



Office of the State Public Defender

Indigent Defense Improvement Division

IDID Bulletin

January 2026

Public Defense Updates

People v. Kopp

The California Supreme Court recently issued an opinion in *People v. Kopp* (2025) ---Cal.5th --- (2025 WL 3755596), addressing the trial courts' constitutional duty to determine a defendant's inability to pay fines, fees and assessments before imposing them. For punitive fines, the Court did not find a due process requirement to hold an ability to pay hearing before imposing every punitive fine, but also held that challenges to punitive fines should initially be reviewed under the excessive fines clause. For specified ancillary costs, a trial court, upon request, is required to consider a defendant's inability to pay, and failure to do so is a violation of equal protection.

A multipage handout further summarizing the opinion, breaking down the statutory court-order payments specifically address in *Kopp* and suggesting language for litigating *Kopp* in court can be found on the [IDID Library](#) on the Training SharePoint. Access to the Training SharePoint is limited to indigent defense practitioners. Access is free, but prior registration is required: <https://bit.ly/OSPDReg>.

CA Public Defender Experience Survey

Professors Irene Joe (UC Davis School of Law) and Swethaa Ballakrishnen (UC Irvine School of Law) are conducting an empirical study of public defenders in California to examine how people enter, remain in, or leave public defense work. Public defenders play a vital role in the criminal justice system, and this study aims to better understand their experiences, challenges, and perspectives—something that is often underrepresented in legal scholarship. If you have been a public defender in California within last ten years, please complete the survey: https://ucdavis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a9vAnhdhPQo0hgy.

Questions about this research? Email: crimjusticestudy@gmail.com.

Public Defender Attorney Openings

The Nevada County Public Defender is currently hiring Attorney I, Attorney II, and Attorney III positions, including a sign-on bonus: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/mynevadacounty>.

NEW! Trial Skills Fundamentals Defend on Demand Online Course

[REGISTRATION LINK](#) - (bit.ly/IDIDTSF)

Trial Skills Fundamentals is a practical, skills-based course designed for defense team members seeking a cohesive framework for preparing and trying criminal cases. The course centers on developing a clear, persuasive theory of the case and carrying it consistently through jury selection, opening statement, witness examination, and closing argument. Emphasizing narrative, strategy, and credibility, the course integrates legal analysis with factual development and emotional resonance, while reinforcing ethical, client-centered advocacy.

By the end of the course, participants will have the framework to articulate a defensible and adaptable theory of the case; identify and address juror beliefs that may hinder acceptance of the defense narrative; frame evidence effectively in opening statements; examine witnesses in a manner aligned with defense theory; and synthesize facts, law, and theme into a coherent closing argument. Throughout, learners will practice skills that promote client-centered lawyering, strategic decision-making, clarity of communication, and disciplined trial preparation applicable across a wide range of criminal cases. Those that complete the entire course, or portions of it, are eligible for 8.0 hours MCLE self-study credit. Defense team members can [REGISTER HERE](#).

January 2026 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.

1/20

Generative AI and Prosecutorial Misconduct

CARSON WHITE, Supervising Attorney, Civil Rights Corps

PETER SANTINA, Managing Attorney, Prosecutorial Accountability Project, Civil Rights Corps

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

With the rapid spread of generative AI tools, more courts are encountering briefs and pleadings containing fabricated case law, misquoted authority, and unreliable analysis. While defense misuse has received significant public attention, far less scrutiny has been directed toward similar issues in prosecutorial filings. To understand the scope of the problem and respond effectively, defenders need shared awareness and a framework for recognizing filings which constitute misconduct when they appear. This webinar will help defense teams recognize what AI-generated legal writing looks like, understand how to document suspected misuse, and explore the legal tools available when fabricated or unreliable content is submitted to the court. By exchanging examples, experiences, and strategies, we can begin identifying statewide patterns and ensure client protection when the process is compromised by unverified AI.

****1 hour of Legal Ethics and Technology in the Practice of Law MCLE and Legal Specialization Credit is offered for this training****

1/27

Understanding CDCR's Compassionate Release Process and Procedures

DR. MICHELE DiTOMAS, Assistant Deputy Medical Executive, CDCR

LARA KISLINGER, Deputy Public Defender, Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office

12:15 PM - 1:15 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

In partnership with the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, presenters will explain CDCR's Compassionate Release procedures, relevant law, and best practices. Attendees will hear from an experienced practitioner and have the opportunity to hear from and ask questions of CDCR's Assistant Deputy Medical Executive about how medical evaluations and compassionate release recommendations are made.

****1 hour of MCLE Credit is offered for this training****

1/30

Culture, Role and Well-Being for Interdisciplinary Defense Teams (Part 2 of 3-Part Series)

SYLVIA GRIBBELL, Psychotherapist, Descanso Therapy

JESSICA MUÑOZ, Psychotherapist

11:00 AM - 12:00PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Geared toward CARE Court practitioners and members of interdisciplinary public defense teams, this training will address: 1.) Identifying appropriate role boundaries within collaborative teams; 2.) Common ethical dilemmas that appear in collaborative work and strategies to navigate these situations with respect and professional integrity; and, 3.) Approaches for centering client dignity and autonomy in outreach, client communication, and service coordination.

****1 hour of MCLE Credit is offered for this training****

February 2026 IDID Training Events

2/3

Advocating for Transgender Incarcerated People in Release Proceedings

ANASTASIA FRANCO, National Prisoner Correspondence Coordinator, Critical Resistance

AMANDA GOAD, Audrey Irmas Director of the Gender, Sexuality, & Reproductive Justice Project, ACLU of Southern California

COLBY LENZ, Deputy Director of Policy and Community Research, UCLA Center for the Study of Women

A.D. SEAN LEWIS, Senior Attorney, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.

JEN ORTHWEIN, Civil Rights Attorney and Licensed Psychologist, Orthwein Law

12:15 PM - 1:30 PM [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Incarcerated transgender people face acute hardships in carceral settings and encounter unique barriers to release from confinement. To address these barriers, presenters recently published, "Transgender, Nonbinary, & Intersex Decarceration: A Guide for Practitioners & Advocates in California." The Guide and this webinar are designed to support attorneys and other advocates representing transgender, nonbinary, and intersex (TNI) individuals in California resentencing proceedings, parole proceedings, clemency petitions, and pretrial release proceedings.

Attendees will learn strategies to mitigate and explain TNI clients' prison records, including disciplinary reports, programming, work and mental health histories, and interactions with the criminal legal system.

****1.25 hours of MCLE is offered for this training****

Other Training Opportunities

Provided for information only and are not affiliated with OSPD



Electronic Evidence: Forensics Seminar

California Lawyers Association

1/6/2026

Webinar

[**More Information and Registration**](#)



2026 Criminal Law New Laws Webinar

California Lawyers Association

1/8/2026

Webinar

[**More Information and Registration**](#)



NCDC Cross-Examination Workshop

National Criminal Defense College

1/8/2026-1/11/2026

University of San Diego School of Law

[**More Information and Registration**](#)



Preparing for Field Investigations

Advancing Real Change, Inc.

1/13/2026

Webinar

[**More Information and Registration**](#)

Women to Women Criminal Defense Workshop

1/17/2026

Rocklin, CA

To register, email emadsen@placerpublicdefender.com



Ask a Mitigation Specialist

Advancing Real Change, Inc.

1/21/2026

Webinar

[**More Information and Registration**](#)



Capital Defense Community Resilience Discussion Forum

Advancing Real Change, Inc.

1/27/2026

Webinar

[**More Information and Registration**](#)



2026 Capital Case Defense Seminar

California Public Defenders Association and California Attorneys for Criminal Justice

2/13/26 - 2/16/26

San Diego, CA

[**More Information and Registration**](#)



NCDC Forensic Cross-Examination Workshop

National Criminal Defense College

3/8/2026-3/10/2026

Texas State Capitol - Austin, TX

[**More Information and Registration**](#)



2026 Jacksonville Summit for Change: Advocacy with Impact

Advancing Real Change, Inc.

April 15 - April 17, 2026

Jacksonville, FL

[**More Information and Registration**](#)



The Deryl Dantzler Trial Practice Institute

National Criminal Defense College

Session I - June 14 - June 26, 2026

Session II - July 19 - 31, 2026

Located in Iowa City, IA at the University of Iowa School of Law

[**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).