



## Session 25 | Are You Ready to Work With Complainants with Disabilities or Those Who Do Not Speak English?: The ADA and Title VI for Oversight Entities

September 3, 2020

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. EDT

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Most oversight entities are also an entity within municipal government. As such, they are required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. That means they should be ready to interact with complainants and witnesses who are people with disabilities, people who are deaf, and people who do not speak English. Their municipality should provide the resources and training to accommodate this need as part of a formal ADA and Title VI policy and procedure, but they may not be fully compliant with the obligations of these federal laws. Oversight professionals should anticipate this need and ensure that staff have the training and resources to communicate effectively with all possible complainants and witnesses. In this session, participants will learn about best practices when interacting with people with disabilities, people who are deaf, and people who do not speak English, as well as how to seek out resources for professional interpretation and translation.

This session will be co-lead by Lendel Bright and Barrie Gewanter, two oversight professionals who have also served as the ADA and Title VI Coordinators for their municipalities. As such, participants will be able to learn from experts in these two federal laws who also understand the demands and challenges of oversight work.

### Speakers:

- Lendel Bright, ADA and Diversity Coordinator, City of St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL
- Barrie Gewanter, Director for Human Rights, Onondaga County, Syracuse, NY

### Speaker Biographies

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**Lendel Bright** | Lendel Bright started his career in law enforcement with twenty years of service to the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office where he worked his way through the Chain of Command to Sergeant. After retiring from the Sheriff's Office, Mr. Bright joined the Pinellas County Urban League as a Youth Crime Prevention Specialist and then a Statewide Program Coordinator/Manager for the Florida Consortium of Urban League Affiliates Black-On-Black Crime Prevention Program. His dedicated service to the community combined with his passion for promoting the benefits of diversity and inclusion led him to his current position as the ADA and Diversity Coordinator for the City of St. Petersburg, a position he has held since 2008. In his role at the City, Mr. Bright oversees the City's ADA compliance and advocacy efforts as well as coordinating the City's programs related to civilian oversight of law enforcement and the Community Action Response Team. Mr. Bright holds professional certifications from the National Association of ADA Coordinators (NAADAC) and the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), for which he is also a current Board Member. Mr. Bright is very active in the community while not at work, including holding leadership positions at his church and in community youth programs. Mr. Bright graduated from Florida State University with a degree in Criminal Justice and is proud to use his breadth of experience to serve the diverse residents and citizens of the City of St. Petersburg.



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*Please note, content and speakers subject to change.*

**Barrie Gewanter** | Barrie Gewanter is a professional civil rights advocate, who currently serves as the Director for Human Rights and the Title VI and ADA Coordinator for Onondaga County in Syracuse, NY. Prior to 2020 she was also the Administrator of the County's Justice Center Oversight Committee. Before assuming these roles, she served as the Director of the Central New York Chapter of the New York Liberties Union (ACLU) over 18 years, and as the Director of the Central New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health. In her NYCLU position, Gewanter served on the Legislative Advisory Committee that re-wrote the enabling legislation for the dormant Syracuse Citizen Review Board. After the revised legislation passed, that police oversight board was reconstituted and is still functioning today. Then, in the wake of two tragic deaths at the Onondaga County Jail, Gewanter became the lead strategist for a cross-cultural coalition that called for the creation of a jail oversight entity. She worked closely with legislative leaders to craft related enabling legislation, and then left the NYCLU in 2015 to take on the dual challenges of creating this new oversight entity and resurrecting the local Human Rights Commission office and board. Ms. Gewanter has played key roles in the passage of several other significant local legislative and civil rights policy measures. Prior to 2015, she was honored by the Human Rights Commission she now runs, as well as the local chapter of Peace Action and branch of the NAACP. Gewanter has a Master's Degree in Sociology and a B.F.A. in Stage Management, and has worked professionally in both fields.



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