
T H E M I N N E S O T A
C O U N T Y A T T O R N E Y S
A S S O C I A T I O N

February 20, 2025

Senator Ron Latz
3105 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Warren Limmer
2221 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Peggy Scott
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Tina Liebling
5th Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Paul Novotny
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Kelly Moller
5th Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Report of Use of Training Grant Funds

Dear Legislators:

As you know, The Minnesota County Attorneys Association must report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over public safety policy and finance on the training provided with \$100,000 grant proceeds that was provided during the last Legislative Session. Attached is the report.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Small
Executive Director

**Prosecutor Training Grant Program A-PTG-2024-MCAA-003
Legislative Committee Report**

Train the Trainer

Course Objectives: 1. Explain how the human brain learns. 2. Explain how instruction helps people learn more effectively and efficiently. 3. Use research-based instructional strategies to promote different kinds of learning. 4. Use effective feedback to promote trial advocacy skill development. 5. Apply instructional methods, strategies, and technology to design effective and efficient training.

Faculty included: Jim Hall, Hallmentum, Mark Rubin, St. Louis County Attorney, Retired and Victor Vieth, Zero Abuse Project.

The course was held at MCAA Office in St. Paul on May 1 - 3, 2024, and 10 Assistant County Attorneys were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: Evaluations were completed by 8 of the 10 seminar participants. The overall value of the course was 4.75 out of 5.00. The students were asked to rate each speaker in four areas – length of session, level of detail covered, session usefulness and meeting expectations for the topic. All of the speaker averages were 4.57 or higher. The most liked session was Mark Rubin’s How to Give Effective Feedback: Live Critique. The least liked session was the Elimination of Bias session.

We also received the following comments and suggestions: Best course I have been to in years. The class size was great! I like the more intimate class size. It energized me after talking to other prosecutors during lunch breaks. Great speaker. Easy two days to be alternative, if interested. Really enjoyed it & learned from it. I really hope that MCAA will offer more trainings for senior attorneys. While it is important for new prosecutors to receive training, seasoned attorneys benefit from trainings tailored to them just as much.

Trial Advocacy for New Attorneys

Course Summary: The value-add of this program is the small group workshops and exercises. Our Trial Advocacy course provides an immersive experience. Trial Advocacy reinforces the presentations from experienced faculty by forcing students to use the lessons gleaned from the general sessions. Students take the concepts presented into a small group workshop and apply them to the fact pattern. Students then try out the newly acquired skills in the exercise. The faculty critique is the polish.

The entire week functions as an integrated whole. Faculty presenting on the various stages of a trial are tasked with giving information generally applicable to the art of prosecution. Small Group Leaders guide students as they apply the lessons to the specific fact pattern. The faculty critique evaluates the students’ performances and suggests areas for improvement. The small group and exercises are the most important component.

Faculty included: Scott Buhler, Assistant Polk County Attorney; Pam Foss, Chief Assistant Clay County Attorney; Aaron Welch, Senior Assistant St. Louis County Attorney, Criminal Division – Virginia; Scott Springer, Assistant Mower County Attorney; Adam Tomczik, Assistant Hennepin County Attorney; Eric Woodford, Chief Deputy Olmsted County Attorney; Scott Hersey, MCAA Appellate Services; Mike Hanson, Senior Assistant Blue Earth County Attorney; Michael Debolt, Assistant Olmsted County Attorney; Bill Lemons, Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor; Tara Ferguson Lopez, Senior Assistant Hennepin County Attorney; Kelsey Kelly, Assistant Anoka County Attorney; Michelle Zehnder Fischer,

Nicollet County Attorney; David Hemming, Assistant Chisago County Attorney; Dan Vlieger, Assistant Attorney General; Stacy St. George, Assistant Criminal Division Head, Dakota County Attorney's Office; Cheri Townsend, Chief Deputy Dakota County Attorney; Tom Wedes, Assistant Criminal Division Head, Washington County Attorney's Office; Cameron Walkowiak, Brainerd Police Department; Jason Sanderson, Crow Wing County Sheriff; Jacob Revering, Crow Wing County Sheriff; Parker Moan, Pequot Lakes Police Department; Marshall Garbe, Breezy Point Police Department; Nick Otterson, MN State Patrol; Bryan Bearce, MN State Patrol; Will Riley, Crow Wing County Community Services; Katie Olson, Crow Wing County Community Services; and Julie Charpentier, Crow Wing County Attorney's Office.

The course was held at Camp Ripley in Little Falls on June 25 - 28, 2024, and 33 County Attorneys and Assistant County Attorneys were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: Evaluations were completed by 29 of the 33 seminar participants. The overall value of the course was 8.60 out of 10.00. When asked about the overall level of the course, the summary was: 3 Too Intensive? 2 Too Easy? 24 Just Right? Because this course is a combination of lecture and small group work, we ask the students about the amount of individual instruction. Their overall feelings were: 0 Too Much? 5 Too Little? 25 Just Right?

For future courses, it was suggested we add the following topics: More on exhibits. Make a record class would be helpful, top most common reversible errors, objections. Motions in Limine, objections. Trial prep with witnesses. Rules of evidence. Examples of laying foundation.

When asked if they had any additional thoughts they would like to share about your experience, we received the following comments: More time to practice during the day. Make the course longer. Great networking opportunity. Thankful for the presenters/faculty to provide so much information and information. This was an intense and at times stressful, but worthwhile experience. I felt I learned a lot.

Minnesota's New Tax-Forfeited Property Legislation Webinar

Course Summary: Last May, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Tyler v. Hennepin County that it is unconstitutional under federal law for a Minnesota county to retain the proceeds from the sale of tax-forfeited property that exceed the tax debt on the property. Come learn about the new legislation passed this session that reformed Minnesota's process for handling tax-delinquent property from two Assistant County Attorneys who worked on the legislation.

The webinar was held from noon to 1:00 pm, on July 24, 2024, originating from the MCAA Office in St. Paul, MN. 70 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: The overall value of the class 98% of participants thought the course was very good to excellent. When rating the speaker for the course 97% said the program met their expectations, 98% thought you demonstrated knowledge of the subject and 95% were easy to understand.

We also received the following comments: The speakers were very knowledgeable and confident, which helped me to understand the material even though it is not my area of practice. Thanks! More on this subject as its impact plays out; this could've been a several hour CLE - I hope there will be a follow up; I don't anticipate personally practicing and advising staff in this area, so the information was shared at a level that a novice or non-expert could understand. Thanks for being willing to answer all of the random questions (including mine). These two Assistant County Attorneys did an excellent job of communicating very important information in an understandable way.

Legislative Update Webinar

Course Summary: Join MCAA Executive Director Robert Small to find out what happened this Legislative session and how it will impact your practice.

The webinar was held from noon to 1:00 pm, on July 31, 2024, originating from the MCAA Office in St. Paul, MN. 68 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: We received very positive ratings for the seminar. For the overall value of the class, all of participants thought the course was very good to excellent. When rating the speaker for the course 93% said the program met their expectations, 99% thought he demonstrated knowledge of the subject and all thought he was easy to understand.

We also received the following comments: Bob always knocks it out of the park! Good job, Bob! We are lucky to have you at the helm! You did an excellent job! Thanks Bob! Your updates are very appreciated. Greatly appreciated this CLE!!! Thank you so much, Bob. You are a tremendous leader - thank you for ALL of your work!!

MCAA Board of Directors Leadership Forum

Course Summary: Yearly meeting of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and interested County Attorneys for CLE credit and setting the strategic direction for the coming year. This year's theme was Building Bridges, Collaboration, and Partnerships. Topics to include: Clemency Review Commission, BCA, Department of Commerce, and the Fire Marshall, along with a session on Prosecutorial Discretion and Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention.

Faculty included: Andrea Bexell, Deputy State Fire Marshal Investigator/External Investigations Training Coordinator; Drew Evans, Superintendent, MN Bureau Of Criminal Apprehension; Kathleen Heaney, Sherburne County Attorney; Molly Hicken, Cook County Attorney; Steve Kritzeck, Minnesota Commerce Fraud Bureau; Kevin Magnuson, Washington County Attorney; Kristen Nelsen, Mower County Attorney; Mark Ostrem, Olmsted County Attorney; Don Ryan, Crow Wing County Attorney and Carli Stark, Clemency Review Commission.

The course was held at the Greysolon Ballroom in Duluth on September 25 - 26, 2024, and 55 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: Evaluations were completed by 12 of the 52 seminar participants. The students were asked to rate each speaker in two areas - information content and presentation style based on a scale of 1, being poor to 5, being excellent. The speaker averages were 4.14 for usefulness and 4.31 for level of detail. The most liked session was on Advantages of Minnesota Commerce Fraud Bureau, Local Law Enforcement Agencies, & State Fire Marshall Partnerships. The least liked session was Clemency Review Commission.

We received the following suggestions to improve the course: This is my most valued CLE/training I attend each year. The networking and casual conversation is most critical. I hope to be a resource to others as well as other electeds have been to me. I like the mixture of sessions addressing partners we work with as well as internal office issues.

Ethical Issues for Government Attorneys Webinar

Course Summary: In this presentation, our experienced faculty review the ethics rules and discuss their application as they work realistic case scenarios facing criminal and civil government attorneys. The goal is to expose you to the rules and their application in order to alert you to potential ethical issues and situations.

The webinar was held from noon to 1:00 pm, on September 25, 2024, originating from the MCAA Office in St. Paul, MN. Over 244 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: For the overall value of the class, 97% of participants thought the course was good to excellent. When rating the speaker for the course 99% said the program met their expectations, they all thought they demonstrated knowledge of the subject and were easy to understand.

We also received the following comments: The humorous slides were a very nice and welcome addition, these topics are very, very dry so I thought they were tastefully interspersed to help keep attention! Each speaker was very knowledgeable about their subject matter and it was easy for me to understand and track what each speaker was trying to get across--even if the subject matter was outside the specific area of government work that I do. Great seminar!!! I believe there is enough information to have an entire hour or more on just the criminal side of ethical issues for Government attorneys. Great combination of topics and presenters. Thank you! This MCAA CLE was particularly well done - focused, helpful content presented clearly and efficiently. Will Topka was excellent!! I think you could do separate sessions for civil ethics vs. prosecutor ethics.

51st Annual MFSRC/MCAA Annual Conference

Course Summary: MCAA co-hosted twenty-three Continuing Legal Education sessions with MFSRC specifically designed for child support professionals.

The conference was held October 9 – 11, 2024, at Treasure Island Resort and Casino. Over 414 County Attorneys, Assistants and Child Support officers were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: 62% of attendees thought the conference would help them improve their on-the-job effectiveness. 51% of attendees gave the conference a 5 out of 5 saying that the conference was great. We also received the following comments: I liked the 101 sessions a lot. This was a great conference! I loved the SRL2 and Tidy Forms sessions. Big takeaways from those. Missed a breakout specific to supervisors such as reports, performance or round table. This was one of the best conferences ever. Not enough for an experienced worker. Longer breakout sessions would be helpful.

2024 CHIPS Conference

Course Summary: Jacqueline Beaulieu, Senior Assistant Hennepin County Attorney; Heather Capistrant, Assistant Ramsey County Attorney; Mark Erickson, Outreach and Development Manager, Tribal Training and Certification Partnership; Larissa Littlewolf, Associate Director, Tribal Training and Certification Partnership; Jennifer Christensen, Juvenile Division Manager, Carver County Attorney's Office; Aimee Cupelli, Assistant Chisago County Attorney; Katie Schur, Assistant Otter Tail County Attorney; Gayle Borchert, Senior Assistant Stearns County Attorney; Melissa Jacobson, Senior Assistant Hennepin County Attorney; Erin Johnson, Assistant Washington County Attorney; Max Page, Senior Assistant Hennepin County Attorney; Therese Price, Assistant Hennepin County Attorney; Maggie Vickerman, Assistant Hennepin County Attorney; Laura Welle, Assistant Morrison County Attorney; Jennifer Baudry, MN DHS; Paul Minehart, MN DHS; Devon Gilchrist, MN DHS; Katie Stock, Chief Assistant Clay County Attorney;

Kevin Fleming, Director of the Youth Justice and Wellness Division, Ramsey County Attorney's Office; Betsey Urbas, Assistant Washington County Attorney; Casey Hardy, Assistant Blue Earth County Attorney; Tracy Harris, Assistant Sherburne County Attorney; Michelle Barnes, Assistant Anoka County Attorney; Rachel Cornelius, Waseca County Attorney; and Sara Westrum, Assistant Anoka County Attorney all presented at this year's conference. We had a nice mix of large, medium and small counties.

The course was held at Breezy Point Resort in Breezy Point on September 23 - 25, 2024, and 91 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: The overall rating for the course was 8.83 out of 10. The materials were rated a 8.5 out of 10, but the facility was only given a 5.6. We also received the following comments: This is the Most useful annual training we have. Nice to have access to CHIPS attorneys. I found the info about areas of law such as Truancy very helpful. It's helpful to know how that area of law overlaps with more traditional CHIPS. Use new practices and ways other counties approach the truancy, coordinate visits, etc.

Veterans Restorative Justice Act Update Webinar

Course Summary: Learn from nationally acclaimed attorney and military veteran, Brock Hunter, about the Minnesota's Veterans Restorative Justice Act. This webinar will provide an overview of how the Veterans Restorative Justice Act operates.

The webinar was held from noon to 1:00 pm, on October 30, originating from the MCAA Office in St. Paul, MN. 118 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: Students had the following thoughts: I wish he had spent more time on the statute and how it functions. I get the need to understand WHY it is place, but we need to know how it works in real life. One of the best presentations ever. Every county attorney and assistant county attorney should watch this. Always enjoy hearing Mr. Hunter give presentations on Veterans Court and the like. He brings a very high level of intelligence to his presentations and communicates in a very effective manner.

2024 SDP/SPP Commitment Training

Course Summary: Topics include Practice Pointers; Overview of DOC SDP/SPP screening and referral process; Overview of Risk Assessment Tools and case studies.

Faculty included: Kristy Cariveau, Assistant Hennepin County Attorney; Jim Zuleger, Assistant Washington County Attorney; Angela Kiese, Assistant Attorney General; Jennifer Paulus, Department of Corrections; Dr. Elizabeth Barbo, Forensic Psychologist, Fourth Judicial District; Elizabeth Beltaos, Hennepin County; and Lisa Jones, Assistant Attorney General.

The course was held at the MCAA Offices in St. Paul on November 28, 2024, and 28 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: Terrific cases studies. Thank you for sharing your experiences. Really appreciate hearing how experts handled trying cases. Great things to think about for future cases. Great work on CMT cases, Also great presentations. Lots of strategic things to think about when trying a case. These presentations were so interesting and helpful. Very Interesting.

Detainers Webinar

Course Summary: Do you have an open case with a defendant in prison? This presentation will discuss the law and procedures under the Interstate Agreement on Detainers Act and the Uniform Mandatory Disposition of Detainers Act. Learn when and how these acts apply and how to avoid getting your case dismissed with prejudice.

The webinar was held from noon to 1:00 pm, on November 20, originating from the MCAA Office in St. Paul, MN. 113 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: Overall the attendees found the CLE useful. The provided the following recommendations: This was an incredibly informative CLE - thank you, MCAA and Judi! Very well put together and informative. thank you Great training-excellent step by step explanation of actions. The presenter was VERY knowledgeable and presented at a level anyone could understand. Thank you! Step by step list of "To Do's" would be great. Appreciate the citations in the materials. Good CLE, subject matter a little dry but presenter did a good job. Judi really knows this subject well.

47th Annual MCAA Meeting

Course Summary: Annual opportunity for County Attorneys and Assistants to get together and discuss issues of common interest & concerns, speakers included

The was held at the Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport - Mall of America. We met on December 4 – 6, 2024. We had 339 County Attorneys and Assistants attending over the three days. This was the largest Annual Meeting in the Association's History.

Evaluation Summary: This was the first year we did not provide course materials and all the evaluations were completed on-line. We did have a lower response rate, but received more helpful comments that can be used for improving the course. We learned the following: Strong presentation and material. Nice to have an interactive session. Very helpful to use the lens of the survivor. I was resistant to go up, move, and play a game. But it was very interesting and brought subject close to home! It was thought provoking. Appreciate the content was based on what really happens (as opposed to hypotheticals) and knowing what happens long before we see the reports. A lot of information was covered in a short period of time. That being said, 2 hours was a long time to hold anyone's attention. Good reference material to keep on hand. Presenters were well prepared (even though they said they didn't have much time to prep together) and definitely knew the material.

Fundamentals of Extradition Webinar

Course Summary: This training will review the law and procedures for the extradition of criminal fugitives; both sending them and getting them. Discussion will include who can be extradited and when, waivers of extradition, requisition and rendition warrants, and contested extradition.

The webinar was held from noon to 1:00 pm, on December 18, originating from the MCAA Office in St. Paul, MN. 82 County Attorneys and Assistants were in attendance.

Evaluation Summary: Students provided the following suggestions: MCAA should put on a longer and more comprehensive extradition webinar. There is so much information, and just not enough time in 1 hour to take it all in. Thank goodness for the great power point. Great review of complicated material. Thanks for explaining! This was a great refresher for those of us who do not see these issues often.