

Questions for Chief Defenders

Name:

District(s)/Circuit:

Selection/Reappointment

How long have you been the Chief Defender?

Who was the Chief Defender prior to you?

What were the circumstances surrounding his/her departure (i.e. retired, resigned to accept other employment, was not re-appointed)

Describe how you were appointed. Did any part of the process strike you as unusual or inappropriate?

Have you been through the reappointment process?

If so, describe the process including whether the following issues were addressed:

Your office's handling of specific cases?

The conduct/performance of individual members of your staff ?

Your individual or your office's caseload?

The overall quality of representation provided by your office?

Management of your office's finances/budget?

Compliance with rules governing the operation of your office?

Staffing and Caseload

How many AFDs are in your office? How many non-AFD staff members?

Are you authorized to have more AFDs than you currently do?

If you have unfilled positions: why are they currently vacant?

___ In the process of hiring

___ Current caseload does not support the filling of the position

____ The position is currently unfunded

____ You are not currently filling the position out of concern that there will not be sufficient funding in the future to maintain this position.

____ Other: _____

Do you feel your current staff size is sufficient to handle your case load?

Are you currently at, above or below your budgeted WCO/AFD ratio?

In the past 5 years have you sought authorization to add additional staff?

If so, to whom did you make the request?

Was your request approved?

If it was denied, what reasons, if any were given for its denial?

Have any attempts been made by the court/judges in your district to influence a hiring or disciplinary decision? If so, please describe.

Sequestration

What steps did you take to address the budget reduction driven cuts?

Did any staff elect to retire to prevent other staffing cuts?

Did you lay off/terminate staff?

If so, how many people were laid off/terminated

Were they AFDs or non-AFD staff?

Did you furlough employees?

If so, how many furlough days did employees take?

What other steps, if any, did you take to address your budget reduction?

Did you refuse cases during sequestration?

If so, was the court supportive of this request?

With the restoration of funding, what steps, if any, have you taken?

(ex: hired new employees, additional training, purchased new equipment)

Budget/Training/Experts

Prior to FY13:

How would you describe the training resources in your office?

How much training did your staff (AFD and non-AFD) receive?

Did you require staff to attend training?

Of the training programs your staff attended, what percentage were sponsored by the FJC, the AOUSC or Defender Services?

What percentage of the training took place within a 2 hour drive of the office to which the trainee reported?

How would you describe your budget and access to funds for experts?

Overall, how would you describe the resources available to your office? Are they sufficient? If not, what else is needed?

Panel Responsibilities

Who decides whether a case is assigned to your office or to the Panel?

What responsibilities, if any, does your office have regarding the Panel?

Do you assign/oversee the assignment of cases to the Panel?

If so, do you have dedicated staff to handle this task?

Regardless of whether you currently handle panel case assignments, do you **want** your office to handle case assignments to the Panel? Why or why not.

Does your office review vouchers prior to submission to the court?

If so, do you have dedicated staff to handle this task?

Regardless of whether you currently review vouchers, do you **want** your office to review vouchers? Why or why not.

Does someone from your office participate in the selection and/or reappointment of CJA Panel attorneys?

If so, do you find this helps the overall quality of the panel?

If you do not participate in the selection/reappointment of panel attorneys, why do you not participate?

Does your office provide training to your district's panel attorneys?

If so, how often you provide such training?

Characterize the overall relationship between your office and the panel?

Other

What do you think is most important for the Task Force to emphasize in its review and recommendations regarding federal indigent defense?

Overall, describe the level of interest the District and/or Circuit Court has expressed in the day-to-day functioning of your office.

Describe your relationship and interactions with:

The AOUSC (other than the DSO)?

The Defender Services Office?

What are your feelings about the need for greater independence of indigent defense from the judiciary? In particular, what should be changed and what should stay the same as it relates to:

Judicial oversight of Defender Services?

Office budgets?

Staffing of offices?

Allocation of resources amongst offices?

Additional comments:

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