



AMERICAN
IMMIGRATION
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION

2026 FALL CONFERENCE AND WEBCAST LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT TRACK

Leading an immigration law firm in today's highly charged environment involves much more than legal expertise. A successful law firm manager needs the skills to build a resilient, cohesive, and sustainable organization that can survive and thrive through uncertainties, client crises, and constant change in the legal, regulatory, technological, and workforce landscapes. Attorneys must meet these challenges while also maintaining client service, employee wellness, and meeting the highest ethical standards. The good news is that you don't need to go at it alone! Join us in Atlanta for a day of thoughtful and supportive conversations with law firm leaders and recognized experts in the field to gain practical tips and insights for protecting your practice, surviving the daily chaos, and setting your business and your employees up for success.

This track will be one of five tracks offered at the AILA Fall Conference and Webcast. In-person registrants will pre-select a track to attend on site but will receive webcast access and recordings for all tracks. Webcast attendees can move between tracks for live sessions and will also receive the recordings.

October 16, 2026
The Hyatt Regency Atlanta
Atlanta, GA

Times listed on the program are Eastern Time (ET)
Note: All sessions and events are subject to change without notice.

Friday, October 16, 2026

8:00 am–5:00 pm	Registration and Exhibits
8:50 am–9:00 am	Welcome Address <i>Sandra A. Grossman, AILA Fall Conference Committee Co-Chair, Washington, D.C.</i>
9:00 am–10:00 am	Building a Mission-Driven Firm Culture: Vision, Values, and Leadership as Continuing Motivators

(DL) = Discussion Leader

** = Invited Speakers, Not Confirmed*

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Most immigration attorneys got into their line of work believing in something greater than themselves: due process, family unity, corporate excellence, protection for the vulnerable. But noble missions quietly erode under the daily grind of billing, staffing, and survival. This panel is about defining the culture you want to create and the values you aspire to uphold, then building them into hiring, client selection, decision-making, and the standards by which you measure success. Speakers share how they've built and rebuilt firms where purpose and sustainability reinforce each other.

- Defining your “WHY”—Mission, Vision, and Values: why you need all three, and how blurring them leaves teams with nothing aspirational to hold on to on hard days
- Hiring and firing through a values lens: screening for mission fit, not just competence, and making the harder call when someone talented isn't a values fit
- Redefining "success": measuring vision (client outcomes, community trust, impact) alongside revenue, so the firm isn't only tracking what's easiest to count
- Mission under market pressure: how your mission and vision hold up against AI, technology shifts, and a changing marketplace
- Marketing your mission: communicating vision and values to a broader audience through marketing and business development

Faculty:

Sandra A. Grossman (DL), AILA Fall Conference Committee Co-Chair, Washington, D.C.

David J. Wilks, AILA Secretary, Rochester, NY

Allen Orr, AILA Past President, Washington, D.C.

10:00 am–10:30 am

Networking Break

10:30 am–11:30 am

From Reactive to Intentional: Leading and Retaining Your Team

Most immigration attorneys were trained to practice law, not manage people. Building and retaining a dedicated and efficient staff, however, is often what separates a firm that grows from one that just gets by. This panel of firm leaders will share how they've tackled feedback, pay, delegation, and culture head-on, and they will discuss successful strategies to implement in your own practice.

- Feedback and development systems throughout the employee lifecycle
- Delegating without micromanaging; spotting overconfidence before it costs you
- Pay, benefits, and what keeps people from walking
- Reinforcing/utilizing a culture that holds up under the emotional weight of this work
- Cross training your team so one departure doesn't sink the firm

Faculty:

Andrea P. Reyes (DL), AILA Board of Directors, Jacksonville, FL

Jeremy L. McKinney, AILA Past President, Greensboro, NC

Rusten Carlson Hurd, Orlando, FL

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11:30 am–12:00 pm **Networking Break**

12:00 pm–1:00 pm **Market with Integrity: AI, Ethics, and Client Trust (Ethics)**

The way clients find attorneys, evaluate law firms, and interact with legal services is changing rapidly as AI becomes part of everyday life. From AI-generated marketing content and deepfakes to AI-assisted client communication and internal firm policies, technology offers incredible opportunities—but also new ethical responsibilities. Maintaining client trust requires thoughtful leadership, transparent marketing, responsible AI use, and clear policies that protect both clients and the integrity of the profession.

- How AI is reshaping legal marketing, visibility, and client acquisition, and how these changes intersect with the Rules of Professional Conduct, including;
 - ABA Model Rules 7.1–7.3: Communications Concerning a Lawyer's Services, Advertising, and Solicitation
 - ABA Model Rule 4.1: Truthfulness in Statements to Others
- Developing responsible AI policies for marketing, client communications, and legal teams, including best practices for engaging with the media
- Building client trust through transparent marketing, ethical AI use, and professional responsibility

Faculty:

Ruby Lichte Powers (DL), AILA Author, Power Up Your Practice: Create the Law Firm and the Life You Deserve, Houston, TX

Natalia Polukhtin, AILA Ethics Committee Vice Chair, Scottsdale, AZ

Kenneth Craig Dobson, New York, NY

1:00 pm–2:00 pm **Lunch**

2:00 pm–3:00 pm **Everyday Decisions that Affect Your Bottom Line**

As your law firm faces the challenges of today, what does it take to ensure financial well-being? This group of recognized experts will provide best practices for developing systems within your organization that support your billing, invoicing, and profitability goals. How can law firm leaders achieve buy-in from staff so that the organization as a whole works towards a financially sustainable future? Panelists will share practical insights on leveraging technology and efficient workflows to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

- The numbers every law firm should know: understanding key financial metrics and benchmarks
- The best financial tools and technologies to support healthy accounting practices, including for invoicing and vendor relations

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- How to create practical and helpful budgets to support sound financial decision-making
- How to introduce transparency in accounting practices to obtain critical buy-in from staff

Faculty:

Alycia T. Moss (DL), Coeur d'Alene, ID

Kirby Gamblin Joseph, Aurora, CO

Arvin Saenz, Dallas, TX

3:00 pm–3:30 pm

Networking Break

3:30 pm–4:30 pm

Managing Workloads and Avoiding Burnout: Building a Sustainable Future for Immigration Law

This panel draws on the findings of the AILA Future of Immigration Law Practice Task Force Report to explore the unique pressures facing immigration lawyers and staff. Panelists will examine why burnout is not a personal weakness, but often the result of how work is designed. They also will share practical, evidence-based strategies for building sustainable practices. They will conclude by imparting actionable steps for building workplace cultures that prioritize well-being, retaining talent, and strengthening the quality of legal representation provided to immigrant communities.

- The high-volume reality of immigration practice
- Sources of stress and recognizing burnout
- Reducing administrative burdens with thoughtful tech strategies
- Supporting the people behind the cases
- Changing the culture of “always on”
- Resilience in a changing policy landscape

Faculty:

Ian David Wagreich (DL), Chicago, IL

Jennifer Michelle Howard, AILA Well-Being Committee Vice Chair, Aurora, CO

Kenneth Pham, Fort Mill, SC

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Sandra A. Grossman, AILA Fall Conference Committee Co-Chair, Washington, D.C.

Andrea P. Reyes, AILA Board of Directors, Jacksonville, FL

Ruby Lichte Powers, AILA Author,

Power Up Your Practice: Create the Law Firm and the Life You Deserve, Houston, TX

Kirby Gamblin Joseph, Aurora, CO

Alycia T. Moss, Coeur d'Alene, ID

Ian David Wagreich, Chicago, IL

Charity Anastasio, Interim Director, AILA Practice & Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

Sarah Kra, Education and CLE Program Associate, Washington, D.C.

Emmie Smith, Director, Professional Development

Reid Trautz, Senior Director (Retired), AILA Practice & Professionalism Center, Washington, D.C.

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