

Advanced Writing & Appellate Advocacy Course

DoubleTree Hotel Austin

June 4-6, 2025

14.5 hours of MCLE credit



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Austin, TX 78701

505 W. 12th St., Ste. 100

Texas District & County Attorneys Association

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Advanced Writing & Appellate Advocacy Course Information

The Advanced Writing & Appellate Advocacy Course is open for application. This three-day course is designed to improve attendees' writing and oral advocacy skills. The training will be conducted through lecture, small group discussion, and individual critique. The instruction model requires a high faculty-to-attendee ratio, and total attendance must be limited. Anyone interested in the course is encouraged to apply, but special consideration will be made for prosecutors whose current duties include a writing component. For example, applicants who are assigned to appellate work, drafting trial briefs, or responding to writs will be prioritized. Additionally, geography, office size, and jurisdiction will operate as selection criteria. If you believe this course would benefit you, apply.

Final applicant review will occur at the application deadline. Upon acceptance, all participants will receive a packet of instructions. Attendees will be expected to submit a short trial brief prior to the start of the course. Once in Austin, experienced faculty will cover specialized topics and facilitate group discussions. On Friday, attendees will argue their briefs in a simulated trial court setting. Following the courtroom exercise, faculty will offer individualized feedback and suggestions regarding each attendee's argument and submitted brief.

Attendance: Attendance is limited to 30 prosecutors. All applications must be received by **April 28, 2025**. No walk-in registrations will be accepted under any circumstances. Upon acceptance, participants will receive confirmation, informational packets, and instructions via email. Advance preparation and full participation are required. Applicants who are not accepted for this course will be put on a waiting list and have priority in case of cancellations. Any attendee substitutions must be submitted to and approved by TDCAA.

Attire: On Wednesday and Thursday, casual dress is acceptable. On Friday, courtroom attire is required.

CLE: TDCAA has applied to the State Bar of Texas for 14.5 hours of MCLE credit for participation in this course.

Registration and fees: Applicants who are admitted to the course will receive a private registration link. A host hotel has been secured with enough rooms to accommodate attendees. Further information and instructions on how to book these rooms will be included in the emailed notifications of acceptance.

Reimbursement: TDCAA will reimburse attendees' hotel costs up to the GSA rate. TDCAA will not reimburse for meals, travel, registration fees, parking, taxi costs, or other extraordinary expenses. All other expenses are your own.

Payment options:

\$500 Registration (\$250 Registration fee + \$250 Association fee): For CAs, DAs, CDAs, C&DAs, and their office personnel. The TDCAA fee of \$250 is each participant's share of costs over and above what the grant allows (for example, excess costs of on-site meals and association overhead). In addition, this fee enables TDCAA to lock in discounted hotel rates for participants and entitles them to attend all association functions, including Wednesday's opening reception, lunch on Thursday, and breakfast on Friday.

\$250 "Training Only" Registration: For CAs, DAs, CDAs C&DAs and their office personnel. This fee does not allow an attendee to participate in receptions or lunches but entitles the attendee admittance to all training sessions.

More information on this course is at www.tdcaa.com/training.

Advanced Writing & Appellate Advocacy Course Agenda

Wednesday, June 4

- 1:00 p.m. Welcome & Introduction
- 1:15 p.m. Course Overview & Group Feedback
- 2:15 p.m. The Writing Process & Organizing Your Ideas
- 3:00 p.m. Trial Briefs & Motion Responses
- 3:45 p.m. Writing the Appellee's Brief
- 4:30 p.m. TRAP Rules Game Show
- 5:30 p.m. Adjourn to Opening Reception (provided by TDCAA)

Thursday, June 5

- 8:30 a.m. Suppression Motions: Procedure & Preparation
- 9:00 a.m. Drafting Findings Dos & Don'ts
- 9:45 a.m. Draft Proposed Findings in Faculty Groups
- 11:15 a.m. Mandamus/Prohibition with Special Focus on Discovery
- Noon Lunch (provided by TDCAA)
- 1:00 p.m. State's Appeals
- 1:30 p.m. Effective Trial Support
- 2:30 p.m. Preservation & Harm
- 3:00 p.m. Standards of Review
- 3:30 p.m. Jury Charge: Troubleshooting & Resources
- 4:30 p.m. Motions for New Trial: Procedure & Preparation
- 5:00 p.m. Oral Argument
- 5:45 p.m. Final Instructions & Adjourn

Friday, June 6

- 8:30 a.m. Breakfast (provided by TDCAA)
- 9:00 a.m. Attendees Report Directly to Assigned Stations
 - Trial-Level Argument & Evaluation
 - Individual Trial Brief Evaluation
- Noon Closing Remarks
- 12:30 p.m. Adjourn

Course Directors:

Alan Curry

Assistant District Attorney in Harris County

Emily Johnson-Liu

Assistant State Prosecuting Attorney, Austin

Faculty:

Jessie Allen

Asst. Criminal District Attorney, Dallas County

Melinda Fletcher

General Counsel, Special Prosecution Unit

Jaclyn Lambert

Asst. Criminal District Attorney, Dallas County

Jennifer Laurin

Chair of Criminal Law, University of Texas School of Law

Britt Lindsey

Asst. Criminal District Attorney, Taylor County

John Messinger

Asst. State Prosecuting Attorney, Austin

Doug Norman

Asst. District Attorney, Nueces County

Tori Oblon

Asst. Criminal District Attorney, Tarrant County

Lauren Scott

Asst. Criminal District Attorney, Bexar County

Stacey Soule

State Prosecuting Attorney, Austin

Melissa Stryker

Asst. District Attorney, Harris County

Holly Taylor

Asst. District Attorney, Travis County

Jennifer Tharp

Criminal District Attorney, Comal County

Andrew Warthen

Asst. Criminal District Attorney, Bexar County

TDCAA Application Form

**Advanced Writing & Appellate Advocacy Course
June 4-6, 2025**

Application Requirements: For consideration, you must complete this form in its entirety. Incomplete forms will not be considered. Please fill out and sign your form. To ensure consideration, applications must be received via email by **April 28**. If accepted, applicants will be notified by email and will receive confirmation and information about the course and lodging. This form may be duplicated.

Name _____
Title _____
Current assignment _____
Office _____
City _____ ZIP _____
Phone _____
State Bar card # _____
Email address _____

1. What is the approximate size of your jurisdiction?
- Less than 20,000 20,000–50,000
 50,001–100,000 100,001–250,000
 250,001–500,000 Over 500,001

2. How many employees are in your office? _____

3. Total years as a prosecutor: _____

4. I am assigned primarily to appellate duties:
yes _____ no _____

5. Total number of trials:

Jury trials: _____ Bench trials: _____
_____ misdemeanor _____ misdemeanor
_____ felony _____ felony
_____ civil _____ civil

6. List the number of briefs/responses (if any) you have filed for each of the following:

Total Direct Appeals _____
Death penalty _____ State's appeal _____
Juvenile _____ Parental Termination _____
Motions for Reh'g _____ PDRs _____
Post-conviction writs _____
Total oral arguments _____
Trial briefs _____

I understand that if I am accepted, my advanced preparation for and full participation in the course are required.

Signature of applicant _____ Date _____

NOMINATIONS MUST BE MADE BY THE ELECTED PROSECUTING ATTORNEY IN THE APPLICANT'S JURISDICTION.

I nominate _____ to participate in TDCAA's Advanced Writing & Appellate Advocacy Course. The information in this application is accurate and complete.

Signature of Elected Prosecutor (Type or print name) Date Phone

We reserve the right to limit the number of attendees from each jurisdiction. Submission of application does not guarantee acceptance.

**Return this form via email to:
Brian.Klas@tdcaa.com**