



The CJA Panel of Attorneys: How to Apply

The Criminal Justice Act Panel (CJA Panel) is composed of selected attorneys qualified to provide defense services to persons who are financially unable to obtain adequate representation and are entitled to appointed counsel under the Criminal Justice Act of 1964, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A, as amended.

Applying for CJA Panel Membership

Attorneys seeking appointment to the CJA Panel must complete the [Court's CJA Panel Questionnaire and Application \(New Appointment\)](#). Applications are reviewed by the CJA Committee, which is responsible for evaluating applicants and administering the District's CJA Panel under the [Criminal Justice Act Plan effective January 1, 2025](#).

The completed application should be delivered to the Clerk's Office, attention Chief Deputy Clerk, at:

**Office of the Clerk
U.S. District Court
Attn: Chief Deputy Clerk – CJA Panel Application
José V. Toledo U.S. Courthouse
300 Recinto Sur St., Suite 325
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901**

CJA Mentoring Program

The Court also administers a [CJA Mentoring Program](#) pursuant to Section VIII(B)(7) of the 2025 CJA Plan. The program is designed to identify and help prepare viable candidates to qualify for consideration for future appointment to the CJA Panel through case-based mentoring in at least one CJA case and participation in training modules addressing federal criminal litigation concepts and techniques.

Relationship to Direct CJA Panel Application. Attorneys who already possess the experience and qualifications required for CJA Panel service may apply directly for Panel membership by submitting the [CJA Panel Questionnaire and Application](#). The Mentoring Program provides a separate developmental pathway for attorneys who seek to build the federal criminal defense experience and training necessary to become viable candidates for future Panel membership. Completion of the Mentoring Program does not itself confer CJA Panel membership; upon completion, the Mentoring Program Subcommittee makes recommendations to the CJA Committee concerning the mentee's participation, and appointment to the Panel remains subject to the CJA Committee's evaluation and the Court's selection process.

Attorneys seeking this developmental pathway should complete the [Court's Application to CJA Mentoring Program](#) and submit the signed application to jorge_soltero@prd.uscourts.gov.

Review and Notification

Applications for Panel membership are referred to the CJA Committee for review and consideration. The Committee evaluates applications in accordance with the Court's CJA Plan and notifies applicants of its decisions in writing.

Application forms, the CJA Plan, Mentoring Program information, and related CJA materials are available on the Court's website at www.prd.uscourts.gov.

For CJA Panel membership and Mentoring Program information, contact Carmen Serrano at (787) 772-3016 or carmen_serrano@prd.uscourts.gov.

CJA Panel Committee Members

Hon. Aida M. Delgado-Colón
U.S. District Judge
Chairperson

Hon. María Antongiorgi-Jordán
U.S. District Judge

Hon. Héctor Ramos-Vega
U.S. Magistrate Judge

Ada I. García-Rivera, Esq.
Clerk of Court

Rachel Brill, Esq.
Federal Public Defender

Lydia Lizarribar, Esq.
Laura Maldonado, Esq.

Joseph Boucher, Esq.

Melanie Carrillo, Esq.

Raúl Mariani, Esq.

Sonia Torres, Esq.
Non-CJA Panel Member