



LISA GODBEY WOOD  
CHIEF JUDGE

United States District Court  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

FRANK M. SCARLETT FEDERAL BUILDING  
801 GLOUCESTER STREET, ROOM 207  
BRUNSWICK, GEORGIA 31520

April 21, 2011

Dear Members of the Southern District of Georgia Bar,

I write to inform you of important revisions to the Criminal Justice Act Plan for the Southern District of Georgia (“revised CJA Plan”) which were recently approved by the Eleventh Circuit Judicial Council of the United States. The revisions will allow the District to identify lawyers who are interested in accepting multiple CJA appointments and enable the District to make multiple appointments to interested lawyers who are qualified to handle such cases.

While the revised CJA Plan does not entirely replace the system whereby attorneys are called upon by the Court to accept CJA appointments, as explained below, the revised CJA Plan incorporates important changes to continue to provide indigent defendants with qualified counsel. Lawyers who are qualified to try federal criminal cases and are interested in doing so will be able to receive multiple appointments. Lawyers who are not qualified to try cases will not be considered for appointment in criminal jury trial matters. Out of district lawyers will no longer be assigned criminal jury trial matters unless they request to do so and are deemed qualified to do so. Lawyers sixty-three (63) years and over will be exempt from service absent the conditions set forth below.

Turning now to the details of the revised CJA Plan, the Court will establish a Standing Committee to advise and assist in the development of a panel of qualified counsel for indigent defendants entitled to representation under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act. The Standing Committee will consist of a District and Magistrate Judge, a CJA resource counsel and at least one private attorney who regularly practices in federal court. The Standing Committee will meet at least once a year to review the panel of CJA attorneys to ensure that the panel consists of qualified and competent attorneys.

Only attorneys who satisfy the Georgia Bar requirements for attorneys who appear as sole or lead counsel in the trial of a criminal case will be considered for appointment in any case which may result in a jury trial. See State Bar of Georgia Rule 8-104(D)(2) (explaining requirement for three hours of continuing legal education in the area of trial practice for any lawyer who appears as sole or lead counsel). Although by its terms the rule applies only to counsel appearing in the “Superior or State Courts,” the District will respect and enforce the rule in any case involving a potential jury trial. Those attorneys who do not meet the Georgia Bar educational requirement for appearing as sole or lead counsel may be appointed to non-jury matters only, such as removal hearings or revocation hearings.

Page Two  
April 21, 2011

Another significant change applies to attorneys who live and work outside of the Southern District. Attorneys who maintain a residence and principal office outside the Southern District will not be appointed in any matter that may result in a jury trial unless they seek such appointments and are qualified to handle such jury matters. Attorneys from outside the Southern District may be called upon occasionally to handle non-jury matters such as removal proceedings and revocation hearings.

Once any attorney reaches the age of sixty-three (63), the attorney will no longer receive CJA appointments unless the attorney seeks such appointments and is otherwise qualified. After the age of sixty-three (63), an attorney who maintains an active trial practice in the Southern District may occasionally be called upon to represent an indigent defendant if the attorney's services would be particularly useful in an individual case.

If you have received this letter but you are not currently a member of the Southern District of Georgia bar, you may consider the possibility of joining our bar by visiting the Court's website or by contacting any of the Southern District of Georgia's Clerk's Offices located in Augusta, Brunswick and Savannah.

In an effort to assemble a panel of qualified attorneys who desire multiple appointments, please complete the brief survey which is linked below. All responses will be kept confidential by the Court. On behalf of the District, I thank you for your continued diligence in providing quality representation to all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Godbey Wood', written in a cursive style.

Lisa Godbey Wood, Chief Judge  
United States District Court  
Southern District of Georgia

[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE SURVEY](#)

LGW/ma