

District of Columbia Court of Appeals

NOTICE

As of January 2026, the D.C. Court of Appeals has begun accepting applications from attorneys who wish to serve on its Criminal Justice Act (CJA) panel on a rolling basis. The court is also continuing to accept applications from attorneys interested in working on criminal appeals pro bono. Applications for both the panel and for the pro bono registry are available at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/cja-practitioner>. If you have questions regarding either paid or pro bono opportunities in criminal appeals, please contact the court's Staff Counsel, Abraham Sisson, at asisson@dcappeals.gov.

CJA Panel

The CJA panel is comprised of attorneys the court determines are qualified to represent indigent appellants in criminal appeals. Decisions to accept applicants to the panel are based primarily on the needs of the court, including the number of appeals filed and the complexity of those appeals. The average CJA panel attorney is appointed to approximately one case per month; however, attorneys can request to be appointed on a more or less frequent basis. The current hourly rate for CJA panel attorneys is \$110, and attorneys are also reimbursed for expenses. Resources available for CJA panel members include trainings offered through the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDS), as well as the PDS-CJA Appellate Consultation and Assistance Program, through which the PDS Appellate Division staff consults on briefs and arranges moot courts for CJA panel attorneys.

Prior to submitting a CJA panel application, applicants must read Order No. M-217-03, which establishes a Continuing Legal Education requirement for attorneys on the CJA panel; the 2006 Notice to CJA Counsel Concerning the Annual CLE Requirement; the memorandum titled "Obligations of Counsel," updated August 4, 2023; and the Voucher Guidelines for Attorneys Appointed by the D.C. Court of Appeals Under the District of Columbia Criminal Justice Act. These documents, along with other documents relevant to the CJA panel, are available on the court's website at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/cja-practitioner>. Attorneys interested in joining the panel must email the completed application, including a writing sample, to cjaapplication@dcappeals.gov. Submission of an application constitutes acknowledgment and acceptance of the "Obligations of Counsel" terms.

An attorney who submits an application to the CJA panel must be a registered e-filer at the time their application is submitted. In addition, because the court makes all payments via the web voucher portal, successful applicants must register for the court's web voucher system. The court will require attorneys admitted to the CJA panel to submit brief reapplications annually to maintain their panel membership.

Pro Bono Registry

In addition to reopening the CJA panel, the court is continuing to add attorneys to its pro bono registry, through which attorneys may be assigned to represent one or more indigent criminal appellants per year on a pro bono basis. Attorneys participating in the registry are not obligated to accept any particular case for assignment. As with the CJA panel application, the pro bono registry application can be found at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/cja-practitioner>.