2025 MSBA Legal Summit
Speaker Guide

Thank you for submitting a program proposal for the 2025 MSBA Legal Summit. We are excited to have you take part in our in-person Legal Summit in Ocean City, Maryland from June 4-6, 2025. This year, the event will once again be held at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, Maryland. Speakers must appear in person to participate, and no virtual presentations will be supported.

Please take a few moments to review this Speaker Guide as it has important and comprehensive information regarding deadlines, registration information, onboarding sessions and more. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at *eventsteam@msba.org*

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Communications:

Communications related to the programs and speakers will be sent to all individuals who submitted a program *and* any speakers identified in the program submission form. Please help us ensure everyone receives the information they need, by forwarding our communications as needed to everyone engaged with your program. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

Conference App:

For several years the Legal Summit has been as paperless as possible and this will continue. We will be utilizing a conference mobile app and microsite to house the event agenda, materials, and other information. For information on how to download the mobile app "MSBA Learn" please use **App Store Download** or **Apps on Google Play**

More details will be provided in future updates to this 2025 MSBA Legal Summit Speaker Guide, including login details, our microsite URL, and more.

Convention Center:

The Roland E. Powell Convention Center is a very large venue, and its classrooms will accommodate a significant number of attendees while maintaining accessibility aisles. Additionally, with large open hallways, easy access to the outdoors, and beautiful views of Assawoman Bay, the venue will create an exciting and comfortable experience for speakers and attendees.

The Convention Center provides ample free surface parking. So no matter where you stay (see hotel information section below) you can easily access the Convention Center.

Classroom Setup:

Classrooms will be located on the 2nd floor of the Convention Center and will be accessible by steps, escalator, and elevator. All classrooms will be equipped with the following to support the speakers in the classroom:

- Podium
- Head table (seating for 4)
- Two (2) wireless, handheld microphones
- LCD projector & screen
- Remote slide controller, and
- MacBook laptop

Presenters may bring their own computer with an HDMI output if preferred. Otherwise, it is recommended to bring any presentations or videos on a USB thumb drive. Although WiFi is available in the classroom, WiFi speeds are not guaranteed, so any videos requiring playback should be downloaded to the thumb drive described above. Classrooms *will not* be equipped to support any virtual, off site speakers

Presentations:

All scheduled presentations are 1-hour in length. As a best practice, plan for about 50 minutes of content to allow room for discussion and questions. Written materials *are required* so that as many sessions as possible qualify for CLE credit with the surrounding MCLE states. Speakers are required to be present in person and no virtual speakers are permitted.

We will provide a Google Slides and PowerPoint template for your use. We strongly encourage the use of the slide templates so that presentations look uniform; however, it is not mandatory. Links to the slide templates will be provided in updates to this Speaker Guide.

Conference Content

We seek programs that provide practical, timely, immediately applicable skills and information to our attendees. All program proposals related to the practice of law are welcome. Strong consideration will be given to proposals covering the following topics:

- Ethics
- Trial Skills
- Administrative Law
- Transactional Law
- Alternative Dispute Resolution

Any current, or potential industry partners or vendors who wish to submit a program proposal must first contact our sales representative Nicola Tate, with Association Media Group (AMG) at ntate@associationmediagroup.com, to discuss their proposed topic.

Speaker Registration:

All speakers will receive a coupon code in the next update to this Speaker Guide to register for the 2025 Legal Summit at a reduced rate. Use the coupon code to register for $279.

Speakers are highly encouraged to register and attend the full 2025 Legal Summit event to hear from our keynote speakers, attend over 50 programs, engage in unique networking events, and support their colleagues that are also presenting. To the extent that a speaker is unable to attend the conference, they may attend for their specific program without registering for the full event.

Deadlines & Important Dates:

Below is a list of some important deadlines to keep in mind:

1. **March 7, 2025** - Final list of speakers, program titles, and descriptions are due. We will circulate the first version of the digital conference brochure in late March for feedback and corrections. Email updates to eventsteam@msba.org.

2. **March 14, 2025** - All speaker bios and high-resolution headshots in *.jpeg or .png file format*, should be submitted to the upload link we'll provide. Simply drag and drop your headshot/bio to upload it to the folder. It's important to share a high-resolution photo for use on social media, and not a *screenshot* from your website. Also, please share any *social media handles* you might have in your bio so we can use them to promote your participation. The MSBA marketing team will be in touch with shareable images and language to use in your post!

    Requested Bio Format (try to limit bullets to 10):

    Name
    Court, Firm or Agency and position there (e.g. administrative judge, partner, shareholder, associate)
    ● Practice area, years practiced and concentrations
    ● For Judges, courts served and years of appointment
    ● Publications, articles, teaching positions
    ● Honors, awards, recognitions
    ● Memberships and/or service
    ● Education

3. **April 11, 2025** - Final Deadline for all materials! It's helpful if materials are provided sooner, but at minimum, materials are needed by this date. Thank you in advance for complying with this deadline. Any slide decks should be submitted in native format and not as PDFs. This ensures the team has a copy of the program slides in case of emergencies. We'll provide an upload link for materials.

4. **May 9, 2025 at 12 noon**– Speaker onboarding and orientation. This session will be held via Zoom and will cover final details and best practices for our presenters. The session will also be recorded, and the recording and slides will be circulated after the event.
5. **June 4 – 6, 2025** – MSBA Legal Summit!

Digital Legal Summit & Legal Summit Series:

The MSBA Legal Summit offers incredible value to legal professionals, including 50+ educational programs, keynote speakers, 40+ exhibitors, networking opportunities, and more. Because the value of this event is both in the education provided, but also the experience, this 2025 Legal Summit will be held 100% in person.

That stated, we will be recording select programs during the event. These recorded programs will be made available to attendees after the Legal Summit. In addition, some of the program proposals will be chosen for our Legal Summit Series, which will be streamed live from May through August as stand alone webinars, rather than being presented in person in June in Ocean City. All Legal Summit Series webinars will be available to attendees of the Legal Summit in Ocean City as part of their registration.

Hotel Details:

The MSBA is working with several hotels conveniently located close to the Convention Center. We've worked hard to provide a variety of options at various price points to accommodate our speakers and attendees. Travel expenses are not covered for speakers by the MSBA. We will provide a hotel guide detailing the available venues and negotiated group rates for the Legal Summit in the next update of this Speakers Guide.

Accessibility:

The MSBA is committed to providing an event with educational and networking opportunities to all attendees regardless of disability. As a speaker, we ask you to consider the suggestions for creating accessible materials and presentations, written by a committee of MSBA volunteers, and attached hereto as "Appendix A".

Questions?

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us at **eventsteam@msba.org**. Thank you again for your time and effort in submitting your program. We are excited to have you part of our signature annual event!

We'll see you in Ocean City in June!

APPENDIX "A"

Tips on Accessibility: E.g. Annual Meeting

Prepared and compiled by:
- *Gary C. Norman, Esq., L.L.M.[1]*
- *Richard E. Shermanski, Jr. Esq.[2]*
- *and Meredith L. Girard, Esq.[3]*

Emphatically, ". . .web accessibility [and other forms of accessibility] aims to facilitate access for individuals with diverse disabilities, such as mobility impairments, visual and hearing impairments, epilepsy, and cognitive impairments that can pose challenges when interacting with computers."[4] Disability has been long overlooked as a dimension of diversity within the legal profession, making affirmative efforts critical.

I.   Materials

Ensuring accessible but usable documents or vehicles is a positive and not a resource burden. Take notice:

"If a document is created accessibly, it can be styled very effectively without affecting the underlying information. In fact, many of the tools that allow for the creation of accessible documents can make the process of visually styling a document easier. For instance, a Word user can set up the heading structure of their document once, and then change visual design used with. . .little effort as all changes will propagate through the pre-styled elements."[5]

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[1] Mr. Norman is a member of the Board of Governors completing a term in May 2024. He is a Past Fellow of the Leadership Academy.

[2] Mr. Shermanski is a Past Fellow of the Leadership Academy, having graduated in June 2024. He serves on the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee of the MSBA.

[3] Ms. Girard is an ally of lawyers and law students with disabilities. She serves on the provision of Legal Services Committee at the Access to Justice Commission that the MSBA orchestrates and staffs.

[4] *See generally*, Nancy Rapp, Esq. *Website Accessibility Guidelines for Law Firms: Compliance and Best Practices*, June 10, 2023, https://www.msba.org/website-accessibility-guidelines-for-law-firms-compliance-and-best-practices/

[5] *See generally*, *Global Awareness Accessibility Day Post One: The Quick and Dirty Guide to Accessible Document Creation*, National Federation for the Blind, May 15, 2021,

The following tips will help make your written materials accessible:

Word: Documents in Word can be easily converted into other formats. In this regard, one should start with Word when seeking to create other formats. You might consider providing materials in both Word and PDF formats to accommodate different usability needs. Microsoft Word has an "Accessibility Checker" function you can use to review your materials for accessibility.

PDF: Starting with an accessible source document is key. When converting to PDF, use settings that retain tags and accessibility formatting. Avoid "Print to PDF" settings as they will remove tags and accessibility formatting.

Adobe has an accessibility checker function you can use to address accessibility issues, such as a missing document description or title. It looks for common elements that need further action, such as scanned text, form fields, tables, and images. See: https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html

II.   Tips on Documents and on Presentations

A. Generally

Tip: People with sensory disabilities or print-based disabilities prefer and often request that documents or slides particularly be provided in advance. For people with sensory or print-based disabilities who rely on a "screen-reader" or some form of text-to-speech, the best practice is to provide them documents either in advance or after a meeting, not as a web link in a "chat" at Zoom.

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https://nfb.org/blog/global-accessibility-awareness-day-post-one-quick-and-dirty-guide-accessible-document-creation

Text Format Tips: Consider the following when creating Power Point based presentations.

- Use a 16-point font size when possible, but if that is not practical, at least 14 points
- Avoid highly stylized typefaces
- Use easy-to-read fonts with clearly defined letters and clear spacing between the letters, such as sans-serif fonts (e.g., Helvetica, Verdana, Arial)
- Avoid using blocks of capital letters for more than a couple of words
- Spell out numbers
- Align all text on the left, rather than centered or right justified
- Use one-inch margins
- Avoid columns
- Avoid lines of text longer than six inches (for persons using magnifiers)
- Do not place text directly over or wrap text around an image
- Use at least 1.5 spacing between lines of text paragraphs Contrast and Color
- Ensure good contrast between the text and background colors
- Use black text
- Use cream instead of white paper for printed materials
- Use a single solid color for documents with a colored background Paper
- Choose a matte rather than a glossy finish

B. **<u>Accessible Presentation Tips</u>**:

If you are the organizer of a presentation, check-in with all of your presenters if they require any reasonable accommodation. We provide additional tips in facilitating a fruitful presentation that values our colleagues with disabilities. We emphasize that many adjustments for disability are also helpful to those without disabilities.

- At the start of the meeting, orally describe the room layout and location of restrooms, emergency exits, break rooms, and food/beverages. Provide an overview of the presentation at the start and a summary of the key points at the end.
- Allow space for support personnel, e.g. Sign Language Interpreters.
- Avoid the use of flashing lights and loud sounds.
- Ensure that the presentation area and screens are viewable from all areas of the room.
- Provide all materials (papers, PowerPoints, agendas, slides) in alternative formats or in accessible formats. Ideally, provide this advance of the meeting/event.
- Make electronic versions of materials available in plain text, rich text, or Microsoft Word formats. Make materials available in advance to support personnel (e.g. Sign Language Interpreters or language interpreters) to familiarize themselves with the materials and ask any questions. Remember to remind the speakers and the audience as to interpreters.
- Allow only one person to speak at a time. This will also help the captioner(s) and ASL interpreter(s) more accurately interpret..
- Have each person say their name each time they speak so that attendees, captioners, and interpreters know who is speaking.

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- Always face the audience.
- Keep hands and other objects away from your mouth when speaking
- Be visible to everyone; stand in good light or make sure your camera is on you and well lit
- Do not stand in front of a window or bright screen in order to avoid the silhouette effect
- Speak in well-modulated tones and at a pace that allows Sign Language Interpreters to interpret accurately

C. Good Presentation Tips in General

As previously stated, what helps people with disabilities, those tips are probably "best practices" or tips in general.

- Keep the presentation clear, simple, concise, and organized. Use simple language; avoid acronyms, jargon, and idioms
- Give attendees enough time to process information by pausing between topics.
- This provides tips as to Question and Answer or Q&A: Instruct attendees to wait to be called on, to not interrupt, to speak one at a time, and to speak clearly into the microphone. Provide attendees with the option of writing their questions ahead of time, which the presenters can then read before responding

III. Web and Mobile Accessibility

To be provided in a future "technical assistance tip sheet," be mindful of the obligations by the MSBA as well as its stakeholders to provide accessible but usable web or mobile platforms.

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IV.   Resources

Consider the following source materials we consulted.

- Nancy Rapp, Esq. *Website Accessibility Guidelines for Law Firms: Compliance and Best Practices*, June 10, 2024, https://www.msba.org/website-accessibility-guidelines-for-law-firms-compliance-and-best-practices/
- *Global Awareness Accessibility Day Post One: The Quick and Dirty Guide to Accessible Document Creation*, National Federation for the Blind, May 15, 2021, https://nfb.org/blog/global-accessibility-awareness-day-post-one-quick-and-dirty-guide-accessible-document-creation
- Several resources, including as to web accessibility testing, exist. While these technical assistance documents are helpful as a "reminder," all of us should take annual one of the free courses or more offered by the National Federation for the Blind. Additionally, the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (hereinafter "Maryland Library") is a helpful resource.
- The American Bar Association's *Accessible Meetings Toolkit* is an excellent resource. *See*, https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/commission-disability-rights/accessible-meetings-toolkit.pdf