



IMLA 2026 Mid-Year Seminar

Washington, D.C.

April 10-13, 2026

Friday – April 10, 2026

Time / Location	Session	Speaker(s)
9:00 AM – 4:45 PM Blue Room Pre-Function	IMLA Registration & Exhibitors Registration will close from 11:45 PM-12:45 PM.	
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Calvert Room	Attendee Lounge Take advantage of our dedicated Attendee Lounge - A powered, flexible space for productivity and connection. Catch up on emails, host small meetings, or enjoy a networking lunch. Stop by anytime during event hours to work, meet, network, and recharge.	
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 Blue Room	The Interplay between the ADA and Section 1983: Parallel Paths in Disability Civil Rights Enforcement How do the Americans with Disabilities Act and 42 U.S.C. §1983 intersect in disability litigation against public entities and localities? This presentation explores the strategic and doctrinal interplay between the ADA's comprehensive statutory framework and §1983's constitutional enforcement mechanism. Attendees will gain practical insight into when ADA claims preclude §1983 remedies, how sovereign immunity and qualified immunity shape litigation strategy, and what this means for localities, public officials, and practitioners navigating disability civil rights claims. Ideal for anyone involved in government decision making, this session clarifies where these two powerful civil rights tools converge—and where they diverge.	Ashley Ulbricht & Alexander Lindvall Moderator: Kelly Schwab
10:45 AM – 11:45 AM Hampton Room	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 Moderator: Lori Bluhm
11:45 AM – 12:55 PM	Lunch Independently	
12:55 PM – 1:55 PM Hampton Room	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	Chris Raiti & John Cerney Moderator: Sean Cooley

	<p>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.</p>	
<p>12:55 PM – 1:55 PM Blue Room</p>	<p>Local Government Impacts of Federal Immigration Policy</p> <p>Immigration policy and enforcement actions have been a central priority of the current federal administration, with significant impacts on local governments and their residents. This panel will discuss some of those federal actions--including ICE "surges," National Guard deployments, threats to federal grant funding, and affirmative litigation by the federal government--and localities' responses to date.</p>	<p>Sam Dinning & Jon Miller Moderator: Jeff Dorocak</p>
<p>2:05 PM – 3:05 PM Blue Room</p>	<p>Deadly Force After Barnes</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Robert Higgason & Ali Sabzevari Moderator: Erich Eiselt</p>
<p>2:05 PM – 3:05 PM Hampton Room</p>	<p>Telecommunications: Strategies for Local Defense As the Feds Go on Offense Again</p> <p>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 Bright and McGlaughlin cases will be featured.</p>	<p>Gerard Lederer, Tillman Lay and Cheryl Leanza Moderator: Brittany Weidner</p>
<p>3:05 PM – 3:20 PM Blue Room Pre-Function</p>	<p>Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants.</p>	
<p>3:20 PM – 4:50 PM Blue Room</p>	<p>Supreme Court Update</p> <p>This Supreme Court Term is full of cases relevant to local governments. Hear from a panel of Supreme Court experts, including two former Solicitors General 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.</p>	<p>Elizabeth Prelogar, Paul Clement & Amy Howe Moderator: Amanda Karras</p>
<p>4:50 PM – 5:20 PM Blue Room</p>	<p>Amicus Awards / Scholarship Announcement</p> <p>Help us celebrate the pro bono authors that help make IMLA's Amicus Program such a success! IMLA will also announce the winners of various IMLA scholarships.</p>	
<p>5:30 PM – 7:00 PM Empire Patio</p>	<p>Welcome Reception</p> <p>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!</p>	
<p>7:30 PM Muzette</p>	<p>Karaoke</p> <p>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</p>	

	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 at amorris@imla.org.	
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Saturday – April 11, 2026

Time / Location	Session	Speaker(s)
7:30 AM – 5:00 PM Blue Room Pre-Function	IMLA Registration & Exhibitors Registration will close from 12:25 PM-2:00 PM.	
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Calvert Room	Attendee Lounge Take advantage of our dedicated Attendee Lounge - A powered, flexible space for productivity and connection. Catch up on emails, host small meetings, or enjoy a networking lunch. Stop by anytime during event hours to work, meet, network, and recharge.	
7:45 AM – 8:45 AM Empire Ballroom	State/Provincial Breakfast The State/Provincial Breakfast with give attendees an opportunity to sit down with fellow attendees from their area. Advance registration is required.	
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Blue Room Pre-Function	Coffee Break	
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM Blue Room	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 Hampton Room	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 localities in almost every state. This panel discussion will introduce local government 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 localities use CMAR, DB and PDB.	Tip Torres & Shamus Hyland Moderator: Melissa Manderschied
10:10 AM – 11:10 AM Blue Room	Practical Skills for Managing the Defense of Section 1983 Litigation in the Age of AI This presentation is designed to help the new local government 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 Moderator: Darren Shulman
10:10 AM – 11:10 AM Hampton Room	The Future of Franchising - Broadband Franchising, Streaming Video Battles and Municipal Fiber Broadband In this session we will give an overview of the state of Minnesota’s first broadband franchise, including the statutory, city charter, and caselaw in support of broadband franchising. We will also describe how franchising is preferable to limiting local government authority to permitting. Next we will turn your attention to how every local government is being underpaid in franchise fees due to streaming and what they can do about it. And finally, a look at local government provisioning of Broadband: How it provides rate and service control that the private sector is loathe to surrender.	Michael Bradley, Michael Watzka & Nancy Werner Moderator: Todd Starr
11:10 AM – 11:25 AM Blue Room Pre-Function	Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants.	

<p>11:25 AM – 12:25 PM Hampton Room</p>	<p>Drones, Air Taxis, and Everything that Flies: Local Government Law and Changing Uses of Airspace</p> <p>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 local government level. Critical federal legal developments are affecting the landscape for local governments, including Beyond 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.</p>	<p>Subash Iyer & John Putnam Moderator: Roscoe Leslie</p>
<p>11:25 AM – 12:25 PM Blue Room</p>	<p>Should a nolle prosequi after a reversed conviction always be a favorable termination?</p> <p>This presentation will examine the issues for local governments in defending reversed conviction cases in circumstances where the prosecutor elected not to proceed with a new trial for reasons unrelated to the guilt or innocence of the criminal defendant. Retrying criminal cases from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s can be nearly impossible due to missing or deceased witnesses and police officers, poorly maintained or missing files and outdated police practices. The same issues arise for localities defending § 1983 claims arising out of the original criminal prosecution. The presentation will also address additional issues in defending these claims and other cases with tolled statutes of limitations, including uncapped liability and huge exposure, indemnification and conflicts issues, and the difficulties of defending Monell claims based on outdated policies and practices. Finally, the presentation will address potential solutions for these various issues.</p>	<p>Edward Whitesell, Jr. & Adam Johnson Moderator: Kimberly Rehberg</p>
<p>12:25 PM – 2:00 PM</p>	<p>Lunch Independently</p>	
<p>1:00 PM – 1:30 PM</p>	<p>RVP/Chair Lunch Meeting</p> <p>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 one another.</p>	
<p>2:00 PM – 3:30 PM Hampton Room</p>	<p>So, you’ve been sued, now what?</p> <p>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 locality from a civil rights case, preservation, selection and engagement of counsel, setting reserves, ensuring communication and coordination among the team tasked with defending your locality.</p>	<p>Tony Fioretti, David Mathues and Kelly Cumberworth Moderator: Patricia Link</p>
<p>2:00 PM – 3:30 PM Blue Room</p>	<p>Section 1983 Hot Topics</p> <p>This session will explore recent Circuit decisions in Section 1983 litigation, including developments addressing qualified immunity, Fourth Amendment, and First Amendment claims, in an interactive format that asks attendees to decide, “how did the court rule?”</p>	<p>Darren Shulman & Hannah Faddis Moderator: Adam Zurbriggen</p>
<p>3:30 PM – 3:45 PM Blue Room Pre-Function</p>	<p>Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants.</p>	
<p>3:45 PM – 4:45 PM</p>	<p>Federal Funding</p> <p>Federal funding for local governments under the current administration places increased emphasis on aligning policies with federal policy priorities, alongside</p>	<p>Erek Barron & Daniel Jacobson Moderator: James Benjamin, Jr.</p>

	traditional requirements for eligibility, reporting, and allowable use of funds. Local agencies face stricter oversight, including more detailed compliance. Funding processes have also become less predictable at times, with delays or revised requirements as programs are reviewed. At the same time, many of these conditions are being challenged legally, creating an evolving and sometimes uncertain funding landscape. This session will explore these challenges and provide insight into how local governments are navigating them.	
3:45 PM – 4:45 PM	State League: 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 & Christie Weidermann Moderator: Rusi Patel

Sunday – April 12, 2026

Time / Location	Session	Speaker(s)
7:30 AM – 12:55 PM Blue Room Pre-Function	IMLA Registration & Exhibitors	
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Calvert Room	Attendee Lounge Take advantage of our dedicated Attendee Lounge - A powered, flexible space for productivity and connection. Catch up on emails, host small meetings, or enjoy a networking lunch. Stop by anytime during event hours to work, meet, network, and recharge.	
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.	
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Blue Room Pre-Function	Coffee Break	
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM Hampton Room	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 Falgoust & Todd Sheeran Moderator: Patricia Beety
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM Blue Room	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 Moderator: Rusi Patel
10:30 AM – 10:45 AM Blue Room Pre-Function	Coffee Break – Coffee, Tea and Lemonade available to registrants.	

<p>10:45 AM – 11:45 AM Hampton Room</p>	<p>Navigating PFAS Litigation: Securing Local Government Remediation Funds</p> <p>This session will provide an in-depth look at the legal strategies and current overview of PFAS litigation, focusing on how local government lawyers can protect clients and secure funds for PFAS remediation. As environmental concerns and regulations intensify, local government 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 local government attorneys in protecting public health by securing financial resources for their communities.</p>	<p>Mike Stag & Ashley Liuzza Moderator: Nina Hickson</p>
<p>10:45 AM – 11:45 AM Blue Room</p>	<p>Discovery and Not What We Expect: Uncovering Criminal Conduct in Employee Misconduct Investigations</p> <p>This presentation will address situations where a public employees conduct could be punished or disciplined by their employer and be potentially subject to criminal investigation or prosecution. The presentation will address the Constitutional Considerations with the intersection of workplace Investigations & potential criminal misconduct, along with other Brady / Giglo issues that may be implicated with police officers under investigation. The presentation will provide case studies to lay out different scenarios and outcomes.</p>	<p>Shannon O’Connor Moderator: Jeannine Williams</p>
<p>11:55 AM – 12:55 PM Hampton Room</p>	<p>Assisting Local Government Clients with Elections Administration During a Time of Change and Challenges</p> <p>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 case law in our nation’s history. This presentation will discuss how do attorneys best advise their clients in this dynamic environment?</p>	<p>Martin Desjardins & Michael Haas Moderator: Deanna Shahnam</p>
<p>11:55 AM – 12:55 PM Blue Room</p>	<p>Core Concepts and Current Section 1983 Litigation Trends in the Land Use and Development Context</p> <p>Local government regulations and decisions involving real property are a fertile area for constitutional challenges. Whether defending local government 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.</p>	<p>Ellie Neiberger Moderator: Todd Sheeran</p>
<p>1:30 PM – 3:00 PM Smithsonian National Zoological Park</p>	<p>Smithsonian Zoo Trip</p> <p>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.</p>	

Monday – April 13, 2026

Time / Location	Session	Speaker(s)
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM Blue Room Pre-Function	IMLA Registration & Exhibitors	
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM Calvert Room	Attendee Lounge Take advantage of our dedicated Attendee Lounge - A powered, flexible space for productivity and connection. Catch up on emails, host small meetings, or enjoy a networking lunch. Stop by anytime during event hours to work, meet, network, and recharge.	
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 This presentation explores real-life experiences of working with unpredictable or challenging local government councils, blending cautionary tales with moments of unexpected humor. Drawing from lessons learned in the trenches, it highlights strategies for maintaining professionalism despite political turbulence. Attendees will leave with practical tools and best practices for navigating the chaos with confidence and composure.	Casey Burgess & Kelly Schwab Moderator: Jeff Dana
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 Moderator: Meredith Ladd
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	Expectations for Attorney-Client Relationships: Establishing Clear, Strong & Effective Commitments 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 local government 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.	Alan Bojorquez, Kuruvilla Oommen & Patrick Baker Moderator: Patricia Link

Last Updated: 03/30/26. Please note the agenda is tentative and subject to change.