

FOURTH CIRCUIT CJA COMPENSABILITY HANDBOOK

**FOURTH CIRCUIT
CJA UNIT**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AND HOURS BILLED PER DAY	1
III.	INITIAL CASE MANAGEMENT	4
IV.	REQUESTING RESOURCES AND MANAGING COSTS	5
V.	CASE-RELATED COMMUNICATIONS	8
VI.	DISCOVERY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTIGATION.....	10
VII.	LEGAL RESEARCH AND WRITING.....	13
VIII.	TRIAL	14
IX.	POST-JUDGMENT AND APPELLATE MATTERS	16
X.	CLIENT SERVICES	20
XI.	TRAVEL AND WAIT TIME	22
XII.	GENERAL OFFICE OVERHEAD AND OTHER EXPENSES.....	25
XIII.	CONCLUSION.....	29

I. INTRODUCTION

The [Criminal Justice Act \(CJA\)](#) provides eligible individuals with the assistance of defense counsel and other reasonably necessary services at every stage of a criminal proceeding. Private attorneys appointed under the CJA are expected to provide high-quality representation and to be skilled in the numerous aspects of a federal criminal defense practice. In exchange, CJA-appointed attorneys are entitled to payment for all time expended that is reasonable and necessary to the representation.

In its [2017 report](#), the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Criminal Justice Act (Cardone Committee) recognized that, in some districts and circuits, classes of otherwise compensable work are excluded from payment, resulting in substantial voucher reductions. To address this issue, the Cardone Committee recommended that comprehensive guidance be provided as to what constitutes a compensable CJA service. Although Volume 7 of the Guide to Judiciary Policy ([CJA Guidelines](#)), the [Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals CJA Policies and Procedures](#), and district-specific policies are useful resources, numerous gray areas have given rise to inconsistent conclusions regarding the compensability of certain tasks.

This Fourth Circuit CJA Compensability Handbook was created to provide additional guidance and detailed examples on what is presumptively compensable within the Fourth Circuit throughout the many stages of CJA representation.¹ It is offered to assist both panel attorneys and approving authorities in understanding and applying the CJA and the CJA Guidelines and to provide a framework for analyzing challenging compensability questions.

Because not every task undertaken in furtherance of a client's representation is compensable, counsel should strive to provide sufficient information in their billing to demonstrate both reasonableness and compensability. To that end, CJA counsel are encouraged to review the Fourth Circuit CJA Unit's billing tip sheets at <https://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/information-for/cja-circuit-wide#>.

In addition, before working on any matter that is ancillary to a criminal representation (e.g., a corollary state court prosecution or civil proceeding), counsel should seek advance authorization from the presiding judge or delegee to ensure such work may be compensated under CJA Guidelines [§ 210.20.30 \(Ancillary Matters\)](#).

II. ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AND HOURS BILLED PER DAY

Under CJA Guidelines [§ 230.66.10](#) and [§ 320.80.10](#), the authorized hourly rate for panel attorneys and service providers is intended to include compensation for general office expenses, including clerical assistance. Consequently, not all administrative tasks that must be carried out are compensable. However, unusual or extraordinary expenses of these types may rise to the level of "other services necessary for an adequate defense" under [18 U.S.C. § 3006A\(e\)](#), especially if the circumstances from which the need arises would normally result in an additional charge to a fee-paying client. CJA Guidelines [§ 320.70.30](#).

¹ This Guide was originally created by the Ninth Circuit, with amendments added that are specific to the Fourth Circuit.

In assessing whether administrative work is compensable, counsel should consider whether the task is purely clerical or rote. If so, then the administrative task likely is not compensable except in unusual situations where extraordinary overhead-type expenses are reasonably necessary to prepare and conduct an adequate defense.

Administrative work requiring some degree of legal knowledge, professional judgment, or strategy (including tasks undertaken by non-attorney service providers) is presumptively compensable. Examples of compensable administrative tasks include organizing case materials (which ordinarily requires thinking through the elements of the offense or other relevant factors) and preparing documentation for a hearing or trial.

Examples of administrative tasks that generally are not compensable, whether undertaken by an attorney or service provider, include: (1) accessing, downloading, opening, renaming, saving, printing, or forwarding electronic files (e.g., notices of electronic filing in CM/ECF) versus reviewing a document's substantive content (which is compensable); (2) entering calls, meetings, due dates, or court appearances in a calendar; (3) rote or routine communications regarding scheduling, including with the court; (4) leaving non-substantive voicemail messages; (5) filing or lodging electronic documents in CM/ECF, unless the filing is particularly voluminous or atypical such that filing takes an unusual or extraordinary amount of time; (6) creating payment vouchers in eVoucher and entering or justifying billed time and expenses; (7) emailing courtesy copies or proposed orders; (8) copying, scanning, or printing; (9) office filing; and (10) preparing documents for mailing.

Whenever appropriate and without compromising work quality, services should be performed by the least expensive, competent service provider capable of performing the compensable task. However, counsel must be careful not to delegate non-compensable administrative tasks to service providers such as contract paralegals, who may not be reimbursed for their time on such tasks.

Both counsel and providers must bill in tenth-hour increments. This means rounding off the amount of time spent working to the nearest tenth of an hour (6 minutes).

MINUTES	TENTHS
1 – 6	0.1
7 – 12	0.2
13 – 18	0.3
19 – 24	0.4
25 – 30	0.5
31 – 36	0.6
37 – 42	0.7
43 – 48	0.8
49 – 54	0.9
55 – 60	1.0

Discrete tasks should be billed separately except that those tasks taking less than 0.1 hours each should be aggregated into one block of time to ensure that billable time does not exceed actual hours worked. For example, if you spend 3 minutes on a client call in the morning and then have another 3-minute client call in the afternoon, you may not bill more than 0.1 hours total. Other common

tasks that should be aggregated in a single day include reading ECF documents and sending or reviewing emails. Billing to the correct voucher category also is necessary and will reduce delays in voucher processing. The Fourth Circuit CJA Unit's [CJA-20 Billing Tips](#) provides guidance on the types of tasks billable to each category.

Unless in trial or finalizing an appellate brief or habeas petition, 10 or more hours billed in a single day by an attorney or service provider across all cases is unusual, and the necessity for such time should be explained in the voucher (e.g., trial preparation, impending deadline, etc.). Otherwise, the voucher may be returned for additional information. Attorneys should have access in eVoucher to an Attorney Time Report (under the Reports tab) that can assist in comparing billed time across cases.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AND HOURS BILLED PER DAY	COMPENSABLE?
Filing or lodging electronic documents in CM/ECF Electronic filing by itself, which typically takes only a minute or two, is a non-compensable administrative task. In contrast, finalizing a document in preparation for filing (e.g., conducting final proofread or creating exhibits) is compensable. *If documents are particularly voluminous or atypical such that counsel or a service provider must expend an unusual or extraordinary amount of time to file in CM/ECF, such efforts may rise to the level of “other services necessary for an adequate defense” under 18 U.S.C. § 3006A(e), as provided in CJA Guidelines § 320.70.30. Counsel’s billing entry should provide sufficient detail to alert reviewers that the filing was not routine or rote.	NO*
Managing notices of electronic filing (NEF) Accessing, downloading, opening, renaming, saving, printing, or forwarding a NEF is not compensable, whereas reviewing substantive content or undertaking substantive work in response to a filing is compensable. Because reviewing a single NEF typically takes less than 0.1 hours, reviewing multiple NEFs in a day may be aggregated into one block of time to reflect actual time spent. NOTE: Counsel are expected to exercise professional judgment in billing time for reviewing NEFs that require no substantive response, especially in multi-defendant cases where notices or filed documents may be irrelevant to counsel’s specific client.	NO
Calendaring due dates, hearings, etc. Adding hearing dates or due dates to a calendar.	NO
Calculating due dates or filing deadlines Determining due date, limitations period, or other deadline based on local rule or statute.	YES
Photocopying, printing, and scanning While time spent reviewing, selecting, culling, or preparing	NO

II. ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AND HOURS BILLED PER DAY	COMPENSABLE?
documents to be copied, printed, or scanned is compensable representational work, time spent at a copy machine, waiting for printouts, or traveling to and waiting at a copy shop are non-compensable administrative tasks. See Section XI for more travel guidance. Counsel should make informed judgments about what needs to be printed and be mindful that proficiency with digital files is beneficial to both counsel's practice and client representation. See Section VI for guidance on managing discovery.	
Preparing mailings Preparing envelopes, affixing postage, looking up addresses, arranging for mail pick up or drop off, or traveling to and waiting at a post office.	NO
Transferring a case to successor counsel Including travel time if counsel's file cannot be sent electronically or delivered at a time both attorneys will be in the courthouse.	YES
More than 10 hours of billable time in one day *Because billing more than 10 hours in a day across all CJA representations may appear excessive if not in trial, counsel should provide an explanation in the voucher entry to facilitate reasonableness review.	YES*

III. INITIAL CASE MANAGEMENT

Counsel's initial case management responsibilities typically include, among other things, assessing charges against a client, checking for conflicts, calculating sentencing exposure, meeting with the client, obtaining discovery, and preparing for a detention hearing. Numerous administrative tasks are also often necessary at the outset of a case; however, as noted above, not all such tasks are compensable (regardless of who undertakes the task).

Examples of compensable administrative tasks include organizing case materials (which ordinarily requires thinking through the elements of the offense or other relevant factors) and preparing documentation for a detention hearing. Examples of non-compensable administrative tasks at the start of a representation include conducting the initial (routine) conflict check, creating a physical case file, calendaring due dates, and making physical space in an office to manage case materials.

III. INITIAL CASE MANAGEMENT	COMPENSABLE?
Preliminary case assessment Reviewing charges, taking case notes, and reviewing electronic discovery to set up infrastructure for discovery organization.	YES

III. INITIAL CASE MANAGEMENT	COMPENSABLE?
Preparing and labeling paper case folders or binders and general office filing Printing documents or creating labels to set up a paper case folder or binder and filing paper documents are non-compensable administrative tasks. *For unusual or extraordinary projects requiring paper folders or binders (e.g., voluminous witness files or trial exhibits), counsel should consider seeking prior authorization, especially if printing and/or binder costs are likely to exceed \$500, or provide a detailed billing explanation. See Section XII for guidance on reimbursable expenses.	NO*
Making physical space at office for case files Arranging files or office furniture to make space for voluminous discovery binders or boxes of records.	NO
Conducting initial routine conflict check An initial routine conflict check prior to accepting a CJA appointment is a non-compensable administrative task. *After appointment, if additional investigation or research is required to confirm that no conflict exists or to address potential conflicts, that time may be compensable. The services of an ethics attorney consultant will likely not be authorized absent a showing of reasonable necessity to the defendant's representation as opposed to counsel's interest in staying on the case.	NO*
Communicating with prior counsel For example, checking with prior counsel to avoid duplicate motion work or discovery organization or to obtain copies of trial exhibits or sealed filings for use on appeal.	YES
Performing work prior to formal appointment Counsel should obtain a <i>nunc pro tunc</i> appointment at the initial appearance or through their CJA administrator to enable entry in eVoucher of billable time incurred prior to entry of the appointment order.	YES

IV. REQUESTING RESOURCES AND MANAGING COSTS

Obtaining resources for a case is a critical component of effective representation. Because the procurement and management of service providers are compensable tasks, counsel may bill time for researching, interviewing, and negotiating with experts. This includes reasonable time spent consulting with panel attorney colleagues, a defender office, or CJA staff to identify potential providers, drafting the justification for resources, and completing any district-required forms via the

AUTH procedure in eVoucher. However, time spent figuring out how to request funding (e.g., reviewing a billing guide or communicating with CJA staff regarding logistics) is not compensable.

Under CJA Guidelines [§ 310.20.30](#), counsel may obtain expert, investigative, and other services without prior authorization for up to \$1,000 per representation (not per provider) unless a higher no-authorization limit (not in excess of the statutory maximum) is permitted under local court policy. For service provider fees in excess of the applicable statutory maximums set forth in CJA Guidelines [§ 310.20.10](#) and [§ 660.20.20](#), prior authorization of the chief circuit judge or delegee is required. In the rare instance preauthorization is not feasible, counsel must include with the authorization request or payment voucher an explanation of why procurement of necessary services could not await prior authorization.

Time spent reviewing a provider's invoice or CJA-21/31 payment voucher to certify that the services were rendered is compensated. Time spent creating, submitting, or checking the status of a voucher are typically not compensated, but may be if the circumstances from which the need arises would normally result in an additional charge to a fee-payment client. [CJA Guidelines Section 320.70.30](#).

Preparing and submitting an attorney's CJA-20/30 payment voucher is non-compensable administrative work. Where attorney fees in a non-capital case exceed the statutory maximum under CJA Guidelines [§ 230.23.20](#), time spent justifying excess fees already expended (e.g., completing a required justification form) also is not compensable because it is an administrative task and not representational work. However, in those courts where counsel must seek *prior* authorization before exceeding the statutory maximum, reasonable time spent estimating counsel's anticipated fees (in essence budgeting) and preparing any required forms in support of the excess request are compensable tasks because counsel must think through the case and plan for litigation. Similarly, because preparation of a case budget requires planning, projecting, and strategizing, reasonable time spent preparing a budget and conferring with a Circuit CJA Budgeting Attorney or local CJA supervisory attorney on substantive budget issues also is compensable.

To manage costs, counsel should routinely run a Defendant Detail Budget Report (DDBR) in eVoucher to ensure the defense team is within authorized funding levels and assess whether additional funding is needed prior to exceeding authorized limits. The report shows only what has been entered into eVoucher. Counsel and service providers should enter services timely to make this report as useful as possible.

IV. REQUESTING RESOURCES AND MANAGING COSTS	COMPENSABLE?
Researching, negotiating, and interviewing service providers Counsel should reach out to CJA panel attorney colleagues, the federal defender, Circuit Case Budgeting Attorney, or CJA Supervising Attorney if having difficulty locating a service provider. Time spent consulting with such individuals to identify potential providers is compensable, although consulting about hourly rates or the procedural mechanics of how to obtain funding is not.	YES
Creating AUTH for service provider, including <i>nunc pro tunc</i> or supplemental requests, and completing necessary supporting documentation (e.g., letter, memo, or court-provided form) Supporting justification should contain sufficient information for the court to assess reasonable necessity for the requested services. Reasonable time expended by a provider to estimate scope of work or needed hours may be compensated on the provider's voucher if the AUTH is approved.	YES
Preparing a case budget or litigation plan in collaboration with a Circuit Case Budgeting Attorney, or CJA Supervising Attorney Including preliminary review of discovery/legal issues and case discussion to forecast needed resources and costs. Does not include emails or calls inquiring about budget status or for procedural help.	YES
Requesting PRIOR authorization to exceed statutory maximum attorney fees Although traditionally this was considered a non-compensable administrative task, the Fourth Circuit has concluded that reasonable time spent preparing a request for future attorney fees is a compensable task because it requires litigation planning.	YES
Justifying attorney fees in excess of statutory maximum AFTER incurred Completing the necessary form(s) to retroactively justify attorney fees already expended is a non-compensable administrative task because it involves no litigation planning and is not representational work.	NO
Requesting authorization to perform work ancillary to the representation Assessing whether contemplated work is ancillary to the representation and seeking authorization to perform such work under CJA Guidelines § 210.20.30 is compensable.	YES
Discussing pending payment vouchers or CJA policies and procedures with a Circuit Case Budgeting Attorney, CJA Supervising Attorney, or other CJA administrative staff CJA administrators are a useful resource for answering compensability and funding-related procedural questions, but such consultation time is not compensable.	NO
Reviewing CJA billing, policy, or compensability resources	NO

IV. REQUESTING RESOURCES AND MANAGING COSTS	COMPENSABLE?
Entering attorney services and expenses into a CJA-20/30 Not compensable whether undertaken by counsel or support staff.	NO
Creating a CJA-21/31 for payment to service provider Although normally a non-compensable task, prompt creation of a payment voucher will assist with timely payment to service providers, particularly in those courts where providers may enter their own billable time.	DEPENDS
Entering service provider services and expenses into a CJA-21/31 Not normally compensable whether undertaken by counsel or the provider (where permitted), however, such efforts may rise to the level of “other services necessary for an adequate defense” under 18 U.S.C. § 3006A(e) , as provided in CJA Guidelines § 320.70.30 . Counsel’s billing entry should provide sufficient detail to alert reviewers that the filing was not routine or rote.	DEPENDS
Reviewing provider services as billed on CJA-21/31 Counsel must certify that services and expenses billed on a CJA-21/31 were rendered and that sufficient funds are available before submitting the voucher to the court. This task is compensable, but counsel should not bill for the administrative task of creating or submitting the CJA-21/31.	YES

V. CASE-RELATED COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating with a client and others in furtherance of the client’s representation is compensable. This includes time spent building trust with a client’s family or others close to the client to investigate, gather mitigation, communicate a plea, and explain the proceedings, as such relationships are often necessary for effective representation and resolution of the case. In situations where extensive communication is necessary, such efforts should be explained sufficiently in the voucher to help approving authorities determine reasonableness.

Routine or rote communications that are purely administrative in nature and require minimal effort (e.g., less than six minutes) are considered administrative overhead and are not compensable. Examples include checking the availability of the court or an individual for the purpose of scheduling a meeting, interview, or hearing. However, scheduling efforts requiring an unusual or extraordinary amount of coordination, especially between multiple parties or a detention facility, are compensable. For the latter, such tasks should be delegated to a lower-cost service provider if available and explained in the voucher with sufficient detail to alert reviewers that the scheduling work was not routine or rote. In addition, communications where a scheduling-related discussion is incidental to some other case-specific topic or issue are compensable. For these types of “mixed” calls or emails, counsel’s billing should identify only the non-administrative aspect of the communication.

Associates and service providers should exercise professional judgment in billing for reviewing communications and materials that do not pertain to their specific role or responsibility on the case. While defense team members need to stay informed of developments in a case, reviewing daily emails between other team members could be construed as not reasonably necessary.

As explained in Section II, a call or email that takes less than six minutes (0.1 hours) may be claimed at 0.1 hours if no other service is claimed for that day. Multiple communications (or other tasks) performed in a single day of less than 0.1 hours each must be aggregated to ensure that billable time does not exceed actual hours worked. For example, multiple short emails and/or phone calls made or received on the same day must be measured as a whole and billed accordingly.

V. CASE RELATED COMMUNICATIONS	COMPENSABLE?
Communicating with client’s family Reasonable communications with a client’s family or others close to the client are critical to building trust and a good working relationship with a client and are thus compensable.	YES
Scheduling meetings, client visits, interpreters, hearings, or interviews Routine or rote communications requiring minimal effort (e.g., solely checking availability of an individual or the court, relaying a schedule change, etc.) are part of administrative overhead and should not be charged unless incidental to some other case-related topic or requiring unusual or extraordinary effort.	NO
Defense team review of all emails and electronic filings on a case including by paralegals, investigators, and other experts Counsel and providers should exercise professional judgment in billing for review of communications or materials that do not pertain to their roles and responsibilities. Such efforts could be construed as not reasonably necessary to the representation by reviewing authorities.	DEPENDS
Defense team meetings Regular team meetings can be a valuable way to share information, and in-person meetings are at times necessary. However, counsel should assess in advance of each meeting whether its purpose can be met using video or audio conferencing to reduce travel and in-person meeting time.	YES
Obtaining clearance for service provider to access client in detention facility This is compensable whether undertaken by counsel or the service provider.	YES

VI. DISCOVERY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTIGATION

Discovery in federal cases has increased in complexity, and counsel must recognize when it's appropriate to solicit assistance from a litigation support expert such as a paralegal, discovery vendor, or the [National Litigation Support Team \(NLST\)](#). The NLST is funded by the Defender Services Office to support CJA panel attorneys. It provides technology, resources, education, and training to help CJA attorneys efficiently search, review, and analyze e-discovery and digital evidence. Keep up on the latest e-discovery tips by following NLST's blog at nlsblog.org.

Under Rule 16.1 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, no later than 14 days after arraignment, counsel must meet and confer with the government regarding a timetable and procedure for pretrial disclosures. Counsel may rely on the [ESI Protocol](#) to develop procedures for disclosure. After the discovery conference, one or both parties may ask the court to determine or modify the time, place, manner, or other aspects of disclosure to facilitate preparation for trial. Having this information early in the case will help counsel determine what litigation support is needed. In addition, having organized discovery will make it easier to create a comprehensive investigative plan.

While counsel must review all relevant disclosures and documents, discretion must be exercised in determining the depth of review required to provide effective representation to the client. If discovery is voluminous, counsel should obtain assistance in organizing and isolating relevant documents to facilitate efficient review by attorneys, investigators, or experts. Time spent by counsel or a service provider assessing, reviewing, coding, or analyzing discovery is compensable whereas the mechanical act of downloading or copying is not.

Counsel also must exercise discretion when printing discovery materials for the purpose of initial review and should make an informed selection of materials instead of printing everything. Given the significant increase in e-discovery, counsel are expected to utilize digital review tools, which studies have shown are more effective than linear document review (see, e.g., [Anne Kershaw, Iterative Legal Analysis & Sampling vs. Linear Document Review—A Comparative Case Study](#)). See Sections II and XII for further guidance on reimbursement of printing time and costs.

Adequately articulating and explaining discovery-related billable time can be challenging, especially where page counts are difficult to ascertain (e.g., conducting a keyword search in a database). For this reason, billers should provide sufficient detail in their entries, including the type and explaining the difficulty or complexity of the materials, to enable voucher reviewers to understand the context of the work and its relevance to the case, without revealing privileged information. Below are examples of good billing descriptions for discovery-related tasks. Consult the Fourth Circuit CJA Unit's [Discovery Billing Tip Sheet](#) for more guidance and examples.

- Coded and indexed approx. [insert page count] of [insert file type] in Excel spreadsheet.
- Searched discovery with dtSearch, received approximately [insert #] hits and reviewed [actual # of documents] from these search results.
- Reviewed and summarized 30 min of recorded witness interviews and 6 hrs of pole cam video (some on fast forward).

- Reviewed approx. 200 pages of reports, warrants, and telephone records in Casepoint.
- Skimmed approx. [insert page count and/or Bates number range] of financial records to identify signatures of payee.

VI. DISCOVERY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTIGATION	COMPENSABLE?
Transferring, downloading, or manipulating discovery productions This includes performing quality control; renaming, unitizing, combining, or converting files; checking or running OCR; and consolidating/copying discs onto a single hard drive. Counsel are expected to enlist lower-cost service providers such as paralegals or litigation support specialists to organize voluminous discovery.	YES
Waiting for files to download, copy, transfer, OCR, or convert Counsel and providers are expected to perform other work during pure wait time. See Section II regarding administrative tasks.	NO
Negotiating fees to host discovery on cloud storage site Counsel must consult with the National Litigation Support Team, CJA Supervising Attorney, or Circuit Case Budgeting Attorney to ensure cloud storage fees are reasonable based on discovery volume. Because this is akin to budgeting and part of negotiating with a service provider, such time is compensable.	YES
Coding or indexing discovery or evidence and organizing into folders or binders Including organizing materials in a database or cloud storage site and selecting materials for issue or witness-specific paper files or binders. If counsel opts to perform these tasks instead of enlisting a paralegal or litigation support specialist, the work should be undertaken contemporaneously with substantive discovery review.	YES
Reviewing discovery For document review, indicate the number of pages or Bates range and type of materials to allow for a reasonableness assessment. Audio and video review should indicate the length and complexity of the recordings. See Discovery Billing Tip Sheet for additional guidance.	YES
Sorting and gathering materials for use by counsel, client, or service providers For voluminous discovery, counsel should consider working with the local CJA administrator, a discovery vendor, or the detention facility to provide in-custody clients with discovery in an electronically reviewable format. See Guidance for the Provision of ESI to Detainees. In addition, discovery can be made available to service providers via a secure cloud-hosted site such as Box.com.	YES

VI. DISCOVERY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTIGATION	COMPENSABLE?
Printing or copying discovery for use by counsel, client, or service providers After sorting and gathering materials to be duplicated (which is compensable work), time spent physically printing or copying is non-compensable administrative work as explained in Section II. However, reasonable copy costs may be reimbursed as an expense as discussed in Section XII.	NO
Selecting and marking exhibits in advance of a hearing or trial	YES
Reviewing co-defendant's or cellmate's plea agreement If not obvious, explain the relevance of the work (e.g., reviewed co-D's plea agreement to assess possibility of renegotiating terms or obtaining better offer; reviewed cellmate plea agreement to assuage client concerns regarding own agreement).	YES
Preparing subpoenas for witnesses and records Including filling out subpoena forms or preparing attachments. Expenses related to production of documents (e.g., copy charges) may be reimbursable. Counsel should seek prior authorization if such expenses are likely to exceed \$500.	YES
Serving subpoenas for fact witnesses and records Service of subpoenas is facilitated and paid by the Department of Justice through the U.S. Marshals Service as provided in FRCP 17 and the U.S. Marshals Service Public Defender Handbook. *While not separately compensable, service of process may be undertaken by a member of the defense team if incidental to some other task (such as a witness interview or other representational purpose). See CJA Guidelines § 230.66.50. Additionally, if the USMS is unavailable due to time or other representational constraints (e.g., the witness will likely avoid law enforcement), the circumstances should be documented and, whenever feasible, prior approval obtained before incurring expenses for service of process.	NO*
Paying for fact witness to travel and testify in court or at deposition The defense team should not front expenses such as travel costs or deposition transcripts related to the testimony of a fact witness. These costs are paid by the U.S. Marshals Service (DOJ) under 18 U.S.C. § 1825(b) and FCRP 15. See CJA Guidelines § 320.40. Please reference the Fourth Circuit Fact Witness Compensation Guidelines. If DOJ refuses to pay, inform your CJA administrator and the court directly.	NO

VII. LEGAL RESEARCH AND WRITING

CJA panel attorneys must thoroughly investigate and research all potentially viable legal defenses and are expected to do so efficiently by maintaining proficiency in federal practice and by using standard legal research techniques. Counsel are encouraged to build brief banks or utilize resources on FD.org or their local defender office for sample motions. Counsel are also expected to have a working knowledge of federal criminal law as well as local and federal rules of procedure and to keep current with the law.

For novel or complex areas of law specific to a client's representation, counsel will likely spend more time than usual on research and writing and should explain the necessity for this work in their vouchers to assist reasonableness review. Such research may go beyond reading caselaw to gain expertise in a new or unique area, such as securitization of assets, bankruptcy, intellectual property, human trafficking, international banking, or gang culture.

While time spent reading materials to get up to speed on a topic may be reimbursable if reasonably necessary to the effective representation of a specific client or representation, time spent on general caselaw reading, skill building, professional development, and CLE or other training events is generally not compensable. One exception is a "bring-your-case" type of training event sponsored by the Defender Services Office. Counsel must obtain prior authorization to bill time or travel expenses for such training.

VII. CASE RESEARCH AND WRITING	COMPENSABLE?
Conducting legal research If relevant to the specific representation to which it is billed. See Section XII concerning reimbursement of Computer Assisted Legal Research expenses.	YES
Editing a template or preexisting pleading for a similar case at hand CJA panel attorneys should use preexisting resources (e.g., briefs and pleadings prepared in similar cases) to the extent feasible. The time spent editing and adapting a template or preexisting pleading is compensable.	YES
Refreshing knowledge of federal criminal law or rules of procedure Counsel are expected to possess a working knowledge of federal criminal law and rules of procedure. Time spent reviewing newly issued caselaw not relevant to a specific representation or becoming familiar with or reviewing resources such as the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, Local Criminal Rules, and Federal Sentencing Guidelines is not compensable absent a specific representational purpose, which should be identified in the voucher.	NO

VII. CASE RESEARCH AND WRITING	COMPENSABLE?
Reviewing publications or other media uniquely related to specific case or client If reasonably necessary to a specific client’s representation (e.g., background about a particular gang, terrorist group, etc.) and outside the range of an experienced criminal defense attorney, reasonable time spent reading a book or viewing a documentary uniquely relevant to the case or client may be compensable. To assist voucher review, billing entries must provide a detailed explanation. Counsel should exercise professional judgment in assessing whether such time is better characterized as non-compensable training or continuing legal education.	DEPENDS
Reimbursement for a publication necessary to client’s representation and not accessible through a library or other means Before purchase, check with your local defender office, panel administrator, or CJA staff to see if the resource is available at no cost. To assist voucher review, the expense entry must explain the publication’s necessity to the representation. Counsel should exercise professional judgment in assessing whether the publication is a general resource for counsel’s law practice and thus not chargeable to CJA.	DEPENDS
Attending CLE related to the subject matter of your case Other than as explained under “Attending ‘bring your case’ style of workshop or conference,” time and expense related to educational seminars, including travel, attendance, registration, or materials, are not compensable or reimbursable under the CJA.	NO
Attending “bring your case” style workshop or conference Although time spent attending plenary sessions is not compensable at “bring your case” workshops, time spent discussing and strategizing about an individual case is compensable. The court may permit reimbursement of travel costs on a pro rata basis based on the conference agenda (plenary vs. specific case sessions); advance authorization to bill time and travel expenses must be sought.	YES

VIII. TRIAL

Incredible effort goes into preparing for and participating in a criminal trial. Counsel must be prepared for both the known and the unknown. The better prepared, the faster counsel can pivot as testimony and theories of the case unfold. Depending on case complexity, preparation may require longer than normal days in the days, weeks, or even months before trial.

During trial, counsel should plan to be in the courtroom 15-20 minutes before the scheduled start time to set up any equipment or evidence displays to avoid delay; this is compensable time. If the trial is complex and courtroom presentation assistance is needed, counsel should ask for such services in advance. Having a paralegal, investigator, or associate attorney to coordinate witnesses or display documents at trial is an effective way to stay organized and allow counsel to focus on direct and cross examination of witnesses.

On trial days, billable hours may easily exceed 10 hours or more a day between out-of-court preparation and in-court proceedings, and no additional justification is needed when billing.

After closing arguments, it is expected that counsel will spend time meeting with the client or co-defendant counsel, talking with witnesses and family members, outlining possible issues for post-trial motions or appeal, dealing with trial exhibits, reassembling the case file, etc. This is compensable time and should be billed as such to demonstrate that counsel was engaged in representational work as opposed to “waiting for jury verdict.” If jury deliberations move into subsequent days, counsel are expected to shift focus to other matters.

VIII. TRIAL	COMPENSABLE?
Creating witness, issue, or exhibit binders in preparation for trial If feasible, counsel should delegate this task to a lower-cost service provider.	YES
Preparing exhibit and witness lists	YES
Preparing demonstrative exhibits	YES
Practicing opening statement or closing argument	YES
Testing defense theories Reasonable time spent preparing and participating in mock cross examination, voir dire, or argument is compensable. In particularly complex or high-profile cases and where otherwise justified, counsel may seek funding to test defense theories before a mock jury or recruit an informal volunteer panel. Consult your local CJA Supervising Attorney or Circuit Case Budgeting Attorney if you think the case might qualify for such services.	YES
Arriving to court 15-20 minutes early to set up courtroom presentation materials and equipment or otherwise prepare	YES

VIII. TRIAL	COMPENSABLE?
Awaiting a jury verdict Compensable: Packing up and managing trial exhibits and files, debriefing or consulting with client or defense team, consulting with co-defendant counsel, making notes for possible post-trial motions or filings, considering possible appellate issues, preparing necessary motions or other filings, responding to jury questions, traveling to and from the courthouse if ordered to be in the building during deliberations or appear in court, and reading of the verdict. Pure wait time typically is not compensable, especially where the jury deliberates for more than one day. When ordered by a court to remain at a courthouse pending a verdict, counsel should exercise professional judgment in billing wait time and should be prepared to work on other matters while waiting.	DEPENDS
Speaking with jurors after verdict is reached If the purpose of speaking with jurors is to discern grounds for post-trial relief, such time is compensable and should be explained in the voucher. NOTE: Please remember that in some jurisdictions, advance approval is required from the court to speak to jurors.	DEPENDS
Preparing post-trial motions	YES

IX. POST-JUDGMENT AND APPELLATE MATTERS

Even after entry of judgment, counsel have obligations and responsibilities at the district court level to make sure the case is handled on appeal or transferred to another attorney for appellate appointment. If trial counsel stays on as appellate counsel, time spent working on the appeal is billed to the court of appeals.

Although in some cases, there may be benefits to maintaining continuity of counsel, the skills necessary to represent a client on appeal differ from those needed to excel at trial practice. Before continuing as counsel on appeal, trial counsel should consult with the client about potential issues for appeal and the appellate qualifications of trial counsel. Many districts have a specialized panel of appellate attorneys available for appointment in cases where trial counsel withdraws. The motion to withdraw need not list any type of deficiency in representation or conflict, merely that trial counsel has primarily a trial practice and prefers to hand the appeal over to qualified appellate counsel. This allows the case to return to trial counsel on remand if the appeal is successful.

As with representation in the district court, counsel representing a client on appeal may at times need to undertake work that is ancillary to the appeal and that may take place back in the district court, including litigation about the completeness of the record and access to sealed filings. Whenever feasible, prior authorization should be sought by contacting CJA administrative staff for the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, who can also provide guidance on when tasks by appellate counsel should be billed to the district court. If an ancillary matter, such as a limited remand or an initial motion for

bail pending appeal, is likely to involve significant work in district court and appellate counsel did not represent the defendant at trial, appellate counsel may be advised to seek appointment and an eVoucher representation in district court.

IX. POST-JUDGMENT AND APPELLATE MATTERS	COMPENSABLE?
Preparing interlocutory appeal or mandamus petition Billed to district court unless Court of Appeals accepts jurisdiction and appoints counsel.	YES
Drafting notice of appeal Billed to the district court, not the Court of Appeals.	YES
Moving to withdraw as counsel on appeal If trial counsel prefers to withdraw in favor of new counsel on appeal, trial counsel should first timely file the notice of appeal in the district court to preserve the client’s right to appeal and then move to withdraw as soon as possible in the Court of Appeals asking for appointment of substitute counsel. See Fourth Circuit Rule 46(c) . NOTE: Time spent moving to withdraw may be billed to the district court representation if counsel has no other billable time for the appellate representation and the motion to withdraw is filed prior to submission of counsel’s final voucher in district court.	YES
Coordinating case file transfer to new counsel after entry of judgment Including communicating with appellate counsel to discuss potential issues to raise on appeal, access to sealed filings, or other matters relevant to the appeal.	YES
Reasonable and necessary communications with client after entry of judgment or dismissal of district court proceedings Including reasonable time responding to client requests for case file or discovery materials or inquiries about post-conviction relief. Counsel should seek guidance from a CJA administrator concerning compensability of client communications that occur after submission of a final voucher in district court. Some courts have local orders governing representation or advice for matters such as 2255 motions resulting from changes in the law and compassionate release requests.	YES
Designating/ordering transcripts for appeal If the transcript-requesting attorney continues the representation on appeal, this time may be billed to the attorney’s district court appointment; otherwise, it should be billed to the Court of Appeals representation. NOTE: CJA-24 transcripts requests are always submitted in the district court’s eVoucher system under either the original district court representation (if counsel represented the client in district court)	YES

IX. POST-JUDGMENT AND APPELLATE MATTERS	COMPENSABLE?
or a new “expert-only” representation created by the district court for the limited purpose of facilitating submission of transcript requests by substitute appellate counsel.	
Designating/ordering transcripts other than for appeal Counsel must identify a representational purpose when ordering transcripts at a client’s request for reasons other than an appeal.	DEPENDS
Designating/ordering transcripts for BOP placement purposes Or for other purposes unrelated to the defense of the criminal case.	NO
Unsealing district court documents for appeal Counsel should consult with the Court of Appeals CJA Administrator about whether time spent in district court seeking to unseal documents for appeal should be billed to the Court of Appeals.	YES
Requesting or facilitating bail pending appeal If counsel represented the client in district court, this may be billed to the district court on a final or supplemental voucher; otherwise, the work can be billed to the Court of Appeals as an ancillary matter.	YES
Printing, scanning, or downloading transcripts or excerpts of record	NO
Preparing Certificate of Appealability (COA) for Habeas Consistent with Rule 11 of the Rules Governing § 2254 and § 2255 Cases, courts must issue or deny a COA when entering a final order adverse to the petitioner. Thus, COA briefing in the district court typically is permitted only if the court concludes that it cannot rule without additional argument from the parties. If a COA is denied by the district court and an NOA is filed, counsel may bill the appellate representation for preparing a COA request in the Court of Appeals, regardless if the COA is granted. If a COA is granted by the district court, appellate counsel should not prepare a COA request in the Court of Appeals but may brief uncertified claims in the opening brief, as provided by Fourth Circuit Rule 22(a).	DEPENDS
Preparing appellate briefs and motions Including time and expense for researching and drafting appellate briefs as well as motions, continuance requests, and petitions for rehearing filed in the Court of Appeals.	YES
Ordering duplication of briefs through copy service Time spent placing a copy order is non-compensable administrative work as explained in Section II. However, reasonable duplication costs may be reimbursed as an expense as discussed in Section XII.	NO
Copying briefs and mailing to client Time spent physically printing or copying is non-compensable administrative work as explained in Section II. However, reasonable	NO

IX. POST-JUDGMENT AND APPELLATE MATTERS	COMPENSABLE?
copy and mailing costs may be reimbursed as an expense as discussed in Section XII.	
Acknowledging oral argument date as required by the Court of Appeals Time spent to complete this ministerial task must not exceed 0.1 hours.	YES
Preparing or responding to certiorari petition Work related to a certiorari petition is billed to the Court of Appeals. If the petition is granted, counsel's time on merits briefs and oral argument is billed to the United States Supreme Court.	YES
Preparing a CJA-26 or CJA-27 Form or Detailed Memoranda for the Court A CJA-26 form (District) or CJA-27 form (Appellate) or a detailed memorandum must accompany every excess voucher submitted to the Court. Attorneys seeking compensation in excess of statutory limits must submit a separate, detailed memorandum demonstrating that the case is more complex or time consuming than the average case and that excess payment is necessary to provide fair compensation. A CJA-26 Excess Compensation Form or a CJA 27 Excess Compensation Form may be used for this purpose. The excess compensation memorandum or form must be uploaded as a PDF document to CJA eVoucher for submission with the CJA 20 voucher.	NO
Undertaking ancillary state court work Counsel must obtain prior court authorization to bill the federal district or appellate court for ancillary state court work, such as filing a successive state post-conviction petition or seeking other relief in state court.	DEPENDS
Responding to allegation of ineffectiveness in a 28 U.S.C. § 2255 petition Because defending against an IAC claim is not direct representational work, counsel may not be reimbursed through the CJA for time spent responding to a former client's allegation of ineffectiveness raised in a post-conviction proceeding.	NO
Preparing requests to file second or successive (SOS) habeas petition Whether work on an SOS request is billed to the district court or appellate court will depend on the specific circumstances of the case; counsel should consult with the local CJA administrator, Supervising Attorney or Court of Appeals CJA Administrative Attorney.	YES
Seeking relief based on a change in law or statute *Courts have discretion to appoint counsel to prepare a motion or petition seeking relief based on a change in law or statute (e.g., compassionate release, First Step Act litigation, <i>Johnson</i> relief, etc.). Counsel must seek PRIOR approval and move for appointment, even	YES

IX. POST-JUDGMENT AND APPELLATE MATTERS	COMPENSABLE?
if counsel represented the client at sentencing. If the case is pending appeal and appellate counsel wants to pursue relief, appellate counsel must seek appointment in district court to undertake the representation and bill to the district court.	

X. CLIENT SERVICES

The CJA Guidelines provide that items of a personal nature purchased for or on behalf of a client are not reimbursable. This includes clothing, haircuts, cigarettes, meals, candy, and other “incidental expenses of a personal nature” that are not considered legal representation. CJA Guidelines [§ 230.66.20](#). Incidental expenses of a personal nature include assisting the client in the disposition of the client’s personal property (unless obtaining access to the property could reasonably contribute to a representational purpose), arranging for the placement of the client’s minor children, assisting the client in executing the conditions of probation or supervised release (e.g., finding employment or housing or arranging for drug or alcohol counseling), and providing legal assistance in matters unrelated to litigation of the case though possibly incidental to the client’s arrest (e.g., helping a detained client execute a Power of Attorney to permit family members to transact on the client’s behalf).

Although defense attorneys often feel morally or even ethically obligated to assist their clients or their clients’ family members with personal matters, activities that are personal in nature are not reimbursable under the CJA absent an articulated and reasonable representational purpose. The determination of whether a service is personal in nature or compensable under the CJA is ultimately within the discretion of the approving authority.

The two most common quasi-personal services that frustrate both counsel and voucher reviewers involve clothing a detained client for court appearances and retrieving a client’s personal belongings seized at the time of arrest. While ensuring a client is dressed appropriately for court arguably has a representational purpose, the CJA Guidelines clearly preclude compensation for time spent by counsel to procure such clothing. However, similar to scheduling-related communications addressed in Section V, communications where a clothing-related discussion is incidental to some other case-specific topic or issue are compensable (e.g., asking a family member about arranging for clothing while also discussing what to expect at an upcoming court hearing). For these types of “mixed” calls or emails, counsel’s billing should identify the non-personal aspect of the communication.

With respect to a client’s personal property, counsel or a service provider may be compensated for retrieving or arranging for others to retrieve items that have potential evidentiary or investigative value relevant to the charges or to potential mitigation (e.g., immigration or other identification, cash, documents, address book, laptop, mobile phone, or other electronic device) or if the retrieval is incidental to some other task (e.g., interviewing a case agent). Billing entries for such work should explain how obtaining access to the personal property furthered a representational purpose to avoid being reduced as non-compensable services of a personal nature.

Work on legal matters ancillary to the criminal representation are not “services of a personal nature” and may be compensated as provided in CJA Guidelines [§ 210.20.30](#). The court is responsible for determining whether a matter is ancillary to the principal criminal charge and, whenever feasible, advance authorization should be sought. If authorized, the scope of representation extends only to the part of the ancillary matter that relates to the principal criminal charge and correlative objective in providing the representation.

X. CLIENT SERVICES	COMPENSABLE?
Procuring or arranging for others to procure clothing for client Time spent solely arranging clothing for court or release (e.g., communicating with a client or client’s family, visiting a defender office closet, shopping at a thrift store). However, the act of arranging for clothing may be accomplished contemporaneously with hearing preparation, interviews, family consultations, or other substantive matters as incidental to that work. In that event, counsel’s voucher should describe the non-clothing-related aspect of the billed time.	NO
Arranging for client haircut	NO
Furnishing cigarettes, candy, meals, etc. Including putting money on a client’s account at a detention center.	NO
Communicating with client, client’s family, or agents about client’s personal property if subject to civil forfeiture or return under Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure 41(g)	YES
Retrieving or arranging for others to retrieve critical client property that has potential evidentiary, investigatory, or other representational purpose Critical client property includes items such as immigration or other identification documents, cash, address or phone books, laptops, and mobile phones or other electronic devices that may support the resolution of criminal matters or assist foreign national clients in a safe return should they be removed. Counsel should utilize a lower-cost service provider to retrieve the property. Billing entries for property retrieval must explain the representational purpose to avoid being reduced as non-compensable services of a personal nature. If the work is found to be compensable, related expenses such as mileage or postage also are compensable.	YES
Assisting detained client in obtaining medical care or addressing a condition of confinement if there is a representational purpose Assisting a detained client to obtain medical care or address some other condition related to confinement must have a representational purpose (e.g., to facilitate attorney-client communication, access to the client, or client participation in their defense or court proceedings) for counsel to be reimbursed for this work. Billing entries should	YES

X. CLIENT SERVICES	COMPENSABLE?
explain the representational purpose to avoid being reduced as non-compensable services of a personal nature.	
Assisting client with requirements of pretrial diversion program This is distinguished from assisting a client after judgment in executing conditions of probation or supervised release, which is a non-compensable service of a personal nature under CJA Guidelines § 230.66.20 .	YES
Petitioning for modification of detention conditions Including for an in-custody client to attend a loved one’s funeral or an out-of-custody client to travel outside the district. Such efforts may require communicating with Pretrial Services or the U.S. Attorney’s Office, which are compensable tasks and not services of a personal nature. NOTE: Attorneys and service providers may not be reimbursed for the time and expense of transporting a client to attend a funeral or other personal matter.	YES
Arranging for the placement of minor children of the client	NO
Providing representation in related state court or other ancillary matters Work related to state court proceedings or other ancillary matters may be compensable. Counsel should obtain prior authorization from the court. CJA Guidelines § 210.20.30 .	DEPENDS

XI. TRAVEL AND WAIT TIME

Counsel and service providers are entitled to compensation for time spent conducting necessary and reasonable travel in furtherance of the representation. This includes travel to visit a detained client or interview a witness. While these are easy examples, others are more difficult, including travel related to non-compensable administrative tasks (such as photocopying or mailing documents to a client). As explained in Section II, the hourly rate paid to counsel and service providers is intended to compensate for general office overhead, including clerical assistance. Many CJA attorneys and providers work from home and lack conveniences such as a high-volume copier or daily express mail pickup. Thus, it may be necessary to take frequent trips to a post office, shipping company, copy center, or office supply store. However, such travel is generally considered part of office overhead (which is overall less costly when working solely from a home office) and thus not reimbursable except in extraordinary or unusual circumstances.

For air and overnight travel, authorization must be sought in advance unless court or district policy establishes otherwise. Prior authorization assists in obtaining reduced and refundable government travel rates. In the absence of exigent circumstances, travel authorization requests should be submitted at least 10 business days ahead of the proposed travel (using the procedures established by the court) and should detail the purpose, proposed itinerary, duration, and estimated

travel expenses. All air travel and car rentals must be pre-authorized by the court and should be booked through a judiciary contract travel agent.

Ordinarily, compensable time for travel includes only those hours actually spent in or awaiting transit. While traveling, time spent on substantive work should be billed separately from pure travel time (in which no work is performed, whether on CJA or privately retained cases) and clearly denoted on the voucher as work accomplished while in travel status. Compensation for pure travel time may not be claimed in one case if billable work in another case is undertaken at the same time while in travel status (double billing); if such work is for another CJA representation, the fact the work occurred while in travel status should be noted in the vouchers submitted for both representations. Counsel and service providers are expected to undertake substantive work whenever possible while in travel status (e.g., while waiting at an airport or on a plane) and excessive “travel only” time when work could have been undertaken while in transit is likely to be scrutinized.

CJA reimburses for reasonable expenses actually incurred during travel, rather than on a flat per-diem basis. In determining whether incurred expenses are “reasonable,” voucher reviewers are guided by travel and subsistence expense levels set by the [Judiciary Staff Travel Regulations](#). Expenses may include parking fees, tolls, mileage for personally owned vehicles, meals, and lodging. Receipts should include line-item details, especially for meals (i.e., not summary credit card receipts). Meal expenses for same-day travel in excess of 12 hours are reimbursable. NOTE: Actual expense receipts must be provided. Please note that same-day travel reimbursement may have tax implications. The maximum reimbursement for airfare booked by the traveler directly is the prevailing government contract rate. The U.S. General Services Administration’s (GSA) website (gsa.gov/travel-resources) publishes government rates for [air travel between most cities](#) and for [daily lodging/subsistence](#).

Alcoholic beverages, entertainment (e.g., movies), travel insurance, parking fines or fees for traffic violations, personal automobile expenses, increased costs incurred by traveling indirect routes for personal reasons, and use of taxis to obtain meals are not reimbursable. If a traveler lengthens a trip or incurs any cost for personal reasons or performs work that is not related to the purpose of the official travel, the increased cost caused by such action also is not reimbursable.

Under [18 U.S.C. § 4285](#), the U.S. Marshals Service is responsible for transporting out-of-custody clients to court. However, as explained in the Cardone Report, the cost of return transportation is not included in this statutory mandate, nor is the cost of lodging and subsistence while an out-of-custody client is attending proceedings in court (e.g., trial). Although not required by statute, the Marshals Service in some districts has acquiesced when ordered by courts to pay for return travel and lodging/subsistence of out-of-custody defendants. Similarly, the Pretrial Services Office in some districts has assisted with locating temporary housing. While the CJA generally may not be used to pay for client lodging or subsistence, at least one court has broadly construed the term “other services” in 18 U.S.C. § 3006A(e)(1) to include lodging for an out-of-state defendant during trial. See *United States v. Mendoza*, 734 F.Supp.2d 281 (E.D.N.Y. 2010). Questions concerning travel for out-of-custody clients should be directed to the presiding judge or other approving authority.

XI. TRAVEL AND WAIT TIME	COMPENSABLE?
Preparing a travel request Including time for estimating expenses. Counsel should consult GSA’s website for government airfare rates and per diem rates for lodging/meals & incidentals . It should not take more than 0.2 hours to conduct this research absent unique and extraordinary circumstances.	YES
Booking travel	NO
Traveling to courthouse for court appearances Subject to district-specific rules or limits.	YES
Traveling to courthouse for other representational purpose when required Including travel to courthouse to deliver required courtesy copies, file materials that cannot be submitted electronically, or obtain items not available in CM/ECF. If possible, attorneys should use the most cost-effective method for delivery, e.g., U.S. postal mail, or combine the task with other work requiring travel to the courthouse.	YES
Arriving before scheduled start time of hearing, meeting, or client visit Limited time before a hearing, meeting, or client visit is scheduled to begin (up to 0.3 hours unless ordered to arrive earlier by the court).	YES
Wait time between scheduled and actual start time of hearing, meeting, or client visit Unless counsel is able to conduct other work while waiting. Includes time waiting for matter to be called after court calendar begins.	YES
Traveling to meet with out-of-custody client For meetings at an attorney’s office that do not coincide with transportation to a court proceeding provided by the U.S. Marshals Service, out-of-custody clients should travel at their own expense when feasible. For clients that lack the means to travel, counsel may request that CJA cover the cost of transporting the client to meet with counsel when doing so would be economically advantageous to the CJA compared to counsel traveling to the client’s locale. Counsel should seek advance authorization and provide a comparison of costs for the client to be transported to and from the attorney’s office and for counsel to travel to and from the client’s locale (including attorney time and travel expenses). If approved, counsel should consult with a CJA administrator for guidance on booking client travel. Client travel expenses are ordinarily limited to the cost of transport and do not include lodging or subsistence.	YES
Traveling and wait time to meet with client at detention facility Subject to district-specific rules or limits.	YES
Traveling to meet with a defense team member	YES

XI. TRAVEL AND WAIT TIME	COMPENSABLE?
In furtherance of their fiduciary duty under the CJA to work efficiently, counsel and service providers should exercise professional judgment in determining whether a meeting’s objective can be accomplished using video or audio conferencing.	
Traveling to pick up discovery Whenever feasible, counsel should coordinate discovery pickup at the U.S. Attorney’s Office with other tasks such as meeting with the assigned AUSA and are encouraged to delegate pick up to a lower-cost service provider. While travel time to a commercial printing or copy center is not ordinarily compensable, it may be allowed if the vendor is used by the Government for discovery productions.	YES
Traveling to and wait time at print/copy center Except in unusual or extraordinary circumstances of the type that would normally result in an additional charge to a fee-paying client. See CJA Guidelines § 320.70.30 .	NO
Traveling to and wait time at post office	NO
Traveling to purchase a hard drive or other office supplies	NO
Traveling by car when mileage plus attorney travel time is less than airfare Travel should be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties of the individual requiring travel.	YES
Transporting client to/from court, airport, rehabilitation facility, or another locale Unless such travel is incidental to a client meeting, in which case the time would be billed as communicating with client, not traveling.	NO
Walking/escorting client within courthouse to probation, pretrial, or U.S. Marshals Service	YES

XII. GENERAL OFFICE OVERHEAD AND OTHER EXPENSES

As provided in CJA Guidelines [§ 230.66.10](#), counsel’s hourly rate is intended to include compensation for general office expenses, including personnel, rent, telephone, cell phone, internet, general video and teleconferencing services, and clerical assistance. However, unusual or extraordinary expenses of these types may rise to the level of “other services necessary for an adequate defense” under [18 U.S.C. § 3006A\(d\)\(1\)](#), especially if the circumstances from which the need arises would normally result in an additional charge to a fee-paying client. CJA Guidelines [§ 320.70.30](#). Prior authorization should be sought before incurring any unusual or extraordinary expenses.

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses may be reimbursed if itemized and documented. Expenses for services such as interpretation or translation are not considered out-of-pocket expenses and should not be fronted by counsel. Rather, they should be submitted on form CJA-21/31 as services (after obtaining prior authorization, if required).

Similarly, the acquisition of computer hardware or software not typically available in a law office and reasonably necessary to the representation, including the procurement of litigation support services (e.g., cloud-hosted discovery), should be submitted on form CJA-21/31. Prior authorization for computer hardware, software, or litigation support services is required. If combined costs are expected to exceed \$10,000, appointed counsel must consult with the local CJA office or [National Litigation Support Team](#) for guidance.

As the amount of electronic discovery continues to expand, counsel are expected to be mindful of adjusting to new technologies that assist with organization and review of discovery and avoid unnecessary printing and copying of voluminous materials. Whenever feasible, discovery should be provided to a client or service providers in an electronic format.

This same guidance regarding reimbursement of counsel's expenses applies in determining the reasonableness of expenses incurred by service providers. CJA Guidelines [§ 320.80.10](#).

XII. GENERAL OFFICE OVERHEAD AND OTHER EXPENSES	REIMBURSABLE?
Administrative assistant to answer phones/reply to general office email	NO
Hard drives for discovery storage If the hard drive or other storage media is purchased with the intent that it stays with the case file or will be used in another CJA representation, reimbursement may be sought. Justification should be included on the voucher.	YES
Mobile printer for use during trial	NO
File folders, binders, and other supplies for office use However, in particularly complex cases requiring an unusual or extraordinary number of binders to provide exhibits to the court or opposing counsel, such expense may be construed as necessary for an adequate defense and thus reimbursed. Justification should be included on the voucher.	NO
Case organization tools unique to the needs of a case Proprietary software (including cloud-based discovery review platforms) or hardware not typically available in a law office needed to review evidence or organize discovery during pendency of a specific case. Counsel should discuss options with a CJA administrator, case budgeting attorney, or the National Litigation Support Team (NLST) and obtain prior authorization. See CJA Guidelines § 320.70.40 .	DEPENDS

XII. GENERAL OFFICE OVERHEAD AND OTHER EXPENSES	REIMBURSABLE?
Cloud storage subscription services Including Dropbox, Box, Sync, or other general storage services. NLST has a contract with Box and can provide free storage for CJA cases that qualify.	NO
General case organization or team communication tools E.g., Casemap, Everlaw, Basecamp, etc. Check with NLST for available discounts .	NO
Trial presentation tools E.g., TrialDirector 360, TrialPad, Sanction, ExhibitView, OnCue, etc. Check with NLST for available discounts or your local CJA Supervising Attorney for license information; some districts may have a limited number of licenses available for CJA use.	NO
Calendaring or billing software	NO
Photocopying or laser printing The Fourth Circuit’s maximum reimbursement rate for in-house copying or printing is 15 cents per page. District reimbursement rates may be lower.	YES
Scanning and OCR services by third-party vendors Third-party vendors may charge an hourly rate or per page fee. Check with your CJA administrator as reimbursement rates vary depending on documents form and quality. (See Section VI for compensability of attorney and service provider time for these tasks.)	YES
U.S. Postal fees	YES
Premium delivery services Use of couriers, messengers, and other premium delivery services (other than standard delivery) is discouraged absent a genuine necessity for the service. Explanations and receipts are required.	DEPENDS
Physical storage of paper materials Storage of hard-copy case files is typically office overhead. However, for an extraordinarily large volume of materials for which counsel lacks adequate space and for which physical storage is necessary for the representation, such expense may rise to the level of “other services necessary for an adequate defense” under 18 U.S.C. § 3006A(d)(1) and may be reimbursed during the representation. Prior authorization is required.	DEPENDS
Collect calls from client While it may be more cost efficient to deposit money into a detained client’s account to facilitate attorney-client communications, such funds are akin to services of a personal nature and not reimbursable under the CJA. Only reasonably documented actual expenses may be reimbursed.	YES

XII. GENERAL OFFICE OVERHEAD AND OTHER EXPENSES	REIMBURSABLE?
Communication with detained client on fee-based platforms Fees paid to detention center vendors for calls, emails, or video visits with a detained client are reimbursable if they can be reliably linked to a particular client/representation.	YES
Video or audio-conferencing tools Subscriptions to common audio or video services (e.g., Zoom, Skype, GoToMeeting, etc.) are considered overhead unless being employed solely for a specific representation and not general use. Any videoconference expense claimed on a voucher should explain why the service is not general office overhead.	DEPENDS
Equipment for in-custody client to review discovery Consult with a CJA administrator as prior authorization is required for the purchase of laptops, tablets, or audio devices.	DEPENDS
Expenses reasonably incurred in defending actions alleging malpractice in representational services under the CJA Reimbursable expenses include the cost of transcripts, witness fees and costs, and retained attorney fees. CJA Guidelines § 230.63.60. The total reimbursement must not exceed the deductible amount of counsel's professional liability insurance policy or \$5,000, whichever is less, and should be claimed as an expense on Form CJA-20/30. These expenses are not reimbursable if a judgment of malpractice is rendered against the attorney. As with § 2255 proceedings, compensation for representing oneself in defending malpractice allegations is not reimbursable.	YES
Computer-assisted legal research (CALR) services Panel attorneys are expected to have access to online legal research tools (e.g., Lexis, Westlaw) and should utilize the most cost-efficient pricing plan available. The CJA Guidelines provide that CALR services may be reimbursed if the amount is reasonable, although reimbursement policies may vary between districts. If submitting a claim for reimbursement, counsel must attach a copy of the bill, along with (1) an explanation of the precise basis for the charge, and (2) a statement of justification if the expense exceeds \$200 during a one-month period.	YES
Transcripts of federal proceedings Counsel should not pay out of pocket for transcripts. Rather, transcripts should be requested on CJA Form 24. Except during trial, expedited or daily copy is discouraged. Any requests for expedited or daily copy must be justified and pre-approved by the court. In multi-defendant cases involving CJA defendants, no more than one transcript should be purchased from the court reporter on behalf of CJA defendants. CJA Guidelines 320.30.30	NO

XII. GENERAL OFFICE OVERHEAD AND OTHER EXPENSES	REIMBURSABLE?
PACER fees Attorneys and service providers should apply for a no-fee account and may contact the PACER Service Center in San Antonio at 1-800-676-6856 for more information. Service providers may require documentation from a CJA administrator explaining their role and eligibility for the CJA exemption and should register at this link for a “case search only” account: https://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/pscof/registration.jsf Additional information: https://www.pacer.gov/ecfcbt/cso/PACER_Job_Aids/Activating_CJA_Privileges.pdf https://www.pacer.gov/ecfcbt/cso/PACER_Job_Aids/CJA_instructions.pdf	NO

XIII. CONCLUSION

Attorneys can make the job of those who review vouchers much easier if they follow the simple rule of explaining why anything out of the ordinary was necessary to the representation. This can almost always be done without compromising the confidentiality of the representation. If you run into problems, please consult your local CJA experts at the courthouse or in your panel community.