WSBA CLE #27732 WEB



Legal Writing: Essential Skills for New Practitioners

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2026

Approved for 5.25 CLE credits (4.25 Law and Legal Procedure + 1.0 Ethics).
$199 - Standard
$179 - New Members*

Washington State Bar Association
1325 Fourth Ave., Suite 600 | Seattle, WA 98101

WEBCAST ONLY

DESCRIPTION

This program begins with a review of the WSBA's recent AI advisory opinion, *Artificial Intelligence-Enabled Tools in Law Practice*, its applications in AI-assisted legal writing, and how to cite use and output of AI. Participants will then see live demonstrations from LexisNexis and Westlaw, where presenters will showcase new research workflows and AI-enhanced tools that attorneys can immediately integrate into their practice. Finally, participants will practice essential skills during two modules: how drafting contracts using plain language ultimately strengthens enforceability, and how writing professional emails emphasizes concise structure and reader-focused messaging.

SCHEDULE

9:10 a.m. > Webcast Log-In Opens

9:25 a.m. > Welcome and Introductions
- **Jennifer Holderman** – *Washington State Bar Association, Seattle*

9:30 a.m. > The Skunk at the Garden Party: Lawyer Liability for AI Fake Citations
60 minutes, 1.0 credits Ethics
This portion of the program will survey the existing risks of lawyer discipline and court sanctions for AI-generated "hallucinated" citations in court filings and the potential emerging risk of associated legal malpractice claims.
- **Mark Fucile** – *Fucile & Reising LLP, Portland, OR*

10:30 a.m. > Getting to Know Westlaw and Lexis
90 minutes, 1.50 credits L&LP
New attorneys often inherit a research workflow without a clear picture of what the major platforms can do. In this hands-on session, Hanna Harrison (LexisNexis) and Marc Fong (Thomson Reuters) walk through live legal research on both Lexis and Westlaw. They highlight the tools and resources most useful early in a career and show how AI features on each platform can support legal research.
- **Mark Fong** – *Thomson Reuters, San Francisco, CA*
- **Hanna Harrison** – *LexisNexis, Spokane*

12:00 p.m. > LUNCH

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SCHEDULE

12:45 p.m. > Beyond the Brief: Better Letters and Emails for Lawyers

60 minutes, 1.0 credits L&LP

Lawyers spend much of their time writing letters and emails, but these everyday communications rarely receive the same attention as briefs and other legal documents. This presentation offers practical techniques for making professional correspondence clearer, more concise, and more effective. Topics include getting to the point, organizing information for busy readers, striking the right tone, and avoiding common writing habits that undermine clarity and credibility. Participants will leave with strategies they can put to use immediately in communications with clients, opposing counsel, and colleagues.

- **Meagan Boyd** – *Atlanta's John Marshall Law School, Atlanta, GA*

1:45 p.m. > The Power of Plain (and How Legalese Jeopardizes Enforceability)

60 minutes, 1.0 credits L&LP

Are the dense, recycled forms that we see so frequently really ironclad? Hardly. Courts have cited plain language and thoughtful design as reasons to enforce disputed provisions. On the other hand, courts refusing to enforce contracts have used phrases such as "dense with legalese," "convoluted legalese," "confusing and difficult to understand," and the like. This presentation will show that for all its perceived reassurance, precision, or convenience, traditional legal style increases risk. The legalese safety net has a hole in it. Attendees will also get ideas for reinventing dense text, including some AI strategies

- **Mark Cooney** – *Thomas M. Cooley Law School, Lansing, MI*

2:45 p.m. > BREAK

3:00 p.m. > GenAI in the Field and the Footnotes

45 minutes, 0.75 credits L&LP

This session examines how generative AI is actually being used in legal practice settings, drawing on original survey data from UW Law students about GenAI expectations and norms in their internships and externships. The session will then turn to a practical question: how do you properly cite GenAI-generated content under current Bluebook and ALWD guidance? Participants will leave with a clearer picture of workplace AI norms and concrete citation practices they can apply immediately.

- **Amanda Stephens** – *University of Washington, School of Law, Seattle*

3:45 p.m. > Adjourn • Complete Online Evaluations

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REGISTRATION

To register online, please go to the **registration page**. Click to add to cart and complete your purchase. You may pay by credit card, or via ACH. Alternatively, you may print and mail an invoice seven business days prior to the program along with your check payable to WSBA. Credit card payments by mail or fax are no longer accepted. Note, our service provider will charge you a separate, non-refundable transaction fee of 2.5% on all bank card transactions.

If special accommodations are needed, please email **cle@wsba.org** or call toll-free at 1-800-945-9722.

☐ *Please omit my name from the networking list made available to exhibitors and/or attendees.*

PRICING INFORMATION

☐ **#27732 WEB, attend via webcast, 12/18/26**

- ◯ $199 - Standard
- ◯ $179 - New Members*

**Active members of the Washington State Bar Association will be considered New Members through the calendar end of the tenth year following admittance to practice in the state. The store will automatically discount registration, if applicable, during checkout.*

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