



Lori James-Townes is the Executive Director of the National Association of Public Defense. Lori assumed this leadership position after three years of working as Assistant Training Director for NAPD and more than 25 years of working on defense teams representing indigent defendants. Lori has over 25 years of clinical practice, leadership, and management experience. At NAPD, she led the creation and planning of NAPD's Women's Conference, which shifted (due to COVID-19) from a 200-person live event to an 800-person virtual event headlined by Stacey Abrams. In 2021, she co-led NAPD's first ever

National Virtual Conference for Gideon Week – bringing more than 6,500 attendees together for the largest public defense training in history.

She is the principal owner of Expand-NOW, a consulting firm specializing in speaker, coaching, and teaching. Through Expand-Now, LLC, she is able to fulfill her lifelong passion for adding value to others.

Prior experience includes serving as the Director of Social Work, Leadership and Program Development @ Maryland Office of Public Defender. She also led the agency's social work staff, consultants, and interns. She has held teaching positions at Morgan State University, the University of Maryland School of Social Work, and most recently Towson University.

Lori has developed programs that are now national models for other agencies. In 2015, The Daily Record Newspaper named her as one of Maryland's Top 100 Women. As a speaker, her presence is requested both nationally and internationally to speak about: Leadership, Storytelling, Mitigation, Culturally Mindful Representation, Team Building, Implicit Bias in the Criminal Justice System, Secondary Trauma, and other clinical areas.

Lori maintains an active role in the National Association of Sentencing Advocates and Mitigation Specialists (NASAMS), NLADA, and is a founding Board Member of the Black Public Defender's Association (BPDA), and is active on many community boards, including serving as the Alumni Board President for the UMSSW.

Lori also serves as a faculty member for the following national and regional leadership development, trials skills, and/or trainings such as Gideon's Promise. She earned her master's degree in clinical social work (University of Maryland SSW) and her B.A. in Social Work from Morgan State University. She completed all coursework in the Dr. Ph Public Health at Morgan State University. One of Lori's favorite motivational quotes is by Maya Angelou: "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you."