



Office of the State Public Defender Indigent Defense Improvement Division

IDID Bulletin May 2025

Indigent Defense Updates

Welcome IDID's New Social Service Specialist!



Abigail (Abi) Resendiz-Zuniga, MSW, brings extensive experience in delivering holistic, client-centered services to the new IDID Social Service Specialist position. In this role, Abi helps identify and build trainings, develop materials, and cultivate service provider connections to support defenders providing CARE Court representation across the state. With a strong foundation in trauma-informed care and interdisciplinary collaboration, she has led impactful programs serving survivors of domestic violence, immigrants, and other underserved communities. Her work is grounded in equity, accessibility and the belief that meaningful advocacy begins with honoring a client's lived experience.

California Public Defender Trainers May Virtual Meetup

Tues 5/27/25 from 12:00pm-1:00pm [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Guest: Renate Lunn, Training Director, New York County Defender Services

Discussion: How can trainers (and supervisors) create or take advantage of shadowing and on-the-job training opportunities to give constructive learning experiences to our staff? How do we identify the informal coaching that is happening in our offices? Can we help shape it?

False Positive Drug Tests at CDCR

Over 5,000 presumed false positive drug tests from the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program could be jeopardizing parole outcomes for thousands of incarcerated people in California. During a backorder of its standard reagent, Quest Diagnostics used an alternative reagent for opiate urine screenings from April through July 2024—causing a spike in positive results from an average of 6.7% to over 20% across California prisons during that period. Because these drug testing results are shared with the Board of Parole Hearings, the consequences for parole candidates have been devastating.

Read more via [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/09/california-prison-drug-tests): <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/09/california-prison-drug-tests>

Vera Institute of Justice Immigration Technical Assistance Center

Access to immigration resources is crucial for many clients and their families. As the challenges for individuals navigating the complex legal system increase, it is vital for defense practitioners to be able to assist clients in understanding their rights and to be able to effectively advocate on their behalf.

The Immigration Technical Assistance Center (ITAC) at the Vera Institute of Justice contains an incredible library of resources and information for advocates who engage in immigrant rights movement building and litigation, which you can access [here](#).

CARE Court Implementation Guide

Center for Justice Innovation (CJI) recently released [Care Court Implementation: Identifying Core Practices](#). This guide draws on lessons from CARE Act implementation in Cohort One counties to provide insight and ideas for Cohort Two counties as they build out their CARE Court programs.

Job Posting

Title of Position	Assistant Public Defender -
Location	San Jose
Employer	Sixth District Appellate Program
Position Type	Staff Attorney
Salary Range	\$100-140K per year
Link to apply/website for more information	Click here for more information
Supplemental Materials Required	Resume/ References
Minimum Qualifications:	See link above for full listing of minimum qualifications
Brief description of the position	The Sixth District Appellate Program is looking to hire a new staff attorney, who directly represents clients in criminal and juvenile appeals, assists panel attorneys, and trains appellate and trial attorneys. The staff attorney also evaluates the work of panel attorneys and reviews their claims for compensation in appointed cases. SDAP is a hybrid office with staff working at the office twice a week. A fully remote schedule will be considered for particularly strong candidates. The candidate must be a licensed attorney in California. Salary will depend on experience but generally ranges from \$100k to \$140k, including health insurance as part of a generous benefits package. Please email your resume, cover letter, and writing sample with an opposition to Jonathan Grossman at jonathan@sdap.org .

May 2025 IDID Training Events

Unless otherwise noted these trainings are intended for criminal defense team members only, including attorneys, investigators, social workers, paralegals, mitigation specialists, law office professionals, and other job roles on defense teams.

5/5

Introduction to Defense Interviewing Skills

PASCUAL BENITEZ, C.C.D.I., Chief Investigator, County of San Diego, Office of the Alternate Public Defender

12:00 PM - 02:00 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Understanding how to interview witnesses is a crucial part in investigating any case. In this webinar, Chief Investigator Pascual Benitez will outline the skills and knowledge essential to providing competent interviewing techniques in criminal cases. At the end of this webinar, attendees will be able to identify the steps necessary to conduct impactful witness interviews.

2 hour MCLE Credit is offered for this training

5/8

Sevilla on Civility

CHARLES SEVILLA, Lawyer

12:15 PM - 01:15 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Civility is part and parcel of our ethical obligation toward the courts, parties, clients and witnesses. It is also an MCLE requirement (1 hour) starting this year. This webinar focuses on why civility can

work for the benefit of the clients we represent and how (giving examples) attorneys uncivil conduct not only undermined their cases but drew disciplinary actions both in court and with the State Bar. We all take an oath to uphold the dignity and integrity of the law. One way to do that is to be aware of the various rules and guidelines for civility.

1 hour MCLE Credit in Civility in the Legal Profession is offered for this training

5/12

RJA: Lessons from North Carolina v. Bacote

MEGAN BRYN, ACLU Capital Punishment Project

ASHLEY BURRELL, Senior Counsel, Legal Defense Fund

SHELAGH KENNEY, NC Center for Death Penalty Litigation

CASSANDRA STUBBS, Director, ACLU Capital Punishment Project

12:00 PM - 01:15 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

On February 7, 2025, a North Carolina judge ruled that race played an impermissible role in jury selection in the case of Hasson Bacote, a Black man sentenced to death in 2009, under that state's Racial Justice Act. Relying on statistical, cultural, historical, and social science in addition to court records and files, it found that Black potential jurors were much more likely to be removed by peremptory challenge in the county and prosecutorial district where Mr. Bacote was tried and by the assistant district attorney who prosecuted him. The court also concluded that "sound statistical evidence" showed that race was a "significant factor in Johnston County juries imposing the death penalty." Come hear attorneys from the team who represented Mr. Bacote talk about the lessons they learned in this epic litigation and take away ideas for improving the development and presentation of RJA claims in California.

1 hour MCLE Credit is offered for this training

5/14

What Defenders Need to Know About Restraining Orders

MARY ANNE MENDENHALL, Director of Family Defense Initiatives, Office of the State Public Defender & Partners for Justice

12:15 PM - 01:15 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Defenders are often tasked with making arguments and objections to restraining orders at arraignment or sentencing. This presentation will provide a window into what happens in the family /civil courts when intrafamilial restraining orders are issued by the criminal court. Defenders will learn the differences and standards for different types of civil restraining orders, from emergency, to temporary, to permanent, and walk away with tools on how to argue against these orders to ensure that clients who are parents can minimize separation from their children.

1 hour MCLE Credit is offered for this training

5/15

Practicing Cultural Humility

ERIN ELIZABETH BRIGGS, Director of Training, Mississippi Office of State Public Defender

12:15 PM - 01:15 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

The practice of cultural humility in the workplace invites employees to actively acknowledge their limitations in understanding different cultures and demonstrate a willingness to learn and ask questions. In part two of IDID's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging on the workplace series, Erin Elizabeth Briggs, the Director of Training for the Mississippi Office of State Public Defender will discuss the key aspects and benefits of cultural humility in the workplace. At the end of this session, attendees will leave with an understanding of what cultural humility is why, now more than ever, it's important to add this practice into their daily lives through self-reflection, openness to learning, and respectful communication.

1 hour MCLE Credit is offered for this training

5/20

How Racial Bias within Defense Teams Can Impact Effective Assistance of Counsel

ALEXIS HOAG-FORDJOUR, Associate Professor of Law, Brooklyn Law School

12:15 PM - 01:15 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Does a client's race or ethnicity impact whether they receive effective assistance of counsel? In this webinar, Professor Alexis Hoag-Fordjour, the author of *White is Right: The Racial Construction of Effective Assistance of Counsel*, will unpack this question and explore related issues in a thoughtful discussion on racial bias within defense teams. At the end of the webinar, attendees will leave with an understanding of how their own racial bias can impact representation.

1 hour MCLE Credit in Recognition of Bias is offered for this training

5/28

Eating for Energy and Mental Performance

TARA COLEMAN, Clinical Nutritionist

12:15 PM - 01:15 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

The way we eat can be our biggest asset when it comes to performance, mental acuity and quality of life. Tara will teach us how simple yet powerful tweaks we can make to our nutrition can have a significant impact on cravings and how much energy we have each day. With a special focus on blood sugar and cognition, you will walk away with actionable steps to apply this knowledge immediately. Be sure to come with questions because we will have plenty of time for Q&A!

**1 hour of MCLE Credit is offered for this training with 0.5 in Prevention and Detection Competence and 0.5 in Wellness Competence **

5/29

The Impact of Power and Privilege

TATIANA KLINE, Training Attorney, Office of the State Public Defender

12:15 PM - 01:30 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Power and privilege play a role in the advantages and disadvantages that people experience based on social, economic, LGBTQ+ status, as well as gender, race and other factors. In part three of IDID's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging on the workplace series, attorney Tatiana Kline will discuss how power and privilege might lead to systemic inequality in the workplace. At the end of the webinar, attendees will leave understanding how their own privilege impacts power dynamics in their office and with practical steps to create more inclusive workplace.

1.25 hours of MCLE Credit in Recognition and Elimination of Bias is offered for this training

June 2025 IDID Training Events

Unless otherwise noted these trainings are intended for criminal defense team members only, including attorneys, investigators, social workers, paralegals, mitigation specialists, law office professionals, and other job roles on defense teams.

6/18

Engaging in Courageous Conversations in the Workplace

LORI JAMES, Executive Director, National Association of Public Defense

12:15 PM - 01:15 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

The ability to have open and honest dialogue about sensitive topics related to diversity, equity inclusion and belonging, even when uncomfortable, is a must to address issues of bias and

discrimination in the workplace. In part four of IDID's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging on the workplace series, Lori James-Townes, the Executive Director of the National Association of Public Defense, will talk about the importance of using dialogue to address the uncomfortable truths around systemic inequalities, personal biases, and microaggressions marginalized groups face. At the end of this session, attendees will leave with an understanding of the importance of engaging in courageous conversations in the workplace through active listening, self-reflection, and open-minded dialogue.

1 hour of MCLE Credit in Recognition and Elimination of Bias is offered for this training

6/25

Being Your Whole Self: Fitting in vs. Belonging

TATIANA KLINE, Training Attorney, Office of the State Public Defender

12:15 PM - 01:30 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Recognizing and understanding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) concepts is important to public defense work. But what is DEI without belonging? According to researcher Brene Brown's, the opposite of fitting in is belonging. In part five of IDID's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the public defender workplace series, attorney Tatiana Kline will discuss how persons from marginalized communities often try to fit in to the office culture in order to be accepted and how this act of fitting in negatively impacts their sense of belonging. At the end of this session, attendees will leave with an understanding of why feeling a sense of belonging at work matters to their overall well-being and how it contributes to a positive culture in the workplace.

1.25 hour of MCLE Credit in Recognition and Elimination of Bias is offered for this training

Other Training Opportunities

Provided for information only and are not affiliated with OSPD



BASIC TRIAL SKILLS INSTITUTE

presented by California Public Defenders Association

7/28/2025 - 8/1/2025

*****Application Deadline 5/15/2025*****

San Diego, CA

[More Information and Registration](#)



LAPD/CPDA 43rd Annual Youth Defender & Advocate Training Seminar

presented by National Legal Aid and Defenders Association

5/6/2025 - 5/9/2025

Worcester, MA

[More Information and Registration](#)



International Forum for Mitigation Practitioners

presented by Advancing Real Change

5/8/2025, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



WIC 625.7 and Juvenile Defense: Post-Training Discussion on Deception Bans

presented by California Youth Defender Center

5/8/2025, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



Pathways of Poison: Navigating the World of Exposure Toxicology

presented by Godoy Medical Forensics

5/9/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



Wounds, Welts and Witness Testimony- A Forensic Nurse's Guide to Bodily Injury Cases

presented by Godoy Medical Forensics

5/13/2025, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



2025 Virtual Train the Trainer

presented by National Legal Aid & Defender Association

5/15/2025 – 5/17/2025

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



Trial Tactics for Pregnancy-Related Cases: Skills for Every Defender

presented by National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

5/16/2025 – 5/17/2025

Austin, Texas

[More Information and Registration](#)



2025 Race Matters Seminar

presented by National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

5/21/2025 – 5/23/2025

Tulsa, OK

[More Information and Registration](#)



Acceptable Medical Practice For Blood Draws

presented by Godoy Medical Forensics

5/21/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



Ask a Mitigation Specialist

presented by Advancing Real Change

5/21/2025, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



Pediatric Failure to Thrive: When is it Child Neglect?

presented by Godoy Medical Forensics

5/29/2025, 10:00 AM - 11:00 PM

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



Justice in the Inland: Nuts & Bolts to SYTF Litigation

presented by California Youth Defender Center

5/30/2025, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



Guilty by Association: Train the Trainers

presented by Loyola Law School

6/13/2025 - 6/14/2025

Los Angeles, CA

[More Information and Registration](#)

The Office of the State Public Defender is a state agency founded in 1976 to represent indigent criminal defendants on appeal. Today, the agency has two divisions. The Appellate Division provides high quality appellate representation for those convicted of capital offenses. The Indigent Defense Improvement Division supports trial level indigent defense systems across California by providing defense attorney training and assistance to counties with public defense systems. See Gov. Code Section 15420(b).
