



NYSBA

Standards for Providing Mandated Representation

Prepared by the Special Committee to Ensure
Quality of Mandated Representation

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INTRODUCTION

Both constitutional and statutory law require New York to provide counsel to certain individuals financially unable to obtain counsel. Most “mandated representation” is provided under a representation plan devised by each county in the state, and the City of New York¹, pursuant to County Law Article 18-B.

County Law Article 18-B authorizes each county to choose one or a combination of several options for providing representation to eligible clients: a public defender office; a private legal aid bureau or society or, in Family Court matters, any corporation or voluntary association or organization permitted to practice law under Judiciary Law § 495(7); or the assignment of private practitioners pursuant to an assigned counsel plan. County Law § 722. The statute for providing representation to eligible juveniles in various matters provides other options, including allowing the appropriate Appellate Division department to contract with one or more qualified attorneys to act as Law Guardians where an assigned counsel panel is not sufficient to provide needed legal services. See, Family Court Act § 243. Other statutory directives mandating representation or governing its provision include Judiciary Law §§ 35, 35-a and 35-b and Surrogate’s Court Procedure Act § 407.

The objective of any representation plan should be to ensure high quality legal services for every individual represented under the plan. A county is entitled to consider costs as a relevant factor in devising its representation plan, but it cannot ignore its constitutional, statutory and moral duty to provide quality counsel to those who cannot afford representation.

Although the County Law currently allows each county to devise its own configuration for a provider system, in a great majority of cases, a proper representation plan will establish a mixed representation system that integrates the use of institutional providers and assigned counsel. Such mixed representation systems can combine the advantages of institutional providers with the advantages of assigned counsel plans to engage a broad segment of the bar in achieving the objective of the plan.

1. Hereinafter the term “counties” includes the City of New York.

The following standards are designed for those devising, reviewing and working within representation plans to provide mandated representation. Unless a specific application or limitation is noted, these standards apply to all mandated representation, except capital defense, which has special requirements. The standards are designed to apply in any provider system, except where explicitly limited to a particular type of provider. The standards are designed to apply to representation by providers of mandated representation in existing systems and in systems developed in the future. It is the intention of the drafters that these standards be viewed and implemented as a whole. These standards do not define the ideal system or attempt to establish the norm. Rather they establish the minimum requirements for a mandated representation system.

Historically, the largest impediment to the provision of quality mandated representation is under-funding of the provider. It is vital that funding sources provide funding adequate to enable providers to meet or exceed the requirements of these standards.

DEFINITIONS

Mandated Representation – Legal representation of any person financially unable to obtain counsel without substantial hardship who is (1) accused of an offense punishable by incarceration; (2) entitled to representation under § 262 or § 1120 of the Family Court Act, Article 6-C of the Correction Law, § 407 of the Surrogate’s Court Procedure Act, § 259-i of the Executive Law or § 717 of the County Law; or (3) otherwise entitled to counsel pursuant to constitutional, statutory or other authority.

Providers of Mandated Representation – Attorneys who, or organizations of any form that, provide mandated representation, including, but not limited to, individual attorneys; public defender offices; legal aid bureaus or societies; corporations, voluntary associations or organizations permitted to practice law under the authority of Judiciary Law § 495(7); and assigned counsel plans. The term “providers of mandated representation” includes both the individual attorneys and whatever entity employs those attorneys or by which those attorneys are assigned to provide mandated representation.

Institutional Providers of Mandated Representation – Providers of mandated representation identified in County Law § 722(1) and (2), including public defenders; legal aid bureaus or societies; any corporation, voluntary association or organization permitted to practice law under the authority of Judiciary Law § 495(7); and any attorney or attorneys with whom an Appellate Division has contracted for the provision of mandated representation under the authority of Family Court Act § 243(b). The term “institutional provider of mandated representation” is used to distinguish the institutions from the individual attorneys working for the institutional providers. An assigned counsel plan is not an “institutional provider of mandated representation.”

Assigned Counsel Plan – A plan for the assignment of private attorneys pursuant to County Law § 722(3).

Assigned Counsel – Private attorneys assigned to provide mandated representation pursuant to County Law § 722(3).

A. INDEPENDENCE

A-1. To guarantee the integrity of the attorney-client relationship, the function of providing mandated representation, including the selection, funding and payment of counsel, shall be independent. In the performance of their legal duties, providers of mandated representation should therefore be free from political influence or any influences other than the interests of the client and should be subject to judicial supervision only in the same manner and to the same extent as all other practicing lawyers. Each provider of mandated representation shall have an independent board or other entity to protect professional independence.

A-2. The selection of providers of mandated representation, including the head of any institutional provider of mandated representation, shall be made solely on the basis of merit.

A-3. Where mandated representation is to be provided by assigned counsel, the selection of the individual attorney to be assigned shall not be made by a judge or court official except in an emergency or in exceptional circumstances. The selection of the individual attorney to be assigned shall be made by someone outside the court system in order to ensure the independence of counsel. Assignments should be made on a rotational basis from a list created pursuant to a plan established under County Law Article 18-B and shall be motivated by the goal of providing high quality mandated representation.

B. EARLY ENTRY OF REPRESENTATION

B-1. Effective representation should be available for every eligible person whenever counsel is requested during government investigation or when the individual is in custody. Provision of counsel shall not be delayed while a person's eligibility for mandated representation is being determined or verified.

B-2. Eligible persons shall have counsel available for any court appearance.

B-3. Counsel shall be available when a person reasonably believes that a process will commence that could result in a proceeding where representation is mandated.

B-4. Systematic procedures shall be implemented to ensure that prompt mandated representation is available to all eligible persons, particularly those held in detention facilities.

C. ELIGIBILITY OF CLIENT

C-1. Any person who is financially unable to obtain counsel without substantial hardship shall be eligible to receive mandated representation in all situations in which a constitutional, statutory or other right to counsel exists.

C-2. Mandated representation shall not be denied because of a person's ability to pay part of the cost of representation, because friends or relatives have resources to retain counsel or because bond has been or can be posted.

C-3. A judge shall decide a person's initial eligibility and continuing eligibility for mandated representation.

C-4. Rules, regulations and procedures concerning the determination of initial eligibility and continuing eligibility for mandated representation shall be designed so as to protect the client's privacy and constitutional rights and to not interfere with the attorney's relationship with his or her client.

C-5. Provision of counsel shall not be delayed while a person's eligibility for mandated representation is being determined or verified.

C-6. Any attempts to obtain partial payment from any person for the costs of mandated representation or associated services shall be made in accordance with County Law § 722-d.

D. PARTIAL PAYMENT

D-1. No person shall be subject to a partial payment order under County Law § 722-d², unless that person was informed, prior to the offer of mandated representation, of any possible obligation to make any payment, as well as the standards that permit the court to order any such payment. No advice about partial payment shall be given in a way that discourages exercise of the right to counsel.

D-2. Partial payment shall not be imposed if doing so would cause financial hardship to the person or the person's dependents and unless satisfactory safeguards are provided.

D-3. Where partial payment pursuant to County Law § 722-d is appropriate, the court shall determine the amount to be paid and such payment shall be made directly to the general fund of the county or other appropriate funding agency.

D-4. The amount of payment to be made shall be decided objectively on a case-by-case basis in accordance with predetermined standards. The predetermined standards shall take into account the cost of living in the particular community in which the person provided mandated representation resides and in which the case is pending and shall also consider all aspects of the person's family circumstances, including but not limited to number of dependents, employment status, housing and health care costs and indebtedness. The standards shall be adjusted periodically to reflect increases in the cost of living. At a minimum, the person seeking counsel shall be given an opportunity to be heard and to present information to the court concerning whether the person can afford the partial payment.

2. This section of the County Law reads as follows:

Whenever it appears that the defendant is financially able to obtain counsel or to make partial payment for the representation or other services, counsel may report this fact to the court and the court may terminate the assignment of counsel or authorize payment, as the interests of justice may dictate, to the public defender, private legal aid bureau or society, private attorney, or otherwise.

Though the statute suggests that "counsel may report" information about the defendant's financial ability to the court, the Special Committee notes that the Disciplinary Rules prohibit an attorney from revealing a "confidence or secret of a client." DR 4-101(B)(1). Such confidences or secrets could include information regarding the client's financial status, which therefore cannot be revealed by a lawyer unless the client consents or some other exception under the Disciplinary Rules applies. See, DR 4-101(C).

D-5. No provider of mandated representation shall be responsible for collection of payment.

D-6. Payment toward the cost of representation shall never be a factor in the determination of bail and shall never be made a condition of probation or other sentence.

D-7. Failure to make any ordered payment shall not result in the denial of counsel at any stage of proceedings.

D-8. Partial payment shall only be ordered based on existing circumstances during the pendency of the matter for which mandated representation has been provided and shall not be ordered based on future ability to pay.

E. QUALIFICATION OF COUNSEL

E-1. Attorneys who provide mandated representation shall have sufficient qualifications and experience to enable them to render quality representation to a client in each particular case. Providers of mandated representation shall never allow an attorney to accept a case if that attorney lacks the experience or training to handle it competently, unless the attorney is associated with another attorney on the case who does possess the necessary experience and training.

E-2. Institutional providers of mandated representation and assigned counsel plans shall have written minimum qualifications for attorneys who provide mandated representation. If mandated representation is to be provided in more than one category of cases, there shall be different minimum qualifications for each category and, if appropriate, for different levels of cases within each category.

F. TRAINING

F-1. All attorneys and staff who provide mandated representation shall be provided with continuing legal education and training sufficient to ensure that their skills and knowledge of the substantive and procedural law and ethical rules relevant to the area of law in which they are or will be practicing are sufficient to enable them to provide quality representation.

F-2. Continuing legal education and training programs shall be made available and affordable for attorneys and staff providing mandated representation, and public funds shall be provided to enable all attorneys and staff to attend such programs.

F-3. Attorneys who provide mandated representation shall allocate a significant portion of their annual mandatory continuing legal education credit requirement toward courses directly related to the subject matter of the mandated representation they provide.

G. WORKLOADS

G-1. The objective of providing high quality mandated representation to all eligible persons cannot be accomplished by even the ablest and most industrious attorneys in the face of excessive workloads. To permit counsel to satisfy their ethical obligations to their clients, every institutional provider of mandated representation and every assigned counsel plan shall establish workload limits for individual attorneys. Workloads shall be at a level to allow counsel to meet the Performance Standards set forth herein.³

G-2. Because different localities have different procedures and policies and because travel requirements may differ from county to county, reasonable statewide numerical workload limits are impossible to establish. Therefore, each institutional provider and assigned counsel plan shall develop local numerical workload standards. Among the factors that shall be considered in establishing maximum workloads are (a) the types of cases being handled; (b) the qualifications and experience of the attorney; (c) the workload and resources of the prosecutor or other attorney(s) handling such cases for the government; (d) the distance between court(s) and attorney offices; (e) the time needed to interview clients and witnesses, taking into consideration the travel time and the location of confidential interview facilities; (f) any other factors relevant to the local practice or the types of cases being handled; and (g) existing national and other recognized workload standards.

In no event, however, shall the local workload standards exceed the national workload standards established in criminal and juvenile delinquency cases by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (Task Force on Courts, 1973) Standard 13.12, which sets forth the following maximum cases per year: 150 felonies or 400 misdemeanors or 200 juvenile delinquency cases or 200 mental health matters or 25 appellate assignments.⁴

3. See, infra, at § I.

4. These numerical standards do not apply to the defense of capital cases, which are unique. See, Federal Death Penalty Cases: Recommendations Concerning the Cost and Quality of Defense Representation (Judicial Conference of the United States, 1998); see also, ABA Guidelines for the Appointment and Performance of Counsel in Death Penalty Cases (rev. 2003).

In cases other than criminal and juvenile delinquency proceedings, each provider of mandated representation is responsible to set its own numerical workload limits based on the factors noted above.

Each provider's workload must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the provider is not responsible for more cases than it can reasonably be expected to handle effectively, bearing in mind the factors set forth above.

G-3. Each provider's workload should be continuously monitored, assessed and predicted so that whenever possible, excessive workload problems can be anticipated and preventive action taken.

G-4. Whenever the workload of a provider of mandated representation exceeds maximum workload standards, it is the obligation of the provider to take appropriate steps, which may include, but are not limited to (a) declining additional cases; (b) seeking leave to withdraw from existing cases; (c) seeking additional funding to hire additional attorneys and/or support staff; (d) actively seeking the support of the judiciary, the private bar and the community in the resolution of the workload problem; and/or (e) seeking assistance from an appropriate state or national organization as a means of independently documenting the problem.

G-5. Courts shall not require providers of mandated representation to accept excessive workloads and shall take all steps necessary to ensure that excessive workloads are not imposed.

G-6. Government funders shall not require providers of mandated representation to accept excessive workloads and shall take all steps necessary to ensure that excessive workloads are not imposed.

H. SUPPORT SERVICES/RESOURCES

H-1. The institutional provider of mandated representation shall provide counsel with the investigatory, expert (including social work), secretarial, interpretation and other support services and facilities necessary to provide quality legal representation.

H-2. The facilities provided to counsel by institutional providers of mandated representation shall include professional quality office facilities that are comparable to a similarly sized private law firm, such as adequate working space for each attorney and staff member, private office and conference room space in which attorneys can meet with clients, sufficient library facilities and/or access to online legal research materials, and computers and other necessary technical and communication equipment.

H-3. The support services and facilities provided to counsel at institutional providers of mandated representation shall be at least comparable to the support services and facilities provided to attorneys for the government.

H-4. The administrative office of an assigned counsel plan shall be equipped with suitable staff, space, equipment and supplies to carry out its duties under County Law § 722(3).

H-5. Assigned counsel plans shall ensure that assigned counsel have the support services and facilities necessary to provide quality legal representation. Such services and facilities shall include access to meeting facilities that ensure confidentiality, sufficient library facilities and/or online legal research materials, any necessary foreign language interpretation services, and sufficient technical and communications equipment and means, including a means for clients to contact the attorney telephonically without incurring long-distance charges. This does not mean that the assigned counsel plan itself is obligated to provide these support services and/or facilities.

H-6. Because persons eligible for mandated representation have the right to all appropriate investigatory and expert services, courts should routinely grant requests for such services made by assigned counsel.

H-7. Institutional providers of mandated representation and assigned counsel plans shall establish means by which incarcerated clients can have confidential communication with their counsel, telephonically or otherwise. Correctional and detention facilities shall cooperate in establishing such means.

I. PERFORMANCE

I-1. An attorney can provide zealous, effective and high quality representation only if the attorney has the time, resources, knowledge and expertise that a conscientious and professional attorney familiar with the particulars of the case would consider necessary.

I-2. If at any time during the representation the attorney concludes that he or she is not able to provide zealous, effective and high quality representation, the attorney must immediately seek to withdraw from the case, unless the attorney can associate with another attorney and thereby be able to provide zealous, effective and high quality representation.

The following are basic Performance Standards and are not intended to be exhaustive.

General Performance Standards

I-3. An attorney must (a) communicate with his or her client on a regular basis during the course of representation, preferably in a private face-to-face discussion; (b) communicate with family or friends of the client, to the extent that the client waives the attorney-client privilege as to such communication; (c) inform the client on a regular basis of the progress of the case; (d) ensure that the client sees copies of all documents prepared or received by the attorney; and (e) provide the client with the opportunity to make an intelligent and well-informed decision in those instances when a decision is to be made by the client (i.e., whether to plead guilty, whether to be tried by a jury or judge and whether to testify).

I-4. An attorney shall abide by the Disciplinary Rules of the Code of Professional Responsibility (Part 1200 of Title 22 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations), and in particular those Disciplinary Rules concerning conflicts of interest (§§ 1200.20, 1200.24, 1200.26 and 1200.27).

I-5. Under an assigned counsel plan, the assignment procedures must ensure that the same counsel will represent the client continuously from the inception of the representation until the initiation of the appellate proceeding, if any, unless a court determines that (a) there is a conflict of interest; (b) there is a breakdown in the attorney-client relationship

that interferes with counsel's ability to provide zealous, effective and high quality representation; or (c) some unforeseen circumstance, such as illness, prevents counsel from continuing to provide zealous, effective and high quality representation. Similarly, counsel assigned at the appellate or post-conviction stage shall provide continuity of representation during that proceeding.

I-6. When a client has multiple pending proceedings, the attorney on any one of them shall immediately and thereafter regularly communicate with the attorney(s) on the other matter(s), to the extent that the client waives the attorney-client privilege as to such communication. If feasible, and with the approval of the client, the attorneys shall make every effort to transfer the representation on all pending matters to a single attorney.

Specific Types of Matters

I-7. Criminal Matters

No attorney shall accept a criminal case unless that attorney can provide, and is confident that he or she can provide, zealous, effective and high quality representation. Such representation at the trial court stage means, at a minimum:

a. Obtaining all available information concerning the client's background and circumstances for purposes of (i) obtaining the client's pre-trial release on the most favorable terms possible; (ii) negotiating the most favorable pretrial disposition possible, if such a disposition is in the client's interests; (iii) presenting character evidence at trial if appropriate; (iv) advocating for the lowest legally permissible sentence, if that becomes necessary; and (v) avoiding, if at all possible, collateral consequences including but not limited to deportation or eviction;

b. Investigating the facts concerning the offense charged, including: (i) interviewing the client; (ii) seeking discovery and disclosure of the People's evidence, exculpatory information and impeaching material; (iii) obtaining relevant information from other sources; (iv) interviewing witnesses to the relevant events; and (v) obtaining corroborating evidence for any relevant defenses;

c. Researching the law, including, as appropriate, state statutory and constitutional law and federal constitutional law relevant to (i) the

offenses charged (and any lesser included offenses); (ii) any possible defenses; (iii) relevant sentencing provisions; and (iv) other matters such as issues concerning the accusatory instrument, the admissibility of evidence, the prosecutor's obligations, speedy trial rights and any other relevant federal or state, constitutional, common law or statutory issue;

d. Preserving the client's options at all stages of the proceedings, such as (i) to seek a jury trial; (ii) to proffer a defense; (iii) to seek dismissal of the indictment; (iv) to seek dismissal of the charges for denial of statutory or constitutional speedy trial rights; (v) to seek preclusion or suppression of evidence; (vi) to seek discovery, exculpatory and impeaching information; and (vii) to seek an appropriate disposition consistent with the client's best interests and instructions;

e. Providing the client with full information concerning such matters as (i) potential defenses and their viability; (ii) the weaknesses in the People's case; (iii) plea offers; (iv) potential sentence exposure under all possible eventualities, including the relationship to any other sentences, potential release dates and available correctional programs; and (v) immigration, motor vehicle licensing and other collateral consequences under all possible eventualities;

f. Filing appropriate pretrial motions for, among other things, (i) dismissal of the charging instrument for facial or evidentiary insufficiency; (ii) joinder or severance; (iii) dismissal of the charges for denial of statutory or constitutional speedy trial rights; (iv) suppression or preclusion of evidence; and (v) additional resources not available due to the client's financial circumstances;

g. In the event of, and in advance of, trial: (i) developing a legal and factual strategy, using whatever investigative and forensic resources are appropriate; (ii) preparing for cross examination of the People's witnesses and direct examination of defense witnesses; (iii) developing a foundation for the introduction of defense evidence; (iv) formulating an opening statement; and (v) drafting requests for jury instructions;

h. In the event of, and in advance of, sentence: (i) gathering favorable information and, where appropriate, presenting that information in written form; (ii) reviewing the probation department report to ensure that it is accurate and taking whatever steps are necessary to correct errors; and (iii) utilizing forensic resources if appropriate;

- i. Following a final disposition other than a dismissal or acquittal:
 - (i) advising the client of the right to appeal and the requirement to file a notice of appeal;
 - (ii) filing a notice of appeal on the client's behalf if the client requests;
 - (iii) advising the client of the right to seek appointment of counsel and a free copy of the transcript;
 - (iv) assisting the client in applying for appointment of counsel and a free copy of the transcript if the client requests;
 - (v) cooperating fully with appellate counsel; and
- j. Following a disposition from which the prosecutor has a right to appeal:
 - (i) advising the client of the possibility that the prosecutor will pursue an appeal;
 - (ii) advising the client of the client's right to appointment of counsel should the prosecutor appeal; and
 - (iii) assisting the client in applying for appointment of counsel if the client requests.

I-8. Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Offender Matters

a. Law Guardians⁵ and attorneys representing juvenile offenders shall investigate, research and prepare in the same manner and using the same tools as attorneys in criminal cases. Thus, to the extent consistent with these types of matters, the Performance Standards contained in § I-7, *supra*, apply here.

b. The attorney shall take into consideration the age of the client and any attendant emotional and psychological needs of the client. Where appropriate, the attorney shall employ the services of a forensic social worker or other qualified professionals.

c. Considering the flexibility available to judges in entering dispositional orders in cases involving juveniles, Law Guardians and attorneys representing juvenile offenders shall be especially vigorous in advocating for the least restrictive alternative, including dismissal.

I-9. Abuse and Neglect Matters

a. Attorneys representing adults in abuse and neglect cases shall investigate, research and prepare in the same manner and using the same tools as attorneys in criminal cases. Thus, to the extent consistent

5. The New York State Bar Association has adopted separate standards governing Law Guardian representation. *See*, Law Guardian Representation Standards, Committee on Children and the Law (1996) and Law Guardian Representation Standards, Vol II: Custody Cases, Committee on Children and the Law (1999). Where applicable to mandated representation, those standards are incorporated herein as part of these Performance Standards.

with these types of matters, the Performance Standards contained within § I-7, supra, apply here.

b. The attorney shall take into consideration any attendant emotional and psychological needs of the client. Where appropriate, the attorney shall employ the services of a forensic social worker or other qualified professionals.

c. The attorney shall be aware of the possibility of criminal prosecution based upon the same conduct at issue and plan strategy and advise the client accordingly.

d. When a Law Guardian has been appointed for children of the client, the attorney shall advise the client regarding the role of the Law Guardian and, when appropriate, shall prepare the client for contact or interviews with the Law Guardian.

e. Attorneys shall counsel clients regarding all of the potential consequences of any particular resolution of the matter before clients are asked to make decisions regarding potential dispositions.

I-10. Appeals

Zealous, effective and high quality representation at the appellate stage means, at a minimum:

a. Obtaining and reviewing all relevant portions of the record;

b. Researching the applicable law, including substantive law, procedural law and rules regarding the appeal;

c. Strategically selecting among the issues presented by the facts, considering the strength of authority, the facts and the standard and scope of review. The selection of issues must be made with an awareness of the consequences for later post-conviction proceedings;

d. Preparing a statement of facts that accurately sets out the significant and relevant facts, with supporting record citations;

e. Presenting legal arguments that apply the most relevant and persuasive law to the facts of the case;

f. Writing in a clear, cogent and persuasive manner;

g. Requesting oral argument when such argument would be in the client's interests and, when oral argument is granted, being thoroughly prepared and presenting the argument in a clear, cogent and persuasive manner;

h. Preparing and filing an application for leave to appeal to the New York State Court of Appeals should the client not prevail on the appeal to the intermediate appellate court, and preparing and filing an opposition to the prosecutor's application for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals, should the client prevail on the appeal to the intermediate appellate court; and

i. In the event of affirmance of an unfavorable intermediate appellate disposition, reversal of a favorable intermediate appellate disposition or denial of leave to the Court of Appeals, advising the client of (i) the right to petition the United States Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari and the procedures by which the client may do so; (ii) the circumstances under which the client may file a state court application for post-conviction relief; and (iii) the circumstances under which the client may file a federal petition for a writ of habeas corpus, including the time limitations and the requirements of preservation and exhaustion.

J. QUALITY ASSURANCE

J-1. Institutional providers of mandated representation shall provide both professional and support staff with meaningful periodic and ongoing evaluation of their work according to objective criteria. Institutional providers of mandated representation shall establish objective criteria to be used in determining whether they are providing quality representation. Such objective criteria shall include, but are not limited to, the Performance Standards contained herein.

J-2. Discipline or discharge should be options where staff performance evaluations indicate a failure to meet the institutional provider's standards of quality representation.

J-3. Institutional providers of mandated representation shall develop procedures for tracking and managing individual cases to ensure that performance standards are met at all stages of proceedings.

J-4. Institutional providers of mandated representation shall establish procedures for the receipt, investigation and resolution of client complaints. All staff must be informed of and required to comply with such procedures.

J-5. Assigned counsel plans shall provide assigned counsel with meaningful, periodic and ongoing evaluation of their work according to objective criteria. The standards against which an assigned counsel's performance is measured should be those of a skilled, knowledgeable and conscientious practitioner in the same field. An assigned counsel plan's objective criteria shall be publicized and shall include, but not be limited to, the Performance Standards contained herein.

J-6. Assigned counsel plans shall establish a system for the periodic and ongoing evaluation of assigned counsel performance according to objective criteria. Assigned counsel plans shall establish policies for the imposition of penalties, including removal from the roster of counsel eligible for assignment to cases, when counsel fails to provide quality representation according to these objective criteria.

J-7. Assigned counsel plans shall establish procedures for the receipt, investigation and resolution of client complaints. Assigned counsel shall be informed of, and be required to comply with, such procedures.

J-8. An independent monitoring and enforcement mechanism shall be established for the evaluation of providers of mandated representation. This mechanism shall ensure that all providers of mandated representation meet the standards of quality representation contained herein.

J-9. All attorneys providing mandated representation, regardless of whether pursuant to an assigned counsel plan, a public defender office, a legal aid bureau or society or any other institutional or associational structure, shall keep records of all time spent on the representation of each individual client, indicating the duration and nature of the work done and the dates on which the work was performed.



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K. COMPENSATION

K-1. There shall be parity between the compensation provided to counsel who provide mandated representation and the compensation provided to attorneys for the government working on the same matters.

K-2. Contracts with institutional providers of mandated representation shall require that there be parity between the compensation paid to their attorneys and other staff and to attorneys and other staff performing comparable duties for the government on the same matters.

K-3. Assigned counsel shall receive prompt compensation at a reasonable hourly rate sufficient to cover their actual overhead costs and expenses and to provide them in addition with a reasonable fee.

K-4. No distinction shall be made between the rates paid to assigned counsel for work performed in court and work performed out of court.

K-5. The rates of compensation paid to assigned counsel shall be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure their adequacy.

K-6. Assigned counsel shall be compensated for all hours necessary to provide quality legal representation, including work done post-disposition.

K-7. Assigned counsel shall be promptly reimbursed for all of their reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.

K-8. Under no circumstances may any attorney who has represented a person pursuant to assignment to provide mandated legal representation accept any payment whatsoever on behalf of the client in connection with the matter that is the subject of the assignment.

K-9. Assigned counsel plans shall have policies allowing payment of interim vouchers for fees and expenses and payment of supplemental vouchers for post-disposition work.

K-10. Where an assigned counsel's request for compensation is reduced in any respect, counsel must be afforded a meaningful opportunity to contest said reduction, including the right to be heard and present relevant information and argument supporting the request. A reduction shall be made and sustained only where the request clearly overstates the amount of hours necessary to provide quality legal representation or the expenses incurred in the particular case.