

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA  
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MARICOPA**

IN THE MATTER OF ADOPTING A PLAN )  
FOR REVIEW OF APPOINTED DEFENSE )  
COUNSEL )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER  
NO. 2018-055

WHEREAS, Rule 6.2 of the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure requires the Presiding Judge to establish procedures for appointment of counsel; and

WHEREAS, Rule 6.5 of the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure provides that appointments shall take into account “the skill likely to be required in handling a particular case;” and

WHEREAS, Rule 6.8 of the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure sets standards for appointment and performance of defense counsel in capital cases,

IT IS ORDERED adopting the Plan for Review of Appointed Defense Counsel, attached as Exhibit A.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED this Administrative Order supersedes Administrative Order No. 2014-101.

DATED this 10<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2018.

/s/ Janet E. Barton

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Janet E. Barton  
Presiding Judge

Original: Clerk of the Superior Court

Copies: Hon. Sam Meyers, Criminal Presiding Judge  
Superior Court Judges and Commissioners – Criminal Department  
Hon. Mark Brnovich, Attorney General  
Hon. William Montgomery, County Attorney  
Christina Phillis, Public Defense Services  
James Haas, Public Defender  
Marty Lieberman, Legal Defender  
Bruce F. Peterson, Legal Advocate  
Raymond L. Billotte, Judicial Branch Administrator  
Richard Woods, Deputy Court Administrator  
Christopher Bleuenstein, Criminal Court Administrator

## **PLAN FOR REVIEW OF APPOINTED DEFENSE COUNSEL**

### **AUTHORITY**

This Plan for Review of Appointed Defense Counsel (the “Plan”) is created pursuant to the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure. The Rules of Criminal Procedure assign certain judicial functions to the Presiding Judge in relation to the appointment of counsel in criminal cases. Rule 6.2 provides that the Presiding Judge shall establish procedures for appointment of counsel. Rule 6.5(c) provides that appointments shall take into account “the skill likely to be required in handling a particular case.” Rule 6.8 sets standards for appointment and performance of defense counsel in capital cases. The persons implementing and carrying out this Plan, specifically including the members of the two review committees, are acting under the authority of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County to assist the Presiding Judge in carrying out his or her judicial responsibilities.

### **PURPOSE OF PLAN**

This Plan is intended to further the goals articulated in the “Resolution on Indigent Defense Services Provided by the Court to Juveniles and Adults” adopted by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and approved by the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County in 1992. The Plan establishes “performance requirements” and “a system which allows for regular evaluation of contract attorneys . . . including provisions leading to contract termination when performance is below standard.” It creates “Review Committee[s]” to assist in “reviewing, selecting and monitoring indigent legal services contracts.” These mechanisms are “consistent with . . . applicable standards of the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association (NLADA) and the American Bar Association (ABA),” which require institutionalized quality control for indigent defense services.

The Plan is intended to ensure, to the extent possible, that attorneys appointed to represent indigent defendants in the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County provide skilled, knowledgeable and conscientious legal representation to their clients. That representation should be commensurate with the gravity of the charges and the severity of the potential consequences for the defendant. These principles shall inform the operation and administration of the Plan. With respect to capital cases, the Plan is intended to serve as a “Legal Representation Plan” as described in Guideline 2.1 of the American Bar Association Guidelines for the Appointment and Performance of Defense Counsel in Death Penalty Cases (the “ABA Guidelines”). The Capital Defense Review Committee is intended to perform some of the duties of a “Responsible Agency” as provided in Guideline 3.1 of the ABA Guidelines.

The Plan will at all times be administered in a manner consistent with and in furtherance of an attorney’s ethical and professional obligations under Supreme Court Rules 41 (obligations of lawyers including respect for courts and professionalism) and 42 (Arizona Rules of Professional Conduct). Nothing in this Plan is intended to confer on any attorney any right to

enter into or continue under or renew a contract for indigent defense services, or any right or benefit of any kind not provided for by such a contract.

## **REVIEW COMMITTEES**

### **Capital Defense Review Committee**

A Capital Defense Review Committee is established. That committee shall be composed of:

- The director of OPDS and the heads of the three Maricopa County adult indigent criminal defense offices, or their designees;
- The Presiding Criminal Judge or a Maricopa County Superior Court Judge designated by the Presiding Criminal Judge; and
- Four members of the criminal defense bar, appointed by the Presiding Criminal Judge, who do not hold a current OPDS contract or have a contract application currently pending and who are not currently employed by a Maricopa County indigent defense agency.

All members of the Capital Defense Review Committee must have substantial experience in the defense of capital cases or experience presiding over capital trials. Current active membership in the Bar is not required.

### **Felony Defense Review Committee**

A separate Felony Defense Review Committee is also established. That committee shall be composed of:

- The director of OPDS and the heads of the three Maricopa County adult indigent criminal defense offices, or their designees;
- The Presiding Criminal Judge or a Maricopa County Superior Court Judge designated by the Presiding Criminal Judge, and
- Four members of the criminal defense bar, appointed by the Presiding Criminal Judge, who do not hold a current OPDS contract or have a contract application currently pending and who are not currently employed by a Maricopa County indigent defense agency.

All members of the Felony Defense Review Committee must have substantial experience in the defense of felony cases or experience presiding over felony trials. Current active membership in the Bar is not required.

Where this Plan refers to “the Committee,” the reference is intended to apply to both the Capital Defense Review Committee and the Felony Defense Review Committee unless the context requires otherwise.

## **Committee Procedures**

The Committee chairs and vice-chairs shall be appointed by the Presiding Criminal Judge from among the current Committee members for a term of one year which can be renewed for up to three consecutive years

Upon the establishment of each Committee, the Presiding Criminal Judge shall appoint one of the criminal defense bar members for a one-year term, another for a two-year term, and the other two for three-year terms. All subsequent appointments or re-appointments shall be for three-year terms.

Each Committee shall establish guidelines for its operation, with the approval of the Presiding Criminal Judge. Operating guidelines may be reviewed and revised from time to time at the discretion of the Chair. Proposed guidelines shall be submitted to the Director of OPDS before adoption, to ensure compliance with applicable laws, rules and contract provisions.

## **FUNCTION OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Capital Defense Review Committee and the Felony Defense Review Committee shall determine whether attorneys holding contracts to provide indigent defense services in Maricopa County are qualified for appointment under the criteria established in this Plan. Based on those determinations, the Committee shall make recommendations to the Criminal Presiding Judge concerning the assignment of contract holders to the types of cases provided for in their respective contracts.

## **Review of Qualifications**

The Capital Defense Review Committee shall review the qualifications of each attorney listed on the OPDS Attorney Services Registry as to whom OPDS requests evaluation for assignment to capital cases. The Capital Defense Review Committee shall determine, based on the Committee's review of qualifications, what type of cases (if any) the attorney may be assigned from the following categories:

- Capital – Lead counsel
- Capital – Co-counsel
- Capital Direct Appeal

The Felony Defense Review Committee shall review the qualifications of each attorney listed on the OPDS Attorney Services Registry as to whom OPDS requests evaluation for assignment to non-capital felony cases. The Felony Defense Review Committee shall determine, based on the Committee's review of qualifications, what type of cases (if any) the attorney may be assigned from the following categories:

- Major Felony
- Felony
- Appeal/Post Conviction Relief

To be deemed qualified for assignment to capital cases, the attorney must demonstrate that he or she meets all of the above criteria, and also the following additional criteria:

- The attorney meets, and can be expected to continue to meet, the minimum eligibility requirements of Criminal Rule 6.8.
- The attorney possesses the qualifications set forth in Guideline 5.1 of the ABA Guidelines.
- The attorney has a demonstrated history of practice, and can be expected to continue to practice, in accordance with the performance and practice standards set forth in Guidelines 10.1 through 10.13 of the ABA Guidelines.

Each calendar year, OPDS shall forward to the Capital Defense Review Committee the names of one-sixth of the attorneys currently receiving assignments to capital cases and the names of all attorneys as to whom OPDS requests evaluation for assignment to capital cases, along with copies of those attorneys' most recent contract application and the additional information called for in this Plan. Effective six years from the date of adoption of this Plan, an attorney shall not be eligible for assignment to capital cases pursuant to a Maricopa County Adult Criminal Contract unless that attorney has completed the required review of qualifications and has been approved for assignment by the Presiding Criminal Judge.

To be deemed qualified for assignment to felony cases, the attorney must demonstrate that he or she meets the following criteria:

- The attorney is a member in good standing of the State Bar of Arizona.
- The attorney meets, and can be expected to continue to meet, the minimum qualifications established by the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure.
- The attorney complies with, and can be expected to continue to comply with, Arizona Supreme Court Rule 41 (Rules of Professional Conduct) and Rule 45 (continuing legal education); and OPDS contract obligations.
- The attorney provides, and can be expected to continue to provide, skilled, knowledgeable, thorough and conscientious representation to his or her clients, commensurate with the gravity of the charges and the severity of the potential consequences for the defendant.
- The attorney meets, and can be expected to continue to meet, the performance and practice standards of the profession and this Plan.

Each calendar year, OPDS shall forward to the Felony Defense Review Committee the names of one-sixth of the attorneys currently receiving assignments to non-capital felony cases and the names of all attorneys as to whom OPDS requests evaluation for assignment to non-capital felony cases, along with copies of each attorney's most recent contract application and the additional information called for in this Plan. Effective six years from the date of adoption of this Plan, an attorney shall not be eligible for assignment to non-capital felony cases pursuant to a Maricopa County Adult Criminal Contract unless that attorney has completed the required review of qualifications and has been approved for assignment by the Presiding Criminal Judge.

## **Evaluation Process**

When OPDS forwards the name of an attorney to the Committee, the Committee shall initiate a review of the attorney's qualifications to determine whether the attorney meets the criteria established by this Plan and therefore should be recommended for case assignment.

The Committee shall require an attorney undergoing review of qualifications to complete a written application separate from the contract application. The application form shall be created by the Committee and revised from time to time as necessary. The application shall require the attorney to provide, at a minimum, a list of representative cases handled by the attorney; references from judges and co-counsel; writing samples; and a summary of relevant continuing legal education for at least the three years immediately preceding the application. The Capital Defense Review application also shall require a complete list of capital cases in which the attorney has participated in the ten years immediately preceding the application, including case name and number; assigned judge; names, business addresses and telephone numbers of all attorneys in the case; and names, business addresses, and telephone numbers of all non-attorney defense team members. An attorney seeking assignment to capital cases also must identify a comprehensive training program in the defense of capital cases that the attorney will complete within one year of approval for assignment, unless the attorney can demonstrate that he or she has completed such a program within the two years immediately preceding the application.

The Committee shall review applications, check references, evaluate work product, and conduct additional inquiry to determine whether an attorney applicant possesses the qualifications required by this Plan. The Committee may solicit input or comments from judges, attorneys, and others. The inquiry by the Capital Defense Review Committee shall include, and the inquiry by the Felony Defense Review Committee may include, interviews of persons not listed as references who are familiar with the applicant's work.

Upon completion of its inquiry, the Committee shall meet and discuss each attorney applicant. The Capital Defense Review Committee shall interview an attorney applicant before recommending the attorney for assignment to capital cases. The Felony Defense Review Committee may interview attorney applicants at its discretion.

The Committee shall recommend whether an attorney applicant should receive assignments in each category of cases for which assignment is authorized under the attorney's Maricopa County Adult Criminal Contract. An attorney whom the Committee has tentatively decided not to recommend for assignment in one or more of the categories of cases for which the attorney is eligible under his or her contract, shall be notified in writing of the tentative adverse recommendation and given an opportunity to be heard as to his or her qualifications either in writing or by in-person meeting with the Committee or both, before the Committee makes a final recommendation.

The Committee shall issue a final recommendation as to whether an attorney should receive case assignments within 180 days of receipt of the attorney's written application, unless the circumstances make action within 180 days impracticable. The Committee chair shall transmit

the Committee's final recommendations to the Presiding Criminal Judge in writing. The Presiding Criminal Judge may meet with the Committee chair to discuss the recommendations, at the Presiding Criminal Judge's discretion.

When the Committee recommends to the Criminal Presiding Judge that an attorney should not receive case assignments in one or more of the categories of cases for which the attorney is eligible under his or her contract, the Criminal Presiding Judge shall give the attorney an opportunity to submit a written statement or other written information concerning his or her qualifications before making a final decision.

After reviewing and considering the Committee's recommendations and any attorney submissions, the Presiding Criminal Judge shall provide to the Director of OPDS a list of attorneys currently approved for the assignment of cases and the category or categories of cases to which each attorney may be assigned. OPDS shall notify attorney applicants in writing of the Presiding Criminal Judge's final decision.

### **Re-evaluation**

The Committee shall periodically re-evaluate the attorneys approved for case assignments under this Plan, to ensure that each attorney continues to meet the criteria established by the Plan. The Capital Defense Review Committee shall re-evaluate attorneys at intervals of not more than six years. The Felony Defense Review Committee shall re-evaluate attorneys at intervals of not more than six years.

The Committee may re-evaluate an attorney at any time, at the request of the Presiding Criminal Judge or at the Committee's discretion, when there is reason to believe that the attorney has not met or may not continue to meet the applicable criteria. Grounds for non-routine re-evaluation may include (but are not limited to) Bar discipline; sanctions imposed by a court; a complaint from a judge, a member of the bar or a client; misconduct or gross negligence in the representation of a client, or a pattern of inadequate representation of clients; excessive caseload; failure to comply with training requirements; or violations of contract terms. An attorney being re-evaluated on other than a routine basis shall be notified in writing and given an opportunity to submit a written statement or other written information to the Committee, before the Committee meets to discuss the attorney.

The Committee shall require an attorney undergoing re-evaluation to update the attorney's prior written application. The attorney also shall provide a list of representative court-appointed cases since the prior application, a summary of recent continuing legal education and certification of compliance with training and professional development requirements. The Capital Defense Review application shall require the attorney to provide a complete list of capital cases in which the attorney has participated since the prior application, including case name and number; assigned judge; names, business addresses, and telephone numbers of all attorneys in the case; and names, business addresses, and telephone numbers of all non-attorney defense team members.

When re-evaluating an attorney's qualifications, the Committee shall utilize the information that the Maricopa County Adult Criminal Contract requires the attorney to submit to OPDS, such as case logs, final disposition records, time sheets, and requests for approval of expenditures. The Committee also shall review complaints about the attorney and requests for a different attorney, if any, received by OPDS or the Committee from any source. The Committee may review any records and accounts, relating to the work performed or the services provided by an attorney in a particular case, that OPDS is authorized to review pursuant to the contract.

After reviewing the attorney's updated application and the additional information required for re-evaluation, the Committee shall decide whether further review is necessary to determine whether the attorney has met or will continue to meet the applicable criteria for appointment. If the Committee decides that further review is not necessary, the Committee shall recommend approval of the attorney to continue to receive case assignments in each category of cases for which assignment is authorized under the attorney's Maricopa County Adult Criminal Contract. If the Committee decides that further review is necessary, the process for re-evaluating the attorney's qualifications, and the right of the attorney to be heard during the process, shall be the same as the initial review of qualifications.

When the Presiding Criminal Judge makes a final decision as to whether an attorney should continue to receive case assignments, the Presiding Criminal Judge shall revise the list of approved attorneys accordingly and provide the revised list to the Director of OPDS. OPDS shall notify each attorney in writing of the Presiding Criminal Judge's final decision.

### **Records**

Committee operating guidelines, final and approved meeting minutes (if any) and final written recommendations to the Criminal Presiding Judge shall be open to the public and available for inspection upon appropriate public records request. These records shall be maintained for seven years by the Court Administrator as custodian of the records.

All other records relating to the attorney review process shall remain confidential except as otherwise specifically provided in this Plan. In order for the evaluation process to be effective and fair, the Committee must obtain complete, reliable, and accurate information from the attorneys being evaluated; as well as the judges, attorneys, and others from whom information is sought. The Committee then must evaluate the information thoroughly and discuss it candidly. The potential for public disclosure would chill the flow of reliable information and discourage candid discussion. Moreover, both the attorney applicants and the third party information providers have legitimate confidentiality and privacy interests, some of which derive from their professional obligations to others.

### **PERFORMANCE AND PRACTICE STANDARDS**

For purposes of determining whether a trial attorney possesses "the skill likely to be required" in handling the cases to which the attorney will be appointed, as required by Rule 6.5(c), the Committee shall apply the following performance and practice standards.



- I. Attorney represents clients in accordance with applicable ethical rules and standards of professional conduct, including but not limited to:
  - a. Contacting and conferring with the client concerning the representation within a maximum of 48 hours of notice of assignment;
  - b. Maintaining reasonable contact and adequately communicating with the client until the representation is terminated;
  - c. Using reasonable diligence in notifying the client of necessary court appearances including any court action that arises out of the client's non-appearance;
  - d. Conducting all out-of-court preparation required for competent representation of the client, including a prompt and thorough client interview and such additional interviews and investigation as may be appropriate;
  - e. Appearing in court on time and prepared for scheduled proceedings;
  - f. Displaying appropriate respectful professional demeanor and conduct in all dealings with the court, opposing counsel, victims and witnesses, and the client.
- II. Attorney demonstrates and maintains proficiency in all applicable aspects of substantive law, procedural rules, and trial advocacy, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Recognition of legal issues;
  - b. Effective legal research and use of pretrial motions;
  - c. Effective case development including thorough client interviews, appropriate use of investigators and timely and comprehensive witness interviews;
  - d. Effectiveness in plea negotiations;
  - e. Effective use of experts when necessary;
  - f. Thorough and effective trial preparation including anticipation of key legal issues, evaluation of admissibility of evidence, discussion of the defendant's role including possible testimony, and preparation of witnesses including the defendant if necessary;
  - g. Willingness to try cases;
  - h. Advocacy skills;
  - i. Effective sentencing presentation.
- III. Attorney manages law practice efficiently and effectively in relation to assigned clients and complies with OPDS contract obligations.

For purposes of determining whether an appellate attorney possesses "the skill likely to be required" in handling the cases to which the attorney will be appointed, as required by Rule 6.5(c), the Committee shall apply the following performance and practice standards.

- I. Attorney represents clients in accordance with applicable ethical rules and standards of professional conduct, including but not limited to:
  - a. Notifying the client concerning the representation within 48 hours of notice of assignment and conferring with the client promptly thereafter;
  - b. Maintaining reasonable contact including in-person communication and adequately communicating with the client until the representation is terminated;
  - c. Using reasonable diligence in notifying the client of all court actions, deadlines and orders;
  - d. Conducting all out-of-court preparation required for competent representation of the client, including a prompt and thorough review of the trial record and such additional development or supplementation of the record as may be appropriate;
  - e. Appearing in court on time and prepared for scheduled proceedings;
  - f. Displaying appropriate respectful professional demeanor and conduct in all dealings with the court, opposing counsel, victims and witnesses, and the client.
- II. Attorney demonstrates and maintains proficiency in all applicable aspects of substantive law, procedural rules, and appellate advocacy, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Recognition of legal issues;
  - b. Effective legal research, briefing and motion practice;
  - c. Familiarity with the practice and procedure of the Arizona Supreme Court in the appeal of capital cases, the practice and procedure of the United States Supreme Court in the application for writs of certiorari in capital cases, and the law controlling the scope of and entitlement to state post-conviction and federal habeas corpus review;
  - d. Effectiveness in plea negotiations;
  - e. Advocacy skills.
- III. Attorney manages law practice efficiently and effectively in relation to assigned clients and complies with OPDS contract obligations.

The Capital Defense Review Committee shall apply, in addition to the foregoing performance and practice standards, the performance and practice standards set forth in Guidelines 10.1 through 10.13 of the ABA Guidelines.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF INDIGENT DEFENSE REVIEW**

### **Training and Professional Development**

An attorney seeking assignment to capital cases must attend and successfully complete a comprehensive training program in the defense of capital cases within one year of the attorney's initial approval for assignment, unless the attorney has completed such a program within the two years immediately preceding approval. In order to maintain eligibility for assignment to capital cases, the attorney must attend and successfully complete, at least once every two years, at least twenty-four hours of continuing legal education specifically relating to the defense of criminal cases, at least twelve hours of which shall consist of specialized training in the defense of capital cases.

An attorney seeking assignment to non-capital felony cases must attend and successfully complete twelve hours of continuing legal education specifically relating to the defense of criminal cases within one year of the attorney's initial approval for assignment, unless the attorney has completed such training within the two years immediately preceding approval. In order to maintain eligibility for assignment to non-capital felony cases, the attorney must attend and successfully complete, at least once every two years, at least twelve hours of continuing legal education specifically relating to the defense of criminal cases.

An attorney receiving case assignments under this Plan shall maintain records demonstrating compliance with training requirements. The Committee may require an attorney to show satisfactory evidence of compliance at any time.

Although each Committee (or the two of them together) may present or facilitate relevant continuing legal education and training, each attorney is responsible for his or her own compliance with training requirements. It is not anticipated that the Committees will underwrite or subsidize attorney training.

### **Collection and Reporting of Information**

An attorney receiving case assignments under this Plan shall create and maintain all records required by the Maricopa County Adult Criminal Contract, including detailed and accurate case logs, final disposition records, and time sheets relating to client representation. The attorney also shall comply with contract requirements relating to OPDS approval of case-related expenditures (for expert witness fees, travel expenses, investigators, mitigation specialists in capital cases, service of process, court transcript fees, and other reasonable and necessary expenditures) and notice to OPDS of requests for judicial approval of expenditures or additional compensation. Copies of required records and documentation shall be retained by the attorney and provided to the Committee on request.

The Presiding Criminal Judge shall work with the Clerk of the Court to create a process by which OPDS and the appropriate Committee routinely receive notice that a defendant has asked to terminate an assigned OPDS attorney's representation, and the result of that request.

## **Complaints**

Upon receipt by OPDS of a complaint about an attorney, from any person, OPDS shall forward or refer the complaint to the appropriate Committee.

The Committee may forward a complaint about an attorney to that attorney, with or without a request for response. Before considering a complaint in the evaluation or re-evaluation of an attorney, the Committee shall forward the complaint to the attorney and ask for a response. When asked to respond to a complaint, the attorney must do so in writing within 10 days as required by the Maricopa County Adult Criminal Contract.

If the Committee receives a written complaint or communication from a defendant specifically asking to terminate an ongoing representation, the Committee shall immediately forward the communication to the assigned judicial officer unless OPDS has already done so.