



IMLA 2026 Code Enforcement Program

Virtual

February 25-26, 2026

Wednesday – February 25, 2026

Time	Session	Speaker(s)
12:00 PM – 12:50 PM Eastern	Welcome Lunch Spend time discussing Code Enforcement issues over an informal networking lunch (or breakfast) via Zoom.	
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM Eastern	Administrative Search Warrants for Beginners This presentation covers basic differences between criminal and administrative search warrants in the context of <i>Camara v. Municipal Court</i> . The requirements for administrative search warrants as outlined in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and other state laws are discussed, as well as best practices for warrant drafting and practical tips for productive use of staff time when executing an administrative search warrant. The presentation also briefly covers other relevant case law and various statutory tools available to some cities to facilitate abatement of nuisance conditions.	Katie Leininger
2:30 PM – 3:30 PM Eastern	Administrative and Evidentiary Hearings in Code Enforcement: Practical Tips for City Attorneys Even when the legal rules are well understood, administrative and evidentiary hearings can present recurring practical challenges for city attorneys. This CLE webinar focuses on real-world tips and strategies for running efficient, defensible code enforcement hearings and avoiding common missteps. Topics will include building a clean and review-proof record, best practices for presenting the city's case, advising hearing officers and boards, managing and tracking down difficult respondents and pro se parties, and handling procedural issues that commonly arise pre-hearing and mid-hearing. The program will emphasize practical lessons learned and best practices that city attorneys can immediately apply in their day-to-day code enforcement work.	Mary Grace McNear

Thursday – February 26, 2026

Time	Session	Speaker(s)
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Eastern	Drug and Public Nuisance Abatement A case study of the City of Birmingham's application of drug and public nuisance abatement laws to eliminate blighted, dangerous, vacant, and neglected properties that serve as launching pads for criminality. The discussion will highlight the profound impact that the City's efforts are having on the surrounding community and fostering neighborhood revitalization.	Nicole King & Joseph Abrams
1:30 PM – 2:30 PM Eastern	Weaponizing Enforcement Code enforcement activities, particularly zoning and property maintenance enforcement, can result in discrimination. This presentation will cover ways discrimination can present itself in code enforcement activities. Additionally, it will	Trish Link

	cover to avoid discriminatory enforcement (disparate-impact claims and complaint-driven system bias) practices.	
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM Eastern	Fourth Amendment Meets Code Compliance Many cities have codes that allow code officials to enter upon property and investigate, and while sometimes it is necessary for health and safety, it can also go so far that it becomes a Fourth Amendment violation. This session will examine when routine code-enforcement activities can constitute a search.	Hannah Hungate

Last Updated: 01/20/26. Please note the agenda is tentative and subject to change.

Speaker Bios

Joseph Abrams

Mr. Joseph Abrams serves as the Chief Assistant City Attorney for the City of Birmingham.

In this role, Attorney Abrams manages the City’s Litigation Division, which is specifically tasked with defending the City and its employees against liability claims. His team also engages in affirmative litigation aimed at targeting and eliminating drug and public nuisance properties within the city limits.

Prior to joining the City, Attorney Abrams served as a staff attorney with Legal Services Alabama, where he assisted low-income and vulnerable Alabamians.

Attorney Abrams earned his B.S. from the University of Alabama (2008), his J.D. from Faulkner University’s Thomas Goode Jones School of Law (2011), and his LL.M. from the University of Alabama (2014). He is admitted to the Alabama State Bar, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, and the Middle District of Alabama.

He served as the Board President for the Tuscaloosa Mental Alliance from 2014–2018 and on the Alabama State Bar Leadership Forum in 2022.

His interests include writing and documentary filmmaking.

Hannah Hungate

Hannah Hungate is the Assistant City Attorney for the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas. She graduated from the University of Arkansas with a Bachelor’s of Science in Business Administration in 2018 and then graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law with her juris doctor in 2021. Following law school, she worked as a personal injury attorney and was named as one of the Outstanding Trial Lawyers of the Year by the Arkansas Trial Lawyers Association in 2023. In July 2023, she joined the City Attorney’s Office for the City of Fayetteville. Her primary areas of focus are eminent domain, code enforcement, and municipal litigation.

Nicole King

Nicole King serves as the City Attorney for the City of Birmingham, having been appointed by Mayor Randall L. Woodfin in 2017 and reappointed in 2021. With over 19 years of legal experience with the City, she began her career in 2006 as a paralegal and progressively advanced through positions as Claims Administrator, Attorney, Senior Attorney, and Principal Attorney before her appointment as City Attorney. As the chief legal advisor to

Mayor Woodfin, the Birmingham City Council, and 33 City departments and divisions, Attorney King oversees a team of 45 employees, providing comprehensive legal counsel on diverse matters, coordinating claims management, and handling municipal court proceedings, transactional work, and litigation on behalf of the City. Attorney King is a member of the Alabama State Bar and is admitted to practice before the United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, the Middle District of Alabama and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

As City Attorney, she focuses on improving the quality of life in Birmingham neighborhoods, which led her to launch and spearhead the Office of the City Attorney Drug and Nuisance Abatement Team (OCA-DNAT), a specialized initiative dedicated to eliminating drug nuisance and problem properties throughout the city. Attorney King leads a team of dedicated legal professionals who have played a pivotal role in the abatement of hundreds of nuisance properties across Birmingham. Through her strategic leadership, the Courts have awarded the City over \$100,000, which has been directed to the Neighborhood Revitalization Fund. Her unwavering commitment to public safety and her passion for enhancing the quality of life for Birmingham's residents continue to fuel her relentless pursuit of a stronger, more vibrant city.

Attorney King earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Alabama in 2000 and received her Juris Doctor from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in 2005.

She maintains active membership in numerous professional organizations, including Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Omicron Omega Chapter, Birmingham Bar Association, Magic City Bar Association, Alabama Women Leading Government, Alabama Association of Municipal Attorneys, and National Black Lawyers Top 100. She is a distinguished graduate of Leadership Birmingham Class 2022 and Momentum Women's Leadership Executive Class 18, and serves on the boards of Opera Birmingham, Momentum, and the Community Affairs Division of the University of Alabama demonstrating her commitment to civic engagement and community leadership.

Attorney King was honored with the Top Birmingham Woman award by the Birmingham Business Journal in 2022. Dedicated to nurturing the next generation of legal professionals, Attorney King has established a comprehensive mentorship program within the Office of the City Attorney, through which she personally mentors high school, college, and law students as they pursue careers in the legal field. Attorney King is married to Marlon King, and together they are the proud parents of three children.

Katie Leininger

Katie graduated from Trinity University with a B.A. in Communication and History. She received her law degree from the University of Houston Law Center. After starting her career as a felony prosecutor in the 106th District Attorney's office, Katie has served as an Assistant District Attorney for the City of Pearland since 2011. After serving as the municipal court prosecutor, Katie has handled a variety of municipal issues including civil nuisance abatement, employment law, public information requests, drafting and amending ordinances, land use, and providing general legal guidance to departments, boards, and commissions. She has previously given CLE and other training presentations on a variety of topics to City staff and groups including the Texas City Attorneys Association and the Texas Police Chiefs Association.

Trish Link

Trish Link started with the Austin City Attorney's Office in 2005 as a municipal court prosecutor and since that time has worked in the Litigation, Land Use and Real Estate, General Counsel, and Municipal Operations divisions. Currently, she leads the Land Use and Real Estate Division in the Austin City Attorney's Office. Over the years, she has advised on numerous municipal law issues, including land use, housing, ordinance drafting, and

enforcement. She is the Chair of IMLA Code Enforcement Section and State Co-Chair for Texas. Trish was designated an International Municipal Lawyers Association (IMLA) Fellow in 2020.

Mary Grace McNear

Mary Grace McNear is the Assistant City Attorney for the City of Avondale, Arizona, where she currently represents the Code Enforcement Department, among other assignments. She was previously with Beus Gilbert McGroder and Sacks Tierney helping developers in planning and zoning cases filed with Arizona municipalities and counties. Ms. McNear has practiced municipal law in house for 15 years, with Avondale and other Arizona cities. She received her law degree from New York University School of Law in 1993 and clerked for Magistrate Judge Virginia Mathis.