



IMLA 2026 Mid-Year Seminar

Washington, D.C.
April 10-13, 2026

Friday – April 10, 2026

| Time / Location | Session | Speaker(s) |
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| 9:00 AM – 4:45 PM Blue Room Pre-Function | IMLA Registration & Exhibitors Registration will close from 11:45 PM-12:45 PM. | |
| 8:30 AM – to 12:00 PM Governor's Room | Board of Directors' Meeting | |
| 10:15 AM – 10:45 AM Blue Room Pre-Function | Welcome to IMLA Coffee Break Join IMLA President and Executive Director for welcoming remarks and helpful tips for new and long-time attendees alike. | Amanda Karras & Susana Alcala Wood |
| 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM | Section 1983 Hot Topics | Darren Shulman & Hannah Faddis Moderator: Adam Zurbriggen |
| 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM | Dangerous Crossroads: The Intersection of the First and Fourth Amendments The presentation examines the liability minefield where search and seizure (Fourth Amendment) and free speech/free press (First Amendment) interests intersect and teaches police officers, public officials, and their legal counsel how to deal with First Amendment auditors and others who are actively trying to bait them into overreaction. Topics covered include filming of police activity and other public officials, filming inside public buildings, filming private businesses and customers in an effort to provoke confrontation (and police response), refusal to identify or answer questions, public use of profanity, and the seizure of cameras or cell phones. | Scott MacLatchie |
| 11:45 AM – 12:55 PM | Lunch Independently | |
| 12:55 PM – 1:55 PM | Winning Summary Judgment in Police § 1983 Cases: The Roadmap This presentation provides a practical, defense-focused roadmap for winning summary judgment in police § 1983 litigation. Drawing from real-world case strategy and recent precedent, the presentation walks through how successful cases are built from day one—with an eye toward dispositive motion practice long before summary judgment is filed. Topics include framing constitutional claims to your advantage, leveraging qualified immunity, locking in favorable facts through discovery, neutralizing expert testimony, and crafting a record that forecloses genuine disputes of material fact. Attendees will leave with concrete tools, strategic checklists, and motion-writing techniques designed to maximize the likelihood of dismissal before trial. | Chris Raiti & John Cerney |
| 12:55 PM – 1:55 PM | Drones, Air Taxis, and Everything that Flies: Municipal Law and Changing Uses of Airspace Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) and emerging Urban Air Mobility (UAM) technologies are rapidly reshaping low-altitude airspace, bringing new regulatory, land-use, safety, and enforcement considerations to the municipal level. Critical federal legal developments are affecting the landscape for local governments, including Beyond | Subash Iyer & John Putnam |

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| | Visual Line of Sight regulations proposed in 2025 and expected final regulations in 2026, and statutory permission for local deployment of CounterUAS tools for which regulations are expected in 2026. For local government attorneys, these systems intersect with critical issues such as preemption, land use provisions for landing locations, airspace restrictions, public safety operations, privacy concerns, counter-UAS procurement and risk management, permitting, and coordination with state and federal transportation agencies. This session will equip city and county attorneys with a grounded understanding of the legal frameworks, emerging risks, and actionable tools for governing “new stuff flying around” in their jurisdictions. | |
| 2:05 PM – 3:05 PM | Deadly Force After Barnes The Barnes decision suggested that the actual moment deadly force is used is not the only time to be examined when a claim of unconstitutional force is raised. This was a split in the circuits, but it also is the first opening to a possible "did the officer create a bad situation where deadly force was necessary." This presentation will explore the various actions and reactions to Barnes, include a section of training of the new standard, and will include suggestions for criminal, and civil, interviews after a deadly force situation. | Tom Carpenter |
| 2:05 PM – 3:05 PM | Telecommunications: Strategies for Local Defense As the Feds Go on Offense Again This session will focus on the threats facing local government before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and in Congress. We will outline the threats posed by the FCC's pending Wireline NOI and Wireless NPRM proceedings and by H.R. 2289. Additional insights will be provided on the steps and processes locals may want to implement to mitigate the possible threat, including the need to fund and support litigation. In assessing potential court remedies, reference to the discussion in Lay & Leanza's Municipal Lawyer article about the Supreme Court's Loper and McLaughlin will be featured. | Gerard Lederer, Tillman Lay and Cheryl Leanza Moderator: Gail Karish |
| 3:05 PM – 3:20 PM Blue Room Pre-Function | Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants. | |
| 3:20 PM – 4:50 PM Blue Room | Supreme Court Update The Supreme Court term is full of cases relevant to local governments. Hear from a panel of Supreme Court experts, including two former Solicitor Generals and one of the leading Supreme Court reporters, about how the cases will impact local governments. Issues before the Court include an important Takings & Excessive Fines case in the context of tax foreclosures; the constitutionality of minority redistricting; Fourth Amendment considerations for warrantless entries into a home to render emergency aid; separation of powers and independent administrative agencies; the constitutionality of the birthright citizenship executive order, and more. | Elizabeth Prelogar, Paul Clement & Amy Howe |
| 4:50 PM – 5:20 PM Blue Room | Amicus Awards / Scholarship Announcement Help us celebrate the pro bono authors that help make IMLA's Amicus Program such a success! IMLA will also announce the winner of the IMLA Charles W. Thompson, Jr. Scholarship. | |
| 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM Empire Patio | Welcome Reception Kick off the Seminar with the Welcome Reception taking place at the Omni Shoreham. Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres, drinks and networking! A badge is required for entry and the dress is business casual. We hope to see you there! Badge is required for entry! Guest tickets are available for purchase. | |
| 7:30 PM Muzette | Karaoke Karaoke lovers will join the group going to Muzette – “DC’s first private-roomed karaoke joint: a subterranean karao-cave with a small dining area serving home-style Korean dishes, a long wooden bar, and a huge mural of Adams Morgan.” Each individual will be responsible for the split cost of the room. Room prices will depend on size and how many people sign up. Email Avery to get put on our list. | |

Saturday – April 11, 2026

| Time / Location | Session | Speaker(s) |
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| 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM Blue Room Pre-Function | IMLA Registration & Exhibitors Registration will close from 12:25 PM-2:00 PM. | |
| 7:45 AM – 8:45 AM Empire Ballroom | State/Provincial Breakfast The State/Provincial Breakfast will give attendees an opportunity to sit down with fellow attendees from their area. Advance registration is required. If you would like to add the breakfast to your registration, please email info@imla.org. | |
| 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM | The First Amendment and Section 1983 for Cities This presentation will discuss the top reasons that local governments and their employees get accused of violating the First Amendment and the application of 42 U.S.C. § 1983 to claims and litigation relating to the First Amendment. | Miles Risley & Lynette Perez Moderator: Stacy Nonhof |
| 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM | Collaborative Project Delivery Mechanics: It's not Alternative Anymore For years, the public sector has trailed in adopting what were once called “alternative project delivery models” in public construction. Construction Manager at Risk, Design Build and now Progressive Design Build are expansive tools available to municipalities in almost every state. This panel discussion will introduce municipal counsel to key procurement and contract distinctions between new, collaborative project delivery and traditional low-bid laws. Experienced project counsel will teach the tricks of trade and highlight traps for the unwary when our municipalities use CMAR, DB and PDB. | Tip Torres |
| 10:10 AM – 11:10 AM | Practical Skills for Managing the Defense of Section 1983 Litigation in the Age of AI This presentation is designed to help the new municipal attorney manage the defense of Section 1983 cases more effectively by creating a detailed litigation timeline that includes essential pre-answer tasks, internal investigation and discovery, working with experts and other government witnesses, and the timing and research of potential motions. In addition, we will be discussing how cutting-edge AI tools can assist with these tasks --making you, the attorney, more time and cost efficient. | Beth Hoffman |
| 10:10 AM – 11:10 AM | The Future of Franchising – Broadband The FCC's attempt to reclassify broadband as a telecommunications service under federal law was rejected by Ohio Telecom v. FCC. This has created an opportunity to reassess whether broadband may be subject to franchising requirements under state law. The first broadband franchise was recently signed in the state of Minnesota. This presentation will address changes in federal law, the Minnesota process, and the benefits of broadband franchising for residents and municipalities. | Michael Bradley & Michael Watza |
| 11:10 AM – 11:25 AM Blue Room Pre-Function | Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants. | |
| 11:25 AM – 12:25 PM | So, you've been sued, now what? The best defense to a Section 1983 case, especially complex ones, is a team effort that includes in-house, litigation counsel, and insurance providers. So, you've been sued, what comes next? Listen to perspectives from in-house counsel, outside counsel, and an insurance adjuster about the steps to take to ensure essential pre-litigation steps are taken to defend your municipality from a civil rights case, preservation, selection and engagement of counsel, setting reserves, ensuring communication and coordination among the team tasked with defending your municipality. | Tony Fioretti & David Matheus |
| 11:25 AM – 12:25 PM | | |
| 12:25 PM – 2:00 PM | Lunch Independently | |

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| 1:00 PM – 1:30 PM | RVP/Chair Lunch Meeting We invite all IMLA RVPs and Chairs to bring your own lunch and join us for a meeting to talk about upcoming goals and to meet on another. | |
| 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | Immigration TBD | Sam Dinning |
| 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | Section 1983 TBD | |
| 3:30 PM – 3:45 PM Blue Room Pre-Function | Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants. | |
| 3:45 PM – 4:45 PM | Federal Funding TBD | Erek Barron & Dan Jacobson |
| 3:45 PM – 4:45 PM | State League Meeting: How State Leagues/ Associations can Utilize AI Many state leagues have been helping advise members on best practices for AI use. This session will explore how leagues themselves can utilize AI to help serve their members. | John Wilkerson, Patricia Beety & Benjamin Mount Moderator: Rusi Patel |

Sunday – April 12, 2026

| Time / Location | Session | Speaker(s) |
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| 7:30 AM – 12:55 PM Blue Room Pre-Function | IMLA Registration & Exhibitors | |
| 7:45 AM – 8:45 AM Empire Ballroom | WONK Breakfast For the WONK breakfast you will sign up for a table based on subject matter and sit down with the subject matter expert to enjoy a meal and discuss areas of interest. Advance registration is required. If you would like to add the breakfast to your registration, please email info@imla.org. | |
| 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM | Public Comment – The Good, The Bad, and The Legal As Leslie Knope (Amy Poehler) from the show Parks and Rec humorously stated: “What I hear when I’m being yelled at [during a public meeting] is people caring loudly at me.” This presentation will explore the benefits of public comment, some of the issues commonly associated with public comment, and what you can do to address those issues. | Neal Falgout & Todd Sheeran Moderator: Kelly Schwab |
| 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM | Who Watches the Watchmen? Federal Officers, Local Authority, and the Rule of Law When federal officers operate within a city or county, their presence can raise complex legal and practical questions—especially when their actions appear to conflict with state or local law. This session explores the legal realities facing local governments when federal enforcement activities occur within their jurisdiction, including the limits of federal authority, doctrines of immunity and preemption, and the roles and responsibilities of local officials and law enforcement. This program will examine how constitutional principles, federal statutes, and state law intersect when federal actors are involved in local enforcement activity. Through real-world scenarios and recent examples, participants will consider what options—legal, operational, and political—are available to local governments, what risks accompany various responses, and how to advise elected officials and staff in moments of heightened tension. | Roberto Ramírez & Blake Pennington |
| 10:30 AM – 10:45 AM Blue Room Pre-Function | Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants. | |
| 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM | Navigating PFAS Litigation: Securing Municipal Remediation Funds This session will provide an in-depth look at the legal strategies and current overview of PFAS litigation, focusing on how municipal lawyers can protect clients and secure funds for PFAS remediation. As environmental concerns and regulations intensify, municipal | Mike Stag & Ashley Liuzza |

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| | attorneys must understand statute of limitations issues, emerging regulations, and the current status of nationwide PFAS litigation, including the importance of timely action. Mike Stag is a court appointed member of the Plaintiff's Executive Committee for the AFFF MDL, the national PFAS litigation resulting in settlements currently valued at more than \$12.5 billion. He will share critical insights into the current settlements, future settlements, MDL status, significant deadlines, and the role of municipal attorneys in protecting public health by securing financial resources for their communities. | |
| 10:45 AM – 11:45 AM | Discovery and Not What We Expect: Uncovering Criminal Conduct in Employee Misconduct Investigations | Shannon O'Connor |
| 11:55 AM – 12:55 PM | Assisting Municipal Government Clients with Elections Administration During a Time of Change and Challenges In the past decade, local elections officials and the attorneys who support them have experienced rapid developments in elections technology alongside a broad expansion in both the quantity and nature of public interest in local elections administration. This has also taken place in concert with recent state and federal rulings on voting, voter registration, redistricting, conduct in and around voting locations, and access to information on elections. All of the above further stands on one of the most mature arenas of voting and civil rights caselaw in our nation's history. This presentation will discuss how do attorneys best advise their clients in this dynamic environment? | Martin Desjardins & Michael Haas |
| 11:55 AM – 12:55 PM | Core Concepts and Current Section 1983 Litigation Trends in the Land Use and Development Local government regulations and decisions involving real property are a fertile area for constitutional challenge. Whether defending municipal clients in litigation or advising them on the legality of proposed action, it is important for local government practitioners to be aware of core concepts and litigation trends in Section 1983 litigation in the land use and development arena. This presentation will first provide an overview of the most frequent types of constitutional claims and highlight unique aspects of Section 1983 litigation in this area, using specific examples of common factual scenarios giving rise to liability. After discussing the common types of claims and established frameworks, the second part of this presentation will outline emerging litigation trends to look out for in this ever evolving area. | Ellie Neiberger & Jamie Kilpatrick |
| 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM Smithsonian National Zoological Park | Smithsonian Zoo Trip Join your fellow attendees for a trip to the Smithsonian Zoo, right up the street from the Omni Shoreham. This trip will be free for anyone attending but we will need you to RSVP to secure you or your guests a ticket. Email Avery to get put on our list. | |

Monday – April 13, 2026

| Time / Location | Session | Speaker(s) |
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| 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM Blue Room Pre-Function | IMLA Registration & Exhibitors | |
| 8:10 AM – 8:35 AM Blue Room Pre-Function | Coffee Break / Passport Drawing Participating exhibitors will provide prizes as attendees visit all exhibitor booths to be eligible for the prize drawing. | |
| 8:35 AM – 9:35 AM Blue Room | Councilmembers Gone Wild | Casey Burgess & Kelly Schwab |
| 9:45 AM – 10:45 AM Blue Room | Case Law Update This is a fast-paced presentation that will provide summaries of cases touching on all aspects of local government law from all the circuits. | Doug Haney |

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| 10:45 AM – 11:00 AM Blue Room Pre-Function | Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants. | |
| 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Blue Room | <p>Expectations for Attorney-Client Relationships: Establishing Clear, Strong & Effective Commitments</p> <p>When representing local governments, the Client is the entity (as an organization). Elected officers, appointed officials and staff members may be representatives of the Client. While the Attorney may work closely with those individuals, they typically are not the Clients. Nonetheless, for purposes of this document representatives of the local government are referred to as “Clients.” Although each arrangement will vary, there are certain essential elements of successful Attorney-Client relationships that tend to provide a solid foundation. This presentation outlines recommended mutual expectations between Attorneys and the local government Clients they serve. Its purpose is to promote professionalism, accountability, and effective collaboration in the delivery of municipal legal services. The presentation references the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, specifically 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.13, 2.1, 4.1, 8.4. IMLA will apply for ethics CLE credits for this session. *</p> | Alan Bojorquez, Kuruvilla Oommen & Patrick Baker |

Last Updated: 02/10/26. Please note the agenda is tentative and subject to change.

*Based on state bar approval.