daniel Parisi · Brian McInerney
9:40–10:40 AM	03 **When the Promise of Miracles Leads a Case Straight to Hades: Ethical and Strategic Responses to Attorney Misconduct** ETHICS Samantha Ratcliffe · Emily Stotts · Jessica Ramos · Laura Ferner	04 **Naughty by Natz: The Virtues and Vices of Naturalization** Elaine Kimbrell · Petula McShiras
10:50–11:50 AM	05 **Keeping the Faith: Heavenly Boundaries, Client Communication, and Sustaining the Advocate** WELLNESS Sara Mailander · Kenneth Mayeaux	06 **Saints, Sinners, and SEVIS: From F-1 Studies to Full-Time Employment** Maka Hutson · Kathleen Gasparian
12:00–12:50 PM	✦ *Lunch & Chapter Meeting*	
1:00–2:00 PM	07 **Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance: Drafting Effective Petitions for Review with the Circuit Courts** Duncan Fulton · Alicia Triche	08 **Righteous Indignation: RFEs, NOIDs & NOIRs in Family-Based Cases** Brandon Riches · Logan Luquette
2:10–3:10 PM	09 **Lawful Good: APA, FOIA, Mandamus, and Making the Government Follow the Rules** Sarah Wilson · Courtney Moran · Lindsay Vick	10 **Amazing Grace: From Parole, TPS & DACA to Permanent Residency** Johnna Main Bailey · Alexandra Friz-Garcia · Melissa Boggs · Amber Seay
3:20–4:20 PM	11 **Thou Shalt Not Gatekeep: Making Federal Litigation More Inclusive** Hiroko Kusuda · Hon. Janis van Meerveld · Sabrina Damast · Samuel Scillitani	12 **Good People, Bad Discretion: The New Morality of USCIS** PROFESSIONALISM Brittany Faith · Eszter Bardi · Helen Parsonage
4:30–5:30 PM	13 **Run Your Firm Like a Business: Pricing, Growth, and Your Exit** PRACTICE MANAGEMENT Amanda Butler Schley · Lily Axelrod · Ruby Powers	14 **From Vice to Visa: Winning O, P, and EB-1 Cases for Adult Entertainers** James Hollis · Karin Wolman
5:30–7:00 PM	✦ *Happy Hour Reception*	

Saturday

NOVEMBER 14

TIME	ROOM A	ROOM B
7:30–9:00 AM	✦ *Breakfast Buffet*	
8:30–9:30 AM	15 **Virtue in the Courtroom: Avoiding the Sins of Removal Defense** Ionela Sierra · Maximiliano Gluzman · Assma Ali · Megan Jackler	16 **Healing the System: Ethical and Innovative Advocacy for Health Care Workers** Elissa Taub · Rosanna Fox
9:40–10:40 AM	17 **Second Chances: Quickly and Effectively Preparing Motions to Reopen** Rebecca Chavez · Nathalia Rocha	18 **The Compliance Holy Trinity Under the New Enforcement Architecture: Understanding Coordinated Enforcement by FDNS, DOL, and ICE** Bruce Buchanan · Emily Brown
10:50–11:50 AM	19 **The Blue Light Part of the Dumpster Fire: What in the World Is the Status of Asylum These Days?** Jacqueline Watson · Alicia Triche · Kaitlin Locascio	20 **No Good Deed Goes Unpunished: Immigrant Visa Processing in a Time of Heightened Scrutiny** Petula McShiras · Erin Hebert

VENUE

Renaissance New Orleans Arts Hotel
700 Tchoupitoulas Street, New Orleans, LA 70130

ROOMS

Room A Room B

MARKED SESSIONS

Ethics · Wellness · Professionalism · Practice Management



Friday NOVEMBER 13

01 Saintliness Required: DOL Hot Topics

8:30–9:30 AM · Friday, November 13 ROOM A

Robin O'Donoghue
O'Donoghue Law · Cambridge, Massachusetts

Magaly Cheng
Clark Lau · Boston, Massachusetts

Douglas Russo
Rose Immigration Law Firm · Brentwood, Tennessee

George Ernst
Hall Booth Smith · Little Rock, Arkansas

The Department of Labor is keeping even seasoned immigration practitioners on their toes, with evolving policies, shifting standards, long processing times, and employer compliance scrutiny that can feel like a test of professional patience, creativity, and possibly sainthood.

In this hot topics session, panelists will unpack the latest DOL developments, spotlight the trouble spots causing headaches in real-world practice, and offer practical strategies for helping employers make it through the process with compliance, credibility, and maybe even a little grace intact.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Current trends in prevailing wage determinations, recruitment requirements, audits, and supervised recruitment.
- Practical approaches for responding to audits, requests for information, and other forms of DOL scrutiny.
- Emerging DOL enforcement priorities and their potential impact on employment-based immigration practice.
- Best practices for counseling employers on navigating evolving DOL requirements and processing time realities.

02 Vice & Visas: NIV Waivers for Drugs and Morality Issues

8:30–9:30 AM · Friday, November 13 ROOM B

Daniel Parisi
DJP Immigration · Madrid, Spain

Brian McInerney
Former DOS Official

When a client's past misconduct collides with their future travel plans, practitioners must navigate the line between vice and virtue. This panel explores nonimmigrant visa waivers for drug-related and morality-based inadmissibility grounds, including common offenses that trigger waiver requirements, exceptions that may eliminate the need for a waiver, and strategies for preparing persuasive INA § 212(d)(3) requests.

Panelists will also discuss current waiver processing trends and recent Foreign Affairs Manual developments affecting adjudications.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Common drug and morality-based offenses requiring waivers.

- Exceptions to waiver eligibility requirements.
- Preparing and submitting a persuasive waiver package.
- Current processing times and adjudication trends.
- Recent updates impacting NIV waiver practice.

03 When the Promise of Miracles Leads a Case Straight to Hades: Ethical and Strategic Responses to Attorney Misconduct

9:40–10:40 AM · Friday, November 13 ROOM A ETHICS

Samantha Ratcliffe
Metropolitan Public Defender · Portland, Oregon

Jessica Ramos
The Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio · Cincinnati, Ohio

Emily Stotts
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors · Nashville, Tennessee

Laura Ferner
Crouch Harwell Fryar & Ferner · Springdale, Arkansas

Because sometimes the biggest obstacle in an immigration case isn't the government. It's the lawyer who promised a miracle. When the "attorney of miracles" leaves a client with a case headed for immigration Hades, the next lawyer inherits more than a file. They inherit ethical dilemmas, damaged trust, and the challenge of determining what can still be saved.

This interactive panel brings together practitioners working with individuals affected by Alexandra Lozano and similar situations to discuss the legal, ethical, and practical challenges that arise when prior counsel's conduct places a client's immigration future at risk. Participants will explore strategies for reviewing inherited cases, addressing questionable filings, evaluating ineffective assistance claims, counseling traumatized clients, and navigating heightened government scrutiny.

Designed as a collaborative discussion rather than a lecture, this session focuses on sharing resources, developing best practices, and building a network of practitioners committed to protecting vulnerable clients while maintaining public trust in the profession.

AFTER ATTENDING, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO

- Analyze ethical obligations when representing clients affected by attorney misconduct, fraud, or ineffective assistance.
- Identify strategies for investigating inherited cases and correcting problematic filings.
- Evaluate remedies including motions to reopen, ineffective assistance claims, and other corrective measures.
- Apply trauma-informed approaches when counseling clients who have lost trust in the legal system.

04 Naughty by Natz: The Virtues and Vices of Naturalization

9:40–10:40 AM · Friday, November 13 ROOM B

Elaine Kimbrell
New Orleans, Louisiana

Petula McShiras
Kolko & Casey · Greenwood Village, Colorado

From the first N-400 filing to the final oath of allegiance, and everything that can go wrong in between, this panel covers the virtues, vices, and complexities of naturalization practice.

Panelists discuss pre-filing red flags, preparing clients for interviews, recent developments involving N-648 disability exceptions, significant circuit court decisions, processing delays, canceled oath ceremonies, and the increasingly important issue of denaturalization, with practical strategies for every stage of the naturalization journey.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Before You Confess: pre-filing screening, eligibility requirements, good moral character, and potential red flags.
- Preparing for Judgment Day: interview preparation, civics testing, and recent developments involving N-648 disability exceptions.
- The Courts Have Spoken: significant circuit court decisions and their implications for naturalization practice.
- Purgatory at USCIS: overcoming processing delays, stalled applications, and canceled oath ceremonies, including federal litigation.
- Citizenship's Original Sin: denaturalization proceedings, grounds for revocation, and strategies for protecting naturalized citizens.

05 Keeping the Faith: Heavenly Boundaries, Client Communication, and Sustaining the Advocate

10:50–11:50 AM · Friday, November 13 ROOM A WELLNESS

Sara Mailander
Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy · Boston, Massachusetts

Kenneth Mayeaux
Rozas & Associates · Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Day after day, advocates are asked to perform small miracles for clients facing life-changing consequences. Over time, that burden can affect not only personal well-being, but also communication, judgment, and the long-term sustainability of a legal practice.

In this uplifting well-being session, panelists explore how attorneys can keep answering the call to serve without sacrificing their own health. The discussion focuses on creating healthy boundaries, fostering effective client communication, recognizing signs of burnout, and building a support system that helps advocates thrive rather than simply survive.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Managing client expectations and setting healthy boundaries around communication, urgency, availability, and scope of representation.
- Distinguishing true emergencies from perceived urgency for clients, staff, and ourselves.
- Knowing when to guide rather than save, while avoiding the trap of carrying clients' burdens alone.
- Recognizing burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma, and finding renewal through AILA, bar associations, and other well-being resources.

06 Saints, Sinners, and SEVIS: From F-1 Studies to Full-Time Employment — What's Going On with F, M and Js?

10:50–11:50 AM · Friday, November 13 ROOM B

Maka Hutson
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld · Dallas, Texas

Kathleen Gasparian
Gasparian Spivey Immigration · New Orleans, Louisiana

As immigration scrutiny intensifies, F-1 students face increasing challenges in maintaining status, navigating employment opportunities, and planning for long-term immigration success. Proposed limits on duration of stay, heightened enforcement, and emerging revenue streams such as NIL deals, sponsorships, and influencer income have created new compliance risks for students, athletes, and creatives.

This panel explores how to keep clients on the virtuous path while avoiding the pitfalls that can derail academic and professional goals, with practical strategies for advising students, schools, and stakeholders in an evolving enforcement environment.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- The Virtues of Status Maintenance: SEVIS compliance, enrollment requirements, reporting obligations, and the impact of a potential shift from D/S to fixed admission periods.
- The Sins of Student Status: unauthorized employment, travel risks, visa revocations, SEVIS terminations, social media scrutiny, and reinstatement challenges.
- Temptation in the NIL Era: applying F-1 employment rules to NIL activities, sponsorships, internships, and influencer income while distinguishing passive income from unauthorized work.
- Creating a Culture of Compliance: best practices for DSOs, universities, and athletic departments to manage risk and maintain program integrity.
- Redemption and the Road Ahead: OPT, H-1B transitions, reinstatement strategies, and options such as NIW and O-1 for high-achieving students and athletes.

07 Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance: Drafting Effective Petitions for Review with the Circuit Courts

1:00–2:00 PM · Friday, November 13 ROOM A

Duncan Fulton
Loyola University New Orleans College of Law · New Orleans, Louisiana

Alicia Triche
Triche Immigration Appeals · Memphis, Tennessee

Petitions for review (PFRs) remain the primary mechanism for obtaining federal judicial review of adverse asylum decisions. This panel discusses how to identify reviewable errors, frame compelling issues, preserve jurisdiction, challenge adverse credibility determinations, and maximize the likelihood of remand or alternatives in the federal courts of appeals.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Whether a claim is reviewable in federal court.
- Identifying and preserving issues likely to survive jurisdictional challenges.
- Tips for drafting an effective petition for review.
- Developing persuasive arguments challenging credibility and corroboration findings.
- How the Fifth and Sixth Circuits differ in their approach to asylum review.
- Seeking stays of removal and emergency relief.
- Drafting compelling appellate briefs that highlight reversible legal error.

08 Righteous Indignation: RFEs, NOIDs & NOIRs in Family-Based Cases

1:00–2:00 PM · Friday, November 13 ROOM B

Brandon Riches
The Riches Law Firm · Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Logan Luquette
Tierra Law Firm · Mandeville, Louisiana

RFEs, NOIDs, and NOIRs can derail even strong family-based cases. With USCIS's August 2026 policy update restoring officers' discretion to deny cases without first issuing an RFE or NOID, practitioners must be prepared to front-load evidence and respond strategically when government concerns arise.

This panel covers practical approaches to overcoming evidentiary challenges, fraud allegations, and Affidavit of Support issues while building a record for approval and potential review.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- The impact of the August 2026 USCIS evidentiary standards memo on family-based practice.
- Tips and tricks for responding to RFEs, NOIDs, and NOIRs, including boilerplate RFEs and unsupported requests for evidence.
- Responding to fraud allegations, credibility concerns, and marriage fraud findings.

- Tackling common I-864 issues, including joint sponsors, income calculations, and domicile.
- Preserving issues for motions, appeals, and federal court review.

09 Lawful Good: APA, FOIA, Mandamus, and Making the Government Follow the Rules

2:10–3:10 PM · Friday, November 13 ROOM A

Sarah Wilson
Colombo Hurd · Orlando, Florida

Lindsay Vick
Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani · Sacramento, California

Courtney Moran
Murray Osorio · Merrifield, Virginia

We counsel our clients every day on the importance of complying with complex laws, regulations, procedures, and deadlines. But practitioners also encounter agencies that unreasonably delay decisions, fail to fulfill statutory or regulatory obligations, withhold critical records, or otherwise fail to follow the rules governing their own actions.

This session examines the legal and practical tools available when traditional advocacy is no longer sufficient. Panelists explore how the Administrative Procedure Act and federal mandamus actions can address unreasonable delays and agency inaction, obtain critical information, challenge unlawful government action, and promote agency accountability, with practical guidance on evaluating claims, developing litigation strategies, and weighing the opportunities and risks of taking a dispute to federal court.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Using the APA and mandamus to challenge unreasonable delays, agency inaction, and failures to comply with legal obligations.
- Evaluating when to move from administrative advocacy to federal litigation, and strategies involving USCIS, DOS, CBP, and EOIR.
- Navigating jurisdictional, procedural, ethical, and practical considerations, including lessons from successful cases and cautionary outcomes.

10 Amazing Grace: From Parole, TPS & DACA to Permanent Residency

2:10–3:10 PM · Friday, November 13 ROOM B

Johnna Main Bailey
Siskind Susser · Memphis, Tennessee

Melissa Boggs
BAL Immigration Law · Richardson, Texas

Alexandra Friz-Garcia
Fonte Friz-Garcia Immigration · Coral Gables, Florida

Amber Seay
Baker Donelson · Chattanooga, Tennessee

As humanitarian immigration programs disappear, practitioners increasingly face questions about how individuals with DACA, TPS, parole, asylum-related protections, and other humanitarian statuses can transition to long-term lawful status through employment-based immigration.

This panel explores the intersection of humanitarian and employment-based practice, focusing on creative and practical strategies for moving clients from temporary protection to permanent residence.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Employment-based options for clients with humanitarian immigration histories.
- Adjustment-of-status eligibility versus consular processing requirements, including 212(d)(3) waivers and 245(k).
- Common grounds of inadmissibility and available waivers.
- Advising employers on sponsoring workers with complex immigration backgrounds.
- Practical challenges from the expiration or termination of temporary humanitarian protections.
- Long-term strategic plans for clients seeking permanent residence.

11 Thou Shalt Not Gatekeep: Making Federal Litigation More Inclusive

3:20–4:20 PM · Friday, November 13 ROOM A

Hiroko Kusuda
Loyola University New Orleans College of Law · New Orleans, Louisiana

Hon. Janis van Meerveld
Chief Magistrate Judge, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana · New Orleans, Louisiana

Sabrina Damast
Law Office of Sabrina Damast · Los Angeles, California

Samuel Scillitani
Assistant Federal Public Defender · New Orleans, Louisiana

Federal litigation is increasingly an essential tool for achieving meaningful outcomes for immigration clients. Yet many attorneys, particularly solo practitioners, small-firm lawyers, and those from historically underrepresented backgrounds, lack access to the mentorship, training, and professional networks that often serve as gateways to federal court practice.

This panel demystifies federal litigation, provides practical guidance for getting started, and explores how greater inclusion in the federal bar can expand access to justice for both attorneys and the communities they serve.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Federal court basics for immigration practitioners, including APA, mandamus, habeas, and other common federal actions.
- Breaking down barriers to entry for solo, small-firm, rural, and underrepresented attorneys.
- Building confidence through mentors, co-counsel, inclusive professional networks, and practical first-case strategies.
- Expanding access to justice by broadening participation in the federal bar and leveraging AILA and other litigation resources.

12 Good People, Bad Discretion: The New Morality of USCIS

3:20–4:20 PM · Friday, November 13 ROOM B PROFESSIONALISM

Brittany Faith
Abbott, Weiss & Faith · Chattanooga, Tennessee

Helen Parsonage
Elliot Morgan Parsonage · Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Eszter Bardi
Sonoda Law Firm · Atlanta, Georgia

USCIS's May 2026 policy memorandum emphasizing adjustment of status as a discretionary benefit has shifted the focus from merely proving eligibility to proving why a client deserves approval. Practitioners now face increased scrutiny of credibility, character, rehabilitation, and the positive and negative equities that can influence an officer's exercise of discretion.

This panel examines how Good Moral Character and discretionary adjudications are evolving, with a focus on interview preparation, credibility issues, and building a record that supports a favorable exercise of discretion. Through practical examples and mock interview scenarios, participants will learn how to prepare clients for an increasingly subjective adjudication environment.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- USCIS's May 2026 discretion memorandum and its impact on Good Moral Character and discretionary adjudications.
- Framing Good Moral Character beyond the statutory minimum by highlighting credibility, rehabilitation, and positive equities.
- Identifying and addressing negative equities, adverse facts, and character concerns before they become interview problems.
- Preparing clients for difficult, subjective, or unexpected interview questions.
- Mock interview scenarios and "Am I Being Punk'd?" moments to build stronger, more credible case presentations.

13 Run Your Firm Like a Business: Pricing, Growth, and Your Exit

4:30–5:30 PM · Friday, November 13 ROOM A PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Amanda Butler Schley
Business Law Group · New Orleans, Louisiana

Ruby Powers
Powers Law Group · Houston, Texas

Lily Axelrod
Axelrod Immigration Law · Memphis, Tennessee

Strategies for finding autonomy, flexibility, meaningful client relationships, and financial success, and for the challenges of small practice: undercharging or undervaluing your services, inconsistent fee practices, unclear engagement agreements, scope creep, referral arrangements, staffing decisions, and uncertainty about long-term growth.

This candid and practical program brings together women law firm owners to discuss the topic lawyers often avoid: money. Participants will learn how to set fees confidently, communicate value, manage changing scopes of representation, handle referral relationships ethically and profitably, and make intentional decisions about firm growth, including what comes next, whether that is a boutique lifestyle practice, a multi-lawyer firm, or selling or transitioning your practice.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Developing fee structures that reflect the value of our services.
- Communicating fees confidently and effectively to prospective clients.
- Drafting contracts that anticipate changing client needs.
- Managing changes in scope and additional work without resentment.
- Making strategic decisions about hiring, growth, and firm culture.
- Creating a long-term vision for succession, transition, or exit from practice.

---

14 From Vice to Visa: Winning O, P, and EB-1 Cases for Adult Entertainers

4:30–5:30 PM · Friday, November 13 ROOM B

James Hollis
Hollis Immigration · Memphis, Tennessee

Karin Wolman
Law Office of Karin Wolman · New York, New York

O and P visa cases for adult entertainers and other provocative performers require practitioners to prove extraordinary ability or distinction while overcoming assumptions, credibility concerns, and heightened scrutiny.

This lively panel addresses how to keep these cases focused on the law, build persuasive evidence, prepare clients for government review, and navigate the ethical issues that arise when a client's profession may trigger bias or moral judgment.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Proving extraordinary ability, distinction, and sustained acclaim when traditional evidence does not fit the client's work.
- Addressing credibility concerns, RFEs, NOIDs, fraud referrals, and agency scrutiny before they derail the case.
- Reconciling social media, promotional content, public personas, and compliance issues with the legal record.
- Preparing clients for interviews, site visits, and government review while managing ethical concerns and implicit bias.

Saturday NOVEMBER 14

15 Virtue in the Courtroom: Avoiding the Sins of Removal Defense

8:30–9:30 AM · Saturday, November 14 ROOM A

Ionela Sierra
Sierra Amrosio Law Firm · Smyrna, Tennessee

Assma Ali
Law Offices of Ali & Associates · Ridgeland, Mississippi

Maximiliano Gluzman
Belmont University College of Law · Nashville, Tennessee

Megan Jackler
Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith · New Orleans, Louisiana

With increasingly accelerated immigration court proceedings, effective removal defense often depends on mastering the basics: scrutinizing the charging document, challenging government evidence, preserving objections, making a complete record, and strategically filing motions that create opportunities for relief both now and on appeal.

This practical session walks through the objections, motions, and procedural tools to consider in virtually every courtroom appearance, from master calendar hearings through merits proceedings, including lesser-used motions that may create leverage, preserve appellate issues, or simply make DHS do its homework, and how administrative closure, continuances, and the status docket can preserve relief while collateral applications remain pending.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- A systematic review of charging documents and government evidence, and common defects in NTAs and supporting records.
- Raising and preserving evidentiary, procedural, and legal objections.
- Using motions strategically to develop and protect the record.
- Underutilized procedural tools available in immigration court.
- Administrative closure, continuances, and the status docket to preserve collateral relief, including I-601A waivers, U visas, SIJS, and other pending benefits.
- Demonstrating good cause, likelihood of success, and productive delay when requesting time before the Immigration Judge.

16 Healing the System: Ethical and Innovative Advocacy for Health Care Workers

8:30–9:30 AM · Saturday, November 14 ROOM B

Elissa Taub
Siskind Susser · Memphis, Tennessee

Rosanna Fox
Lepore Taylor Fox · Livingston, New Jersey

As workforce shortages continue to challenge the health care industry, immigration lawyers play a critical role in helping employers recruit and retain essential talent.

This panel explores practical and creative immigration strategies for physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals, including temporary visas, permanent residence options, physician waivers, and solutions for underserved communities.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Visa options for physicians, nurses, and other health care workers when things are on "pause."
- Schedule A, PERM, and immigrant visa strategies given current delays.
- Conrad 30 and other physician waiver programs, and their current challenges.
- Addressing licensing, credentialing, and retention challenges.
- Creative solutions for difficult or nontraditional cases.
- Ethical considerations in health care immigration practice.

---

17 Second Chances: Quickly and Effectively Preparing Motions to Reopen

9:40–10:40 AM · Saturday, November 14 ROOM A

Rebecca Chavez
National Immigration Project · Texas

Nathalia Rocha
Rocha Immigration Law · Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Motions to reopen have become an increasingly essential tool for protecting clients facing removal orders, detention, and barriers to relief. This practical panel focuses on the real-world reopening issues practitioners encounter throughout the MidSouth.

Panelists discuss best practices for gathering evidence quickly, identifying viable legal theories, litigating equitable factors, and overcoming common procedural obstacles.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Potential grounds for reopening removal proceedings.
- Strategies for challenging in absentia removal orders.
- Developing reopening arguments in SIJ, detention, and notice-related cases.
- Gathering and presenting persuasive evidence under compressed timelines.
- Navigating jurisdictional and procedural challenges.
- When sua sponte reopening should be considered.

18 The Compliance Holy Trinity Under the New Enforcement Architecture: Understanding Coordinated Enforcement by FDNS, DOL, and ICE

9:40–10:40 AM · Saturday, November 14 ROOM B

Bruce Buchanan
Phelps Dunbar · Nashville, Tennessee

Emily Brown
Elevate Justice · Pensacola, Florida

Today's enforcement environment is defined by unprecedented coordination among ICE, FDNS, and the Department of Labor, a compliance trinity capable of turning a single oversight into a multi-agency investigation. ICE worksite audits, FDNS site visits, and DOL H-1B enforcement initiatives such as Project Firewall are surging simultaneously, while information sharing lets each agency capitalize on the findings of the others.

Participants will learn how agencies coordinate investigations, where compliance vulnerabilities most commonly arise, and how to build corporate immigration programs grounded in the virtues of diligence, transparency, and accountability while avoiding the vices of complacency, siloed compliance, and willful ignorance.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- The evolving partnership among ICE, FDNS, and DOL and what it means for employer compliance.
- ICE worksite audits, raids, and I-9 enforcement trends.
- FDNS site visits, fraud indicators, and petition verification initiatives.
- DOL enforcement priorities, including Project Firewall and H-1B wage investigations.
- How a vice in one area can become a violation in another through interagency data sharing.
- Common compliance sins: incomplete public access files, wage discrepancies, job duty inconsistencies, and I-9 deficiencies.
- Virtuous compliance practices that reduce risk before government scrutiny begins.
- Preparing employers for audits, site visits, subpoenas, and government investigations.
- Ethical obligations when uncovering historical compliance problems.

19 The Blue Light Part of the Dumpster Fire: What in the World Is the Status of Asylum These Days?

10:50–11:50 AM · Saturday, November 14 ROOM A

Jacqueline Watson
Posada & Watson · Austin, Texas

Kaitlin Locascio
Loyola University New Orleans · New Orleans, Louisiana

Alicia Triche
Triche Immigration Appeals · Memphis, Tennessee

Asylum law remains one of the most rapidly changing areas of immigration practice. This panel provides a practical discussion of where asylum stands today and how practitioners can effectively represent clients amid continuing policy shifts, litigation, and procedural uncertainty.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Where Are We Now? The current state of asylum practice.
- Courts, Policies, and Litigation: what has changed and what remains unsettled.
- Navigating credible fear, border processing, and access to protection.
- Practical strategies for screening, counseling, and representing asylum seekers.

20 No Good Deed Goes Unpunished: Immigrant Visa Processing in a Time of Heightened Scrutiny

10:50–11:50 AM · Saturday, November 14 ROOM B

Petula McShiras
Kolko & Casey · Greenwood Village, Colorado

Erin Hebert
Ware Immigration · Metairie, Louisiana

This panel focuses on pressing issues affecting immigrant visa applicants, including public charge adjudications, country-specific restrictions, DS-260 pitfalls, provisional waiver revocations, administrative processing delays, prior asylum filings, passport and civil document challenges, and processing for applicants who cannot safely return to their countries of nationality.

Panelists will discuss emerging trends from consular posts and provide practical strategies for preparing clients, avoiding refusals, and responding when cases stall or go off track.

THE PANEL WILL DISCUSS

- Current trends affecting immigrant visa adjudications at U.S. consulates.
- Preparing clients for heightened public charge scrutiny and post-interview document requests.
- Recognizing common triggers for administrative processing and prolonged delays.
- The consequences of prior asylum filings, asylum denials, and other humanitarian applications during immigrant visa processing.
- 601A provisional waiver complications, including revocations and post-departure inadmissibility findings.
- Counseling applicants facing country-specific restrictions, travel barriers, or lack of access to a functioning U.S. consulate.
- Strategies for clients with passport, civil document, or nationality-related obstacles.
- Communicating effectively with consular posts and using escalation options when cases stall.

Sponsors

✦ *Thanks to our Gold Sponsors!*

DOGWOOD
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

EB5GROUP
EB-5 Capital Advisors

FORTIS
EVALUATIONS

MORNINGSIDE
EVALUATIONS

✦ *Thanks to our Silver Sponsors!*

AC
ASHLEY COX
LEADERSHIP MENTOR

BILINGÜE

LollyLaw®

Speakers

Assma Ali 15
Lily Axelrod 13
Johnna Main Bailey 10
Eszter Bardi 12
Melissa Boggs 10
Emily Brown 18
Bruce Buchanan 18
Rebecca Chavez 17
Magaly Cheng 01
Sabrina Damast 11
George Ernst 01
Brittany Faith 12
Laura Ferner 03
Rosanna Fox 16
Alexandra Friz-Garcia 10
Duncan Fulton 07
Kathleen Gasparian 06
Maximiliano Gluzman 15
Erin Hebert 20
James Hollis 14
Maka Hutson 06
Megan Jackler 15
Elaine Kimbrell 04
Hiroko Kusuda 11
Kaitlin Locascio 19
Logan Luquette 08
Sara Mailander 05
Kenneth Mayeaux 05
Brian McInerney 02
Petula McShiras 04, 20
Hon. Janis van Meerveld 11
Courtney Moran 09
Robin O'Donoghue 01
Daniel Parisi 02
Helen Parsonage 12
Ruby Powers 13
Jessica Ramos 03
Samantha Ratcliffe 03
Brandon Riches 08
Nathalia Rocha 17
Douglas Russo 01
Amanda Butler Schley 13
Samuel Scillitani 11
Amber Seay 10
Ionela Sierra 15
Emily Stotts 03
Elissa Taub 16
Alicia Triche 07, 19
Lindsay Vick 09
Jacqueline Watson 19
Sarah Wilson 09
Karin Wolman 14

AILA MidSouth

Renaissance New Orleans Arts Hotel

700 Tchoupitoulas Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
November 13–14, 2026

