

**2026 Poverty Law Conference: Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Community in a Time of Attacks
on the Vulnerable**

USC Gould School of Law – Los Angeles, California

February 20–21, 2026

Conference Schedule

Thursday, February 19th

5:00pm – 6:30pm: *Welcome Reception (Faculty Lounge, Room 433)*

Friday, February 20th

8:15am – 8:50am: *Continental breakfast and check-in (East Lobby)*

8:50am – 9:15am: *Welcome and opening plenary (Room 103)*

9:15am – 10:45am: *Breakout Session 1*

1. The Rent is Too Damn High: Topics in Housing Affordability (Room 103)

Moderator: Deepika Sharma

Carrie Floyd – *Ancillary Fees in the Residential Rental Market*

Deanna Newton – *Affordable Housing and Tax Credits*

Roberta Mann – *A Roof Over One's Head: Solving the Housing Affordability Crisis in the United States*

2. Courts, Rights & Access to Justice (Faculty Lounge, Rm. 433)

Moderator: Clare Pastore

Tom Lininger – *Underprivileged: Evidentiary Privileges* [virtual]

Delaram Takyar – *Beyond the Courts: Access to Justice in Family Law*

Kathryn Sabbeth – *Lawyers for Profit*

3. Healthcare Under Assault (Room 130)

Moderator: Jonathan Cohen

Vanessa Racehorse – *Urban Indian Healthcare*

Jessica Millward – *Deadly Choices: Ambulance Coverage*

10:45 – 11:15am: *Break*

11:15am – 12:45pm: Breakout Session 2

4. Local Public Finance, Local Power (Room 103)

Moderator: Bernadette Atuahene

Brian Highsmith – *Anti-Oligarchy State Constitutions*

Tim Mulvaney – *Progressive Property Taxes*

Ariel Jurow Kleiman – *Progressive User Fees*

5. Work, Labor & Economic Margins (Room 130)

Moderator: Stephen Rich

Shayak Sarkar – *Domestic Workers' Collective Bargaining*

Keith Cunningham-Parmeter – *Preferential Hiring for Men on the Margins*

Kate Vengraitis – *AI, SSA, and the UDHR: Social Insurance for a Rapidly Changing World*

6. The Collateral Consequences of Vulnerability in the Criminal System (Faculty Lounge, Rm. 433)

Moderator: Jerron Wheeler

Carla Laroche – *Inclusionary Voter Exclusion*

Ben McJunkin – *Exploring Unhoused Agency*

Chester Fernández – *Cruel and NOT Unusual: Trans Defendants in Criminal Sentencing*

12:45pm – 2:00pm: Lunch and Keynote Presentation by Holly Mitchell, Los Angeles County Supervisor

Location: Faculty Lounge, Room 433

2:00 – 3:30pm: Breakout Session 3

7. Taxes, Estate Planning & Economic Dignity (Faculty Lounge, Rm. 433)

Moderator: Katie Pratt

Nicholas Mirkay – *Economic Dignity in Tax Policy*

Orli Oren-Kolbinger – *Access Denied: Procedural Barriers, Constructive Taxation, and the Limits of the Taxing Power*

Aissatou Barry – *Estate Planning & Generational Wealth*

8. Invisible People, Invisible Data, and Vulnerabilities (Room 103)

Moderator: Andrew Hammond

Keeshea Turner Roberts – *The Margins Within* [virtual]

Leehi Yona – *Climate Injustice, Off the Books*

Zamir Ben-Dan – *City of Grants Pass & Status Crimes*

9. Teaching Innovative Immigration Advocacy in Tumultuous Times (Room 130)

Jaclyn Kelley-Widmer

Erin Barbato

H. Marissa Montes

3:30 – 4:00pm: Break

4:00 – 5:30pm: *Breakout Session 4*

10. Supporting Women and Children (Faculty Lounge, Rm. 433)

Moderator: Kaipo Matsumura

Angela Dixon – *Winnowing Well: Medicaid Cuts & Maternal Mortality* [virtual]

Michelle Drumbly – *Child Tax Credit & Co-Parenting*

Sonia Suter – *State Abortion Exceptionalism*

11. Creative Poverty Lawyering (Room 103)

Moderator: Laura Riley

Rachel Landauer – *Regulatory and Compliance Counseling as a Lever of Institutional Innovation*

Erika Hanson – *Community-Centered Cash: Lawyering to Protect Benefits in Guaranteed Income Pilots*

Jeanne Nishimoto - *Litigating Nuisance: Lessons for Poverty Lawyers Across Practice Areas*
(two presenters from this project)

[Note: A roundtable about Innovations in Teaching during this session was cancelled.]

5:30pm onward: *Dinner on your own*

Saturday, February 21st

8:15am – 9:00am: *Continental breakfast and welcome (East Lobby)*

9:00am – 10:30am: *Breakout Session 5*

12. Building, Bolstering, and Dismantling the Safety Net (Faculty Lounge, Rm. 433)

Moderator: Ezra Rosser

Rebekah Diller – *Private Rights of Action in Medicaid Enforcement*

Erin Islo – *The Entitled Child*

Jennifer Bird-Pollan – *P-EBT: Feeding Children in Crisis*

13. Can't Buy Me Justice: The Real Cost of Financial Sanctions (Room 103)

Bradford Colbert – *From Restoration to Retribution: How Restitution Became Punishment*

Brittany Friedman – *Access to Justice and the History of Pay-to-Stay*

Charles Moore – *Criminal Monetary Sanctions as Barriers to Court Access*

14. Teaching about Homelessness (Room 130)

Julie Gilgoff

Brittany Stringfellow Otey

Ron Hochbaum

Sara Rankin

10:30am – 11:00am: *Break*

11:00am – 12:30pm: *Breakout Session 6*

15. Gaps and Disparities in Safety Net Design (Room 103)

Moderator: Ariel Jurow Kleiman

Trevor Findley – *A Tale of Two Safety Nets*

Portia Chigbu – *Social Protection as a Buffer: Preventing Intergenerational Poverty in Post-Disaster Contexts* [virtual]

Andrew Hammond – *Welfare Litigation in State Courts*

16. Street Medicine & the Law: Challenges & Opportunities (Room 130)

Jonathan Cohen

Kaitlin Schwan

Lisette Carmona

Katrina Rayco

Sofia Gruskin

17. Scholarly Approaches to Understanding Poverty and Inequality (Faculty Lounge, Rm. 433)

Moderator: Ezra Rosser

Ezra Rosser – *Poverty Law Field Guide*

Stefan Bird-Pollan – *Hegel, Poverty & Misrecognition*

David Hasen – *Managing Low-Resource Volatility*

Whitney Holmes – *Intergenerational Hierarchies & Economic Conflict*

12:30pm – 1:30pm: Lunch with discussion groups and closing

(boxed lunches will be available)