



## **WEBINAR: Desiree Lassiter**

### **Chemistry 101 for Lawyers**

**a. Date** – Webinar: March 23, 2021 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. EDT

**b. Description**

Desiree Lassiter provides an introduction to the basic chemistry principals driving the latest challenges to state drug priors under 18 U.S.C. § 924(e) (ACCA), definitions under 21 U.S.C. § 802(44) and more. This training teaches lawyers the foundational concepts at the center of these chemistry-based challenges and will include: a simplified review of chemical bonding and chemical structures, identification of the common atoms found in drug molecules and a drug's molecular formula, exploration of isomerism and available online tools to assist with the identification of potential drug isomers, and a summarization of commonly used chemistry vocabulary found in drug statutes. The goal is to provide practitioners with the chemistry foundation necessary to understand terms used in drug statutes, follow recent court decisions where chemistry-based challenges are made, increase efficacy when engaging with chemistry experts, and issue spot potential chemistry-based attacks.

*Start time is 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (10:00 a.m. PST).*

**c. Presenter**

Desiree Lassiter received her Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering from MIT and wrote an undergraduate thesis on the chemical vapor deposition of thin films. While studying at MIT, Desiree was employed by MIT's tutorial services room as a chemistry tutor and served as a chemistry teaching assistant for MIT's project interphase. Desiree was also awarded MIT's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership award for her work within the Latino community and her commitment to uniting underrepresented communities across MIT's campus. Following her time at MIT, Desiree continued her studies in chemical engineering at the University of California, Los

Angeles. At UCLA, she was awarded the Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship, received a Master of Science degree in chemical engineering, and wrote her thesis on the plasma etching of thin films using chlorine-based plasmas. Desiree served as a teaching assistant for a semiconductor processing course and supported UCLA's Center for Excellence in Engineering and Diversity, where she taught and tutored underrepresented engineering students in their undergraduate chemistry courses.

Desiree went on to earn her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. During the pursuit of her law degree, Desiree made the difficult decision to transition away from the world of engineering and become a public defender. Her decision was based in part on her family's personal experience within the criminal justice system and her work in Berkeley's Death Penalty Clinic. After law school, Desiree joined the Bronx Defenders and developed her foundation as a public defender. She served the Bronx community for 7 years before moving to Baltimore, Maryland and joining the Federal Defenders office. Desiree is also a registered patent attorney.