



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT PLAN**

**Approved by the Judicial Council of the Fourth Circuit on October 25, 2023.**

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United States District Court  
For the Eastern District of Virginia  
Criminal Justice Act Plan

I. Authority

Under the [Criminal Justice Act \(CJA\) of 1964, as amended, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A](#), the judges of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia adopt this Plan, as approved by the circuit, for furnishing representation in federal court for any person financially unable to obtain adequate representation consistent with the CJA. In doing so, the [Guide to Judiciary Policy \(Guide\), Volume 7A](#) has been considered. This Plan supersedes all prior CJA plans previously approved by this court.

II. Statement of Policy

A. Objectives

The objectives of this Plan are:

1. to attain the goal of equal justice under the law for all persons;
2. to provide all eligible persons with timely appointed counsel services that are consistent with the best practices of the legal profession, are cost-effective, and protect the independence of the defense function so that the rights of individual defendants are safeguarded and enforced; and
3. to particularize the requirements of the CJA, the USA Patriot Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005 (recodified at [18 U.S.C. § 3599](#)), and *Guide*, Vol. 7A, in a way that meets the needs of this district.

This Plan must therefore be administered so that those accused of a crime, or otherwise eligible for services under the CJA, will not be deprived of the right to counsel, or any element of representation necessary to an effective defense, due to lack of financial resources.

B. Compliance

1. The administration of the Plan will be informed by the provisions of the *Guide*, Vol. 7A.
2. The court will ensure that a current copy of the Plan is made available on the court's website and provided to CJA counsel upon the attorney's designation as a member of the CJA panel of private attorneys (CJA Panel).

III. Definitions

A. Representation

“Representation” includes counsel and investigative, expert, and other services.

B. Appointed Attorney

“Appointed attorney” is an attorney designated to represent a financially eligible person under the CJA and this Plan. Such attorneys include private attorneys, the Federal Public Defender, and staff attorneys of the Federal Public Defender Organization, and attorneys on the CJA Panel.

C. CJA Administrator

“CJA Administrator” is a person designated by the court to administer the CJA Panel.

IV. Determination of Eligibility for CJA Representation

A. Subject Matter Eligibility

1. Mandatory

Representation **must** be provided for any financially eligible person who:

- a. is charged with a felony or with a Class A misdemeanor;
- b. is a juvenile alleged to have committed an act of juvenile delinquency as defined in [18 U.S.C. § 5031](#);
- c. is charged with a violation of probation, or faces a change of a term or condition of probation (unless the modification sought is favorable to the probationer and the government has not objected to the proposed change);
- d. is under arrest, when such representation is required by law;
- e. is entitled to appointment of counsel in parole proceedings;
- f. is charged with a violation of supervised release or faces modification, reduction, or enlargement of a condition, or extension or revocation of a term of supervised release;
- g. is subject to a mental condition hearing under [18 U.S.C. chapter 313](#);
- h. is in custody as a material witness;
- i. is seeking to set aside or vacate a death sentence under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 or § 2255;

- j. is entitled to appointment of counsel in verification of consent proceedings in connection with a transfer of an offender to or from the United States for the execution of a penal sentence under [18 U.S.C. § 4109](#);
- k. is entitled to appointment of counsel under the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution; or
- l. faces loss of liberty in a case and federal law requires the appointment of counsel.

## 2. Discretionary

Whenever a district judge or magistrate judge determines that the interests of justice so require, representation **may** be provided for any financially eligible person who:

- a. is charged with a petty offense (Class B or C misdemeanor, or an infraction) for which a sentence to confinement is authorized;
- b. is seeking relief under [28 U.S.C. §§ 2241](#), [2254](#), or [2255](#) other than to set aside or vacate a death sentence;
- c. is charged with civil or criminal contempt and faces loss of liberty;
- d. has been called as a witness before a grand jury, a court, the Congress, or a federal agency or commission which has the power to compel testimony, and there is reason to believe, either prior to or during testimony, that the witness could be subject to a criminal prosecution, a civil or criminal contempt proceeding, or face loss of liberty;
- e. has been advised by the United States attorney or a law enforcement officer that they are the target of a grand jury investigation;
- f. is proposed by the United States attorney for processing under a pretrial diversion program; or
- g. is held for international extradition under [18 U.S.C. chapter 209](#).

## 3. Ancillary Matters

Representation may also be provided for financially eligible persons in ancillary matters appropriate to the criminal proceedings under 18 U.S.C. § 3006A(c). In determining whether representation in an ancillary matter is appropriate to the criminal proceedings, the court should consider whether such representation is reasonably necessary:

- a. to protect a constitutional right;

- b. to contribute in some significant way to the defense of the principal criminal charge;
- c. to aid in preparation for the trial or disposition of the principal criminal charge;
- d. to enforce the terms of a plea agreement in the principal criminal charge;
- e. to preserve the claim of the CJA client to an interest in real or personal property subject to civil forfeiture proceeding under [18 U.S.C. § 983](#), [19 U.S.C. § 1602](#), [21 U.S.C. § 881](#), or similar statutes, which property, if recovered by the client, may be considered for reimbursement under [18. U.S.C. § 3006A\(f\)](#); or
- f. effectuate the return of real or personal property belonging to the CJA client, which may be subject to a motion for return of property under [Fed. R. Crim. P. 41\(g\)](#), which property, if recovered by the client, may be considered for reimbursement under [18 U.S.C. § 3006A\(f\)](#).

## B. Financial Eligibility

### 1. Presentation of Accused for Financial Eligibility Determination

#### a. Duties of Law Enforcement

- (i) Upon arrest, and where the defendant has not retained or waived counsel, federal law enforcement officials must promptly notify, telephonically or electronically, the appropriate court personnel, who in turn will notify the Federal Public Defender Organization of the arrest of an individual in connection with a federal criminal charge.
- (ii) Employees of law enforcement agencies should not participate in the completion of the financial affidavit or seek to obtain information concerning financial eligibility from a person requesting the appointment of counsel.

#### b. Duties of United States Attorney's Office

- (i) Upon the return or unsealing of an indictment or the filing of a criminal information, and where the defendant has not retained or waived counsel, the Office of the United States Attorney will promptly notify, telephonically or electronically, appropriate court personnel, who in turn will notify the Federal Public Defender Organization.



- (ii) Upon issuance of a target letter, and where the individual has not retained or waived counsel, the Office of the United States Attorney or their delegate must promptly notify, telephonically or electronically, the appropriate court personnel, who in turn will notify the Federal Public Defender Organization, unless the United States Attorney's Office is aware of an actual or potential conflict with the target and the Federal Public Defender Organization, in which case they must promptly notify the court.
  - (iii) Employees of the United States Attorney's Office should not participate in the completion of the financial affidavit or seek to obtain information concerning financial eligibility from a person requesting the appointment of counsel.
- c. Duties of Federal Public Defender Office
- (i) In cases in which the Federal Public Defender Organization may be appointed, the office will:
    - immediately investigate and determine whether an actual or potential conflict exists; and
    - in the event of an actual or potential conflict, promptly notify the court to facilitate the timely appointment of other counsel.
  - (ii) When practicable, the Federal Public Defender Organization duty attorney will discuss with the person who indicates that he or she is not financially able to secure representation the right to appointed counsel and, if appointment of counsel seems likely, assist in the completion of a [financial affidavit \(Form CJA 23\)](#) and arrange to have the person promptly presented before a magistrate judge or district judge of this court for determination of financial eligibility and appointment of counsel.
- d. Duties of Pretrial Services Office
- (i) When practicable, the pretrial services officer will not conduct the pretrial service interview of a financially eligible defendant until counsel has been appointed, unless the right to counsel is waived or the defendant otherwise consents to a pretrial service interview without counsel.
  - (ii) When counsel has been identified, the pretrial services officer will provide counsel notice and a reasonable opportunity to attend any interview of the defendant by the pretrial services officer prior to the initial pretrial release or detention hearing.

- (iii) To facilitate the presence of counsel, the pretrial services officer may conduct the pretrial services interviews by remote means.

## 2. Factual Determination of Financial Eligibility

- a. In every case where appointment of counsel is authorized under [18 U.S.C. § 3006A\(a\)](#) and related statutes, the court must advise the person that he or she has a right to be represented by counsel throughout the case and that, if so desired, counsel will be appointed to represent the person if he or she is financially unable to obtain counsel.
- b. The determination of eligibility for representation under the CJA is a judicial function to be performed by the court after making appropriate inquiries concerning the person's financial eligibility. Other employees of the court may be designated to obtain or verify the facts relevant to the financial eligibility determination.
- c. In determining whether a person is "financially unable to obtain counsel," consideration should be given to the cost of providing the person and his or her dependents with the necessities of life, the cost of securing pretrial release, asset encumbrance, and the likely cost of retained counsel.
- d. The initial determination of eligibility must be made without regard to the financial ability of the person's family to retain counsel unless their family indicates willingness and ability to do so promptly.
- e. If the person's net financial resources and income are insufficient to obtain qualified counsel, then a person is "financially unable to obtain counsel." Any doubts about a person's eligibility should be resolved in the person's favor; erroneous determinations of eligibility may be corrected at a later time.
- f. Relevant information bearing on the person's financial eligibility should be reflected on a [financial eligibility affidavit \(Form CJA 23\)](#).
- g. If at any time after the appointment of counsel a judge finds that a person provided representation is financially able to obtain counsel or make partial payment for the representation, the judge may terminate the appointment of counsel and direct that any funds available to the defendant be paid as provided in [18 U.S.C. § 3006A\(f\)](#).
- h. If at any stage of the proceedings a judge finds that a person is no longer financially able to pay retained counsel, counsel may be appointed consistent with the general provisions of this Plan.

V. Timely Appointment of Counsel

A. Timing of Appointment

Counsel must be provided to eligible persons as soon as feasible in the following circumstances, whichever occurs earliest:

1. after they are taken into custody;
2. when they appear before a magistrate or district court judge;
3. when they are formally charged or notified of charges if formal charges are sealed; or
4. when a magistrate or district court judge otherwise considers appointment of counsel appropriate under the CJA and related statutes.

B. Court's Responsibility

The court, in cooperation with the Federal Public Defender and the United States attorney, will make such arrangements with federal, state, and local investigative and police agencies as will ensure timely appointment of counsel.

C. Pretrial Service Interview

When practicable, unless the right to counsel is waived or the defendant otherwise consents to a pretrial service interview without counsel, financially eligible defendants will be provided appointed counsel prior to being interviewed by a pretrial services officer.

D. Retroactive Appointment of Counsel

Appointment of counsel may be made retroactive to include representation provided prior to appointment.

VI. Provision of Representational Services

A. Federal Public Defender and Private Counsel

This Plan provides for representational services by the Federal Public Defender Organization and for the appointment and compensation of private counsel from a CJA Panel list maintained by the court in cases authorized under the CJA and related statutes.

B. Administration

Administration of the CJA Panel, as provided in this Plan, is the responsibility of the court.

C. Apportionment of Cases

Where practical and cost effective, private attorneys from the CJA Panel will be appointed in a substantial proportion of the cases in which the accused is determined to be financially eligible for representation under the CJA.

D. Number of Counsel

More than one attorney may be appointed in any case determined by the court to be extremely difficult.

E. Capital Cases

Procedures for appointment of counsel in cases where the defendant is charged with a crime that may be punishable by death, or is seeking to vacate or set aside a death sentence in proceedings under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2254 or 2255, are in [section XIV of this Plan](#).

VII. Federal Public Defender Organization

A. Establishment

The established Federal Public Defender Organization shall continue in this district under the CJA and is responsible for rendering defense services on appointment throughout this district.

B. Standards

The Federal Public Defender Organization must provide high quality representation consistent with the best practices of the legal profession and commensurate with those services rendered when counsel is privately retained. **See:** [Polk County v. Dodson](#), 454 U.S. 312, 318 (1981) (“Once a lawyer has undertaken the representation of an accused, the duties and obligations are the same whether the lawyer is privately retained, appointed, or serving in a legal aid or defender program.” (quoting ABA Standards for Criminal Justice section 4-3.9 (2d ed. 1980))).

C. Workload

The Federal Public Defender Organization will continually monitor the workloads of its staff to ensure high quality representation for all clients.

D. Professional Conduct

The Federal Public Defender Organization must conform to the highest standards of professional conduct, including but not limited to the Code of Conduct for Federal Public Defender Employees and Local Criminal Rule 57.4(I), Professional Ethics.

E. Private Practice of Law

Neither the Federal Public Defender nor any defender employee may engage in the private practice of law.

F. Supervision of Defender Organization

The Federal Public Defender will be responsible for the supervision and management of the Federal Public Defender Organization. Therefore, the Federal Public Defender will be appointed in all cases assigned to that organization for subsequent assignment to staff attorneys at the discretion of the Federal Public Defender.

G. Training

The Federal Public Defender will assess the training needs of the Federal Public Defender staff and, in coordination with the CJA Panel Attorney District Representative,<sup>1</sup> the training needs of the local CJA Panel Attorneys and provide training opportunities and other educational resources.

VIII. CJA Panel of Private Attorneys

A. Establishment of Divisional CJA Panel Committees

1. A CJA Panel Committee (“CJA Committee”) will be established by the court in consultation with the Federal Public Defender to serve each division; Alexandria, Richmond and Norfolk/Newport News. Each CJA Committee will consist of one district court judge, one magistrate judge, one federal public defender attorney, two CJA Panel attorneys, and an ex officio staff member employed by the clerk who will act as administrative coordinator.
2. Membership on the CJA Committee will be for a term of three years and may be extended for an additional three years. Members’ terms will be staggered to ensure continuity on the CJA Committee.
3. The CJA Committee for each division will meet at least twice a year and at any time the court asks the Committee to consider an issue.
4. The CJA Panel Attorney District Representative (PADR) shall serve on the divisional CJA Committee where they principally practice and may attend CJA Committee meetings in and for the other divisions. The PADR shall receive minutes and regular communication from each divisional committee and shall provide regular updates on matters of district wide importance.

B. Duties of the CJA Committees

1. Membership

Examine the qualifications of applicants for membership on the CJA Panel in each division and recommend to the chief judge the approval of those attorneys who are deemed qualified and the rejection of the applications of those attorneys deemed unqualified.

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<sup>1</sup> The CJA Panel Attorney District Representative (PADR) is a member of the district’s CJA Panel who is selected by the chief judge, to serve as the representative of the district’s CJA Panel for the national Defender Services CJA PADR program and local CJA committees.

2. Recruitment

Engage in recruitment efforts to establish a diverse panel and ensure that all qualified attorneys are encouraged to participate in the furnishing of representation in CJA cases.

3. Annual Report

Review the operation and administration of the CJA Panel over the preceding year, and recommend any necessary or appropriate changes to the chief judge concerning:

- a. the size of the CJA Panel;
- b. the recruitment of qualified and diverse attorneys as required in this plan; and
- c. recurring issues or difficulties encountered by panel members or their CJA clients.

4. Removal

Recommend to the chief judge the removal of any CJA panel member who:

- a. fails to satisfactorily fulfill the requirements of CJA panel membership during their term of service, including the failure to provide high quality representation to CJA clients, or
- b. has engaged in other conduct such that his or her continued service on the CJA Panel is inappropriate. **See also:** [Section IX.C.7.](#)

5. Training

Assist the Federal Public Defender Organization in providing training for the CJA Panel on substantive and procedural legal matters affecting representation of CJA clients.

6. Voucher Review

When requested by any judge, magistrate judge, or CJA Panel Attorney, review and make recommendations on the processing and payment of CJA vouchers in those cases where the court, for reasons other than mathematical errors, is considering authorizing payment for less than the amount of compensation claimed by CJA counsel. If review is requested, the judge will, at the time the voucher is submitted to the CJA Committee, provide a statement describing questions or concerns they have with the voucher. Counsel will be notified of the potential voucher reduction and given the opportunity to provide information or documentation relevant to the voucher and concerns raised by the judge. The CJA Committee will issue a written recommendation to the judge. **See also:** [Section XII.B.6.](#)

7. Mentoring

Appoint experienced CJA panel members to serve on a subcommittee to create and administer a mentoring program designed to identify and help prepare viable candidates to qualify for consideration for appointment to the CJA Panel. Experienced members of the criminal defense bar who have practiced extensively in the federal courts will be selected to serve as mentors. The subcommittee will review the mentee applications, make recommendations concerning their participation in the mentoring program, identify appropriate cases for the mentoring program, evaluate the success of the mentoring program, and provide guidance to the mentors.

8. Other Duties

Perform any other duties the court delegates regarding the management and operation of the CJA Panel.

IX. Establishment of CJA Panels

A. Approval of CJA Panel in each Division

1. The four existing, previously established panels of attorneys who are eligible and willing to be appointed to provide representation under the CJA are hereby recognized. Each of the court's four divisions will maintain its own CJA Panel.
2. The chair of each CJA Committee will recommend attorneys for membership on the division's respective CJA Panel after receiving recommendations from the CJA Committee. The Norfolk/Newport News CJA Committee will consider appointments in both those divisions.

B. Size of CJA Panel

1. The size of the CJA Panel will be determined by the CJA Committee based on the caseload and activity of the panel members, subject to approval of the court.
2. The CJA Panel must be large enough to provide a sufficient number of experienced attorneys to handle the CJA caseload, yet small enough so that CJA panel members will receive an adequate number of appointments to maintain their proficiency in federal criminal defense work enabling them to provide high quality representation consistent with the best practices of the legal profession and commensurate with those services rendered when counsel is privately retained.

C. Qualifications and Membership on the CJA Panel

1. Application

Application forms for membership on the CJA Panel are available from the court in each division.

## 2. Equal Opportunity

All qualified attorneys are encouraged to participate in the furnishing of representation in CJA cases.

## 3. Eligibility

- a. Applicants for the CJA Panel must be members in good standing of the federal bar of this district and eligible for admission to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.
- b. Applicants must maintain a primary, satellite, or shared office in this district, and be willing to personally attend interviews and court appearances in the division where they are seeking appointment.
- c. Applicants must possess strong litigation skills and demonstrate proficiency with the federal sentencing guidelines, federal sentencing procedures, the Bail Reform Act, the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, and the Federal Rules of Evidence.
- d. Applicants must have significant experience representing persons charged with serious criminal offenses and demonstrate a commitment to the defense of people who lack the financial means to hire an attorney.
- e. Attorneys who do not possess the experience above but believe they have equivalent other experience are encouraged to apply and provide in writing the details of that experience for the CJA Committee consideration.

## 4. Appointment to CJA Panel

The chief judge will designate a judge in each division who will appoint or reappoint attorneys to the CJA Panel after considering the recommendations of the CJA Committee. Due to the highly complex and demanding nature of capital and habeas corpus cases, special procedures will be followed for the eligibility and appointment of counsel in such cases. **See: [Section XIV of this Plan](#).**

## 5. Terms of CJA Panel Members

To establish staggered CJA membership terms, the current CJA Panel will be divided into three groups, equal in number. Initially, members will be assigned to one of the three groups on a random basis. Members of the first group will continue to serve on the CJA Panel for a term of one year, members of the second group will continue to serve on the CJA Panel for a term of two years, and members of the third group will continue to serve on the CJA Panel for a term of three years. Thereafter, attorneys admitted to membership on the CJA Panel will each serve for a term of three years, subject to the reappointment procedures in this plan. There is no limit on the number of terms a Panel attorney may serve.



## 6. Reappointment of CJA Panel Members

- a. The court will notify CJA panel members, before the expiration of their current term, of the need to apply for reappointment to the CJA Panel.
- b. A member of the CJA Panel who wishes to be considered for reappointment must apply for appointment to an additional term at least three months prior to the expiration of his or her current term.
- c. The CJA Committee will solicit input concerning the quality of representation provided by lawyers seeking reappointment.
- d. The CJA Committee also will consider how many cases the CJA panel member has accepted and declined during the review period, whether the member has participated in training opportunities, whether the member has been the subject of any complaints, and whether the member continues to meet the prerequisites and obligations of CJA panel members as provided in this Plan.
- e. The CJA Committee will recommend to the chief judge whether applicants for reappointment should remain a member of the Panel. The chief judge or the designated judge in each division will make final decisions on reappointment to the Panel in that division.
- f. If an attorney decides not to reapply, or is not selected for reappointment, and is involved with appointed representation of a defendant in an ongoing matter, the attorney shall continue the representation until the case is concluded unless otherwise ordered by the judge presiding.

## 7. Removal from the CJA Panel

### a. Mandatory removal

Any member of the CJA Panel who is suspended or disbarred from the practice of law by the state court before whom such member is admitted, or who is suspended or disbarred from this court or any federal court, will be removed from the CJA Panel immediately.

### b. Automatic disciplinary review

The CJA Committee will conduct an automatic disciplinary review of any CJA panel member against whom any licensing authority, grievance committee, or administrative body has taken action, or when a finding of probable cause, contempt, sanction, or reprimand has been issued against the panel member by any state or federal court.

c. Complaints

(i) Initiation

A complaint against a panel member may be initiated by the CJA Committee, a district or magistrate judge, a defendant, or the Federal Public Defender Organization. A complaint need not follow any particular form, but it must be in writing and state the alleged deficiency with specificity. Any complaint should be directed to the CJA Committee, which will recommend to the chief judge whether further investigation is necessary.

(ii) Notice

When conducting an investigation, the CJA Committee will notify the panel member of the specific allegations.

(iii) Response

A panel member subject to investigation may respond in writing and appear, if so directed, before the CJA Committee or its subcommittee.

(iv) Protective action

Prior to disposition of any complaint, the CJA Committee may recommend temporary suspension or removal of the panel member from any pending case, or from the panel, and may take any other protective action that is in the best interest of the client or the administration of this Plan.

(v) Review and recommendation

After investigation, the CJA Committee may recommend dismissing the complaint, or recommend appropriate remedial action, including removing the attorney from the panel, limiting the attorney's participation to particular types or categories of cases, directing the attorney to complete specific CLE requirements before receiving further panel appointments, limiting the attorney's participation to handling cases that are directly supervised or overseen by another panel member or other experienced practitioner, or any other appropriate remedial action.

(vi) Final disposition by the court

The CJA Committee will forward its recommendation to the chief judge for consideration and final disposition.

(vii) Confidentiality

Unless otherwise directed by the court, any information acquired concerning any possible disciplinary action, including any complaint and any related proceeding, will be confidential.

(viii) None of these procedures create a property interest in being on or remaining on the CJA Panel.

d. Notification

The Federal Public Defender Organization will be immediately notified when any member of the CJA Panel is removed or suspended.

e. Nothing in this Section IX (7) shall limit in any way the scope or effect of the provisions of Local Civil Rule 83.1(L) or Local Criminal Rule 57.4(L) and Appendix to those rules, or in any way foreclose or supersede the responsibility or authority of the court thereunder.

X. CJA Panel Attorney Appointment in Non-Capital Cases

A. Appointment List

The court will maintain a current list of all attorneys included on the CJA Panel in each division, with current office addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers, as well as a statement of qualifications and experience.

B. Appointment Procedures

1. The court is responsible for overseeing the appointment of cases to panel attorneys. The court will maintain a record of panel attorney appointments and, when appropriate, data reflecting the apportionment of appointments between attorneys from the Federal Public Defender Organization and panel attorneys.
2. Appointment of cases to CJA panel members will ordinarily be made on a rotational basis. In a complex or otherwise difficult case, the court may appoint counsel outside of the normal rotation to ensure the defendant has sufficiently experienced counsel.
3. Under special circumstances the court may appoint a member of the bar of the court who is not a member of the CJA Panel. Such special circumstances may include cases in which the court determines that the appointment of a particular attorney is in the interests of justice, judicial economy, or continuity of representation, or for any other compelling reason. It is not anticipated that special circumstances will arise often, and the procedures provided in the Plan are presumed to be sufficient in the vast majority of cases in which counsel are to be appointed. Appointments made under this section will be reported to the CJA Committee.

4. Unless otherwise impracticable, CJA panel attorney(s) must be available to represent defendant(s) at the same stage of the proceedings as is the Federal Public Defender.

## XI. Duties of CJA Panel Members

### A. Standards and Professional Conduct

1. CJA panel members must provide high quality representation consistent with the best practices of the legal profession and commensurate with those services rendered when counsel is privately retained. **See:** [\*Polk County v. Dodson\*](#), 454 U.S. 312, 318 (1981) (“Once a lawyer has undertaken the representation of an accused, the duties and obligations are the same whether the lawyer is privately retained, appointed, or serving in a legal aid or defender program.” (quoting ABA Standards for Criminal Justice section 4-3.9 (2d ed. 1980))).
2. Attorneys appointed under the CJA must conform to the highest standards of professional conduct, including but not limited to Local Criminal Rule 57.4 (l).
3. CJA panel members must notify within 30 days the chair of the CJA Committee when any licensing authority, grievance committee, or administrative body has taken action against them, or when a finding of contempt, sanction, or reprimand has been issued against the panel member by any state or federal court.

### B. Training and Continuing Legal Education

1. Attorneys on the CJA Panel are expected to remain current with developments in federal criminal defense law, practice, and procedure, including the Recommendation for Electronically Stored Information (ESI) Discovery Production in Federal Criminal Cases.
2. Attorneys on the CJA Panel are expected to attend training sessions sponsored by the Federal Public Defender Organization, the Federal Bar Association, and the court.
3. Attorneys on the CJA Panel are referred to the Federal Adaptation of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association Performance Guidelines for Criminal Defense Representations for information relevant to the discharge of their duties.
4. CJA panel members must attend five continuing legal education hours relevant to federal criminal practice annually.
5. Failure to comply with these training and legal education requirements may be grounds for removal from the CJA Panel.

### C. Facilities and Technology Requirements

1. CJA panel attorneys must have facilities, resources, and technological capability to effectively and efficiently manage assigned cases.

2. CJA panel attorneys must comply with the requirements of electronic filing and eVoucher.
3. CJA panel attorneys must know and abide by procedures related to requests for investigative, expert, and other services.

D. Continuing Representation

Once counsel is appointed under the CJA, counsel will continue to serve until the matter is concluded in this court (including the timely filing of any notice of appeal) or until the appointment is terminated by court order.

E. Miscellaneous

1. Case budgeting

In non-capital representations of unusual complexity that are likely to become extraordinary in terms of cost, the court may require development of a case budget consistent with [Guide, Vol. 7A, §§ 230.26.10–20](#). Counsel should notify the court as early as possible if the case budgeting threshold is expected to be met.

2. No receipt of other payment

Appointed counsel may not require, request, or accept any payment or promise of payment or any other valuable consideration for representation under the CJA, or for any other contemporaneous representation of a CJA appointed client in any other matter, unless approved in advance by order of the court.

3. Redetermination of need

If at any time after appointment, counsel has reason to believe that a party is financially able to obtain counsel, or make partial payment for counsel, and the source of counsel's information is not protected as a privileged communication, counsel will advise the court.

XII. Compensation of CJA Panel Attorneys

A. Policy of the Court Regarding Compensation

1. Providing fair compensation to appointed counsel is a critical component of the administration of justice. CJA panel attorneys must be compensated for time expended in court and time reasonably expended out of court, and reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred.
2. Voucher cuts should be limited to:
  - a. Mathematical errors;
  - b. Instances in which work billed was not compensable;

- c. Instances in which work was not undertaken or completed; and
- d. Instances in which the hours billed are clearly in excess of what was reasonably required to complete the task.

#### B. Payment Procedures

1. Claims for compensation must be submitted on the appropriate CJA form through the court's eVoucher system.
2. Claims for compensation should be submitted no later than 45 days after final disposition of the case, unless good cause is shown. Responsibility for timely submission of vouchers is exclusively with the panel attorney.
3. The court's designee will review the claim for mathematical and technical accuracy and for conformity with Guide, Vol. 7A and, if correct, will forward the claim for consideration and action by the presiding judge.
4. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the court expects to act on CJA compensation claims within 30 days of submission, and vouchers should not be delayed or reduced for the purpose of diminishing Defender Services program costs in response to adverse financial circumstances.
5. Except in cases involving mathematical corrections, no claim for compensation submitted for services provided under the CJA will be reduced without affording counsel notice and the opportunity to be heard.
6. The court, when contemplating reduction of a CJA voucher for other than mathematical reasons, may refer the voucher to the CJA Committee for review and recommendation before final action on the claim is taken. A CJA Panel Attorney may also invoke Independent Review by the CJA Committee. **See:** [Section VIII of this Plan](#). The presiding judge retains final authority to approve vouchers.
7. Notwithstanding the procedure described above, the court may, in the first instance, contact appointed counsel to inquire regarding questions or concerns with a claim for compensation. In the event that the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the court and CJA panel member, the claim for compensation need not be referred to the CJA Committee for review and recommendation.

### XIII. Investigative, Expert, and Other Services

#### A. Financial Eligibility

Counsel for a person who is financially unable to obtain investigative, expert, or other services necessary for an adequate defense may request such services in an *ex parte* application to the court as provided in 18 U.S.C. § 3006A(e)(1), regardless of whether counsel is appointed under the CJA. Upon finding that the services are necessary, and that the person is financially unable to obtain them, the court must authorize counsel to obtain the services.

B. Applications

Requests for authorization of funds for investigative, expert, and other services *must* be submitted using the court's eVoucher system by filing an AUTH or BUDGETAUTH as applicable and/or as instructed by the Case Budgeting Attorney. Requests submitted through the eVoucher system are *ex parte* and will not be disclosed except with the consent of counsel for the defendant or as required by law or court order.

C. Compliance

Counsel must comply with Judicial Conference policies in [Guide, Vol. 7A, Ch. 3](#).

XIV. Appointment of Counsel and Case Management in CJA Capital Cases

A. Applicable Legal Authority

The appointment and compensation of counsel in capital cases and the authorization and payment of persons providing investigative, expert, and other services are governed by [18 U.S.C. §§ 3005, 3006A](#), and [3599](#). The [Guide, Vol. 7A, Ch. 6](#) will inform administration of this Plan in capital cases.

B. General Applicability and Appointment of Counsel Requirements

1. Unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this section apply to all capital proceedings in the federal courts, whether those matters originated in a district court (federal capital trials) or in a state court (habeas proceedings under 28 U.S.C. § 2254). Such matters include those in which the death penalty may be or is being sought by the prosecution, motions for a new trial, direct appeal, applications for a writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States, all post-conviction proceedings under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2254 or 2255 seeking to vacate or set aside a death sentence, applications for stays of execution, competency proceedings, proceedings for executive or other clemency, and other appropriate motions and proceedings.
2. Any person charged with a crime that may be punishable by death who is or becomes financially unable to obtain representation is entitled to the assistance of appointed counsel throughout every stage of available judicial proceedings, including pretrial proceedings, trial, sentencing, motions for new trial, appeals, applications for writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States, and all available post-conviction processes, together with applications for stays of execution and other appropriate motions and procedures, competency proceedings, and proceedings for executive or other clemency as may be available to the defendant. **See:** [18 U.S.C. § 3599\(e\)](#).
3. Qualified counsel must be appointed in capital cases at the earliest possible opportunity. The USAO will notify FPD of all cases involving capital crimes, and provide a list of attorneys who may be subject to a conflict of interest in the matter at issue, as soon as practicable, and no later than when such cases are placed on the public docket, to permit the FPD to perform its obligations under 18 U.S.C. § 3005 and the CJA Plan.

4. Given the complex and demanding nature of capital cases, where appropriate, the court will utilize the expert services available through the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO), Defender Services Death Penalty Resource Counsel projects (“Resource Counsel projects”), which include: (1) Federal Death Penalty Resource Counsel and Capital Resource Counsel Projects (for federal capital trials), (2) Federal Capital Appellate Resource Counsel Project, (3) Federal Capital Habeas § 2255 Project, and (4) National and Regional Habeas Assistance and Training Counsel Projects (§ 2254). These counsel are death penalty experts who may be relied upon by the court for assistance with selection and appointment of counsel, case budgeting, and legal, practical, and other matters arising in federal capital cases.
5. The Federal Public Defender should promptly notify and consult with the appropriate Resource Counsel projects about potential and actual federal capital trial, appellate, and habeas corpus cases, and consider their recommendations for appointment of counsel.
6. In appointing counsel in capital cases, judges should consider and give due weight to the recommendations made by federal defenders and resource counsel and articulate reasons for not doing so.
7. The presiding judge may appoint an attorney furnished by a state or local public defender organization or legal aid agency or other private, non-profit organization to represent a person charged with a capital crime or seeking federal death penalty habeas corpus relief provided that the attorney is fully qualified. Such appointments may be in place of, or in addition to, the appointment of a federal defender organization or a CJA panel attorney or an attorney appointed pro hac vice. **See:** [18 U.S.C. § 3006A\(a\)\(3\)](#).
8. All attorneys appointed in federal capital cases must be well qualified, by virtue of their training, commitment, and distinguished prior capital defense experience at the relevant stage of the proceeding, to serve as counsel in this highly specialized and demanding litigation.
9. All attorneys appointed in federal capital cases must have sufficient time and resources to devote to the representation, taking into account their current caseloads and the extraordinary demands of federal capital cases.
10. All attorneys appointed in federal capital cases are advised to become familiar with the [American Bar Association’s 2003 Guidelines for the Appointment and Performance of Defense Counsel in Death Penalty Cases](#) (Guidelines 1.1 and 10.2 et seq.), and with the [2008 Supplementary Guidelines for the Mitigation Function of Defense Teams in Death Penalty Cases](#), insofar as they provide advice on the responsibilities of counsel.
11. All attorneys appointed in federal capital cases should consult regularly with the appropriate Resource Counsel projects.
12. There should be no formal or informal non-statutory budgetary caps on capital cases, whether in a capital trial, direct appeal, or habeas matter.



13. All capital cases should be budgeted with the assistance of case-budgeting attorneys and/or resource counsel where appropriate.
14. Questions about the appointment and compensation of counsel and the authorization and payment of investigative, expert, and other service providers in federal capital cases may be directed to the AO's Defender Services Office, Legal and Policy Division Duty Attorney at 202-502-3030 or by email at [ods\\_lpb@ao.uscourts.gov](mailto:ods_lpb@ao.uscourts.gov).

C. Appointment of Trial Counsel in Federal Death-Eligible Cases<sup>2</sup>

1. General Requirements

- a. Appointment of qualified capital trial counsel must occur no later than when a defendant is charged with a federal criminal offense where the penalty of death is possible. **See:** [18 U.S.C. § 3005](#).
- b. To protect the rights of an individual who, although uncharged, is the subject of an investigation in a federal death-eligible case, the court may appoint capitally qualified counsel upon request, consistent with Sections C.1, 2, and 3 of these provisions.
- c. At the outset of every capital case, the court must appoint two attorneys, at least one of whom meets the qualifications for "learned counsel" as described below. If necessary for adequate representation, more than two attorneys may be appointed to represent a defendant in a capital case. **See:** [18 U.S.C. § 3005](#).
- d. When appointing counsel, the judge must consider the recommendation of the Federal Public Defender, who will consult with Federal Death Penalty Resource Counsel to recommend qualified counsel.
- e. In appointing counsel, judges should give due weight to the recommendations made by federal defenders and resource counsel or articulate reasons for not doing so.
- f. To effectuate the intent of 18 U.S.C. § 3005 that the Federal Public Defender's recommendation be provided to the court, the judge should ensure the Federal Public Defender Organization has been notified of the need to appoint capitally qualified counsel.
- g. Appointment of capital counsel should take into account for the particular needs of the case and the defendant and should take into account individualized recommendations from the Federal Public Defender in conjunction with the Federal Death Penalty Resource Counsel and Capital Resource Counsel projects.

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<sup>2</sup> The Judicial Conference adopted detailed recommendations on the appointment and compensation of counsel in federal death penalty cases in 1998 ([JCUS-SEP 98](#), p. 22). In September 2010, the Defender Services Committee endorsed revised commentary to the Judicial Conference's 1998 recommendations. [CJA Guidelines, Vol. 7A, Appx. 6A \(Recommendations and Commentary Concerning the Cost and Quality of Defense Representation \(Updated Spencer Report, September 2010\)\)](#) ("Appx. 6A") is available on the judiciary's website.

- h. Out-of-district counsel, including federal defender organization staff, who possess the requisite expertise may be considered for appointment in capital trials to achieve high quality representation together with cost and other efficiencies.
- i. In evaluating the qualifications of proposed trial counsel, consideration should be given to their commitment to the defense of capital cases, their current caseload including other capital cases, and their willingness to effectively represent the interests of the client.

## 2. Qualifications of Learned Counsel

- a. Learned counsel must either be a member of this district's bar or be eligible for admission pro hac vice based on his or her qualifications. Appointment of counsel from outside the jurisdiction is common in federal capital cases to achieve cost and other efficiencies together with high quality representation.
- b. Learned counsel must meet the minimum experience standards in [18 U.S.C. §§ 3005](#) and [3599](#).
- c. Learned counsel should have distinguished prior experience in the trial, appeal, or post-conviction review of federal death penalty cases, or distinguished prior experience in state death penalty trials, appeals, or post-conviction review that, in combination with co-counsel, will assure high quality representation.
- d. "Distinguished prior experience" contemplates excellence, not simply prior experience. Counsel with distinguished prior experience should be appointed even if meeting this standard requires appointing counsel from outside the district where the matter arises.
- e. The suitability of learned counsel should be assessed with respect to the particular demands of the case, the stage of the litigation, and the defendant.
- f. Learned counsel must be willing and able to adjust other caseload demands to accommodate the extraordinary time required by the capital representation.
- g. Learned counsel should satisfy the qualification standards endorsed by bar associations and other legal organizations regarding the quality of representation in capital cases.

## 3. Qualifications of Second and Additional Counsel

- a. Second and additional counsel may, but are not required to, satisfy the qualifications for learned counsel, as provided above.

- b. Second and additional counsel must be well qualified, by virtue of their distinguished prior criminal defense experience, training and commitment, to serve as counsel in this highly specialized and demanding litigation.
  - c. Second and additional counsel must be willing and able to adjust other caseload demands to accommodate the extraordinary time required by the capital representation.
  - d. The suitability of second and additional counsel should be assessed with respect to the demands of the individual case, the stage of the litigation, and the defendant.
- D. Appointment and Qualifications of Direct Appeal Counsel in Federal Death Penalty Cases
1. When appointing appellate counsel, the judge must consider the recommendation of the Federal Public Defender, who will consult with Federal Capital Appellate Resource Counsel to recommend qualified counsel.
  2. In appointing appellate counsel, judges should give due weight to the recommendations made by federal defenders and resource counsel, or articulate reasons for not doing so.
  3. Counsel appointed to represent a death-sentenced federal appellant should include at least one attorney who did not represent the appellant at trial.
  4. Each trial counsel who withdraws should be replaced with similarly qualified counsel to represent the defendant on appeal.
  5. Out-of-district counsel, including federal defender organization staff, who possess the requisite expertise may be considered for appointment in capital appeals to achieve high quality representation together with cost and other efficiencies.
  6. Appellate counsel, between them, should have distinguished prior experience in federal criminal appeals and capital appeals.
  7. At least one of the attorneys appointed as appellate counsel must have the requisite background, knowledge, and experience required by [18 U.S.C. § 3599\(c\) or \(d\)](#).
  8. In evaluating the qualifications of proposed appellate counsel, consideration should be given to the qualification standards endorsed by bar associations and other legal organizations regarding the quality of legal representation in capital cases.
  9. In evaluating the qualifications of proposed appellate counsel, consideration should be given to their commitment to the defense of capital cases, their current caseload including other capital cases, and their willingness to effectively represent the interests of the client.

- E. Appointment and Qualifications of Post-Conviction Counsel in Federal Death Penalty Cases ([28 U.S.C. § 2255](#))
1. A financially eligible person seeking to vacate or set aside a death sentence in proceedings under 28 U.S.C. § 2255 is entitled to appointment of fully qualified counsel. **See:** [18 U.S.C. § 3599\(a\)\(2\)](#).
  2. Due to the complex, demanding, and protracted nature of death penalty proceedings, the court should consider appointing at least two attorneys.
  3. In light of the accelerated timeline applicable to capital § 2255 proceedings, prompt appointment of counsel is essential. Wherever possible, appointment should take place prior to the denial of certiorari on direct appeal by the United States Supreme Court.
  4. When appointing counsel in a capital § 2255 matter, the court should consider the recommendation of the Federal Public Defender, who will consult with the Federal Capital Habeas § 2255 Project.
  5. In appointing post-conviction counsel, judges should give due weight to the recommendations made by federal defenders and resource counsel, **or** articulate reasons for not doing so.
  6. Out-of-district counsel, including federal defender organization staff, who possess the requisite expertise may be considered for appointment in capital § 2255 cases to achieve high quality representation together with cost and other efficiencies.
  7. Local or circuit restrictions prohibiting capital habeas units (CHUs) from engaging in cross-district or cross-circuit representation should not be imposed without good cause. Every district should have access to a CHU.
  6. Counsel in § 2255 cases should have distinguished prior experience in the area of federal post-conviction proceedings and in capital post-conviction proceedings.
  7. When possible, post-conviction counsel should have distinguished prior experience in capital § 2255 representations.
  8. In evaluating the qualifications of proposed post-conviction counsel, consideration should be given to the qualification standards endorsed by bar associations and other legal organizations regarding the quality of legal representation in capital cases.
  9. In evaluating the qualifications of proposed post-conviction § 2255 counsel, consideration should be given to their commitment to the defense of capital cases, their current caseload including other capital cases, and their willingness to effectively represent the interests of the client.


- F. Appointment and Qualifications of Counsel in Federal Capital Habeas Corpus Proceedings ([28 U.S.C. § 2254](#))
1. A financially eligible person seeking to vacate or set aside a death sentence in proceedings under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 is entitled to the appointment of qualified counsel. **See:** [18 U.S.C. § 3599\(a\)\(2\)](#).
  2. Due to the complex, demanding, and protracted nature of death penalty proceedings, the court should consider appointing at least two attorneys.
  3. When appointing counsel in a capital § 2254 matter, the appointing authority should consider the recommendation of the Federal Public Defender who will consult with the National or Regional Habeas Assistance and Training Counsel projects.
  4. In appointing counsel in a capital § 2254 matter, judges should give due weight to the recommendations made by federal defenders and resource counsel, **or** articulate reasons for not doing so.
  5. Local or circuit restrictions prohibiting Capital Habeas Units (CHUs) from engaging in cross-district or cross-circuit representation should not be imposed without good cause. Every district should have access to a CHU.
  6. Out-of-district counsel, including federal defender organization staff, who possess the requisite expertise may be considered for appointment in capital § 2254 cases to achieve cost and other efficiencies together with high quality representation.
  7. For federal counsel to avail themselves of the full statute of limitations period to prepare a petition, the court should appoint counsel and provide appropriate litigation resources at the earliest possible time permissible by law.
  8. Unless precluded by a conflict of interest, or replaced by similarly qualified counsel upon motion by the attorney or motion by the defendant, capital § 2254 counsel must represent the defendant throughout every subsequent stage of available judicial proceedings and all available post-conviction processes, together with applications for stays of execution and other appropriate motions and procedures, and must also represent the defendant in such competency proceedings and proceedings for executive or other clemency as may be available to the defendant. **See:** [18 U.S.C. § 3599\(e\)](#).
  9. Counsel in capital § 2254 cases should have distinguished prior experience in the area of federal post-conviction proceedings and in capital post-conviction proceedings.
  10. When possible, capital § 2254 counsel should have distinguished prior experience in capital § 2254 representations.

- 11. In evaluating the qualifications of proposed capital § 2254 counsel, consideration should be given to the qualification standards endorsed by bar associations and other legal organizations regarding the quality of legal representation in capital cases.
- 12. In evaluating the qualifications of proposed capital § 2254 counsel, consideration should be given to proposed counsel's commitment to the defense of capital cases, their current caseload including other capital cases, and their willingness to represent effectively the interests of the client.


XV. Effective Date

This Plan will become effective when approved by the Judicial Council of the Fourth Circuit.

ENTER FOR THE COURT ON October 16, 2023.

  
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**Mark S. Davis**  
**Chief Judge**  
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 CHIEF JUDGE, DISTRICT COURT

APPROVED BY THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE FOURTH CIRCUIT ON October 25, 2023

  
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 CHIEF JUDGE, COURT OF APPEALS