

Minimum Qualifications of Indigent Defense Panel Attorneys

In order to assure the indigent accused receive effective assistance of counsel to which they are constitutionally entitled, members of the Indigent Defense Panel providing defense services should meet the following minimum professional qualifications to be considered eligible and maintain eligibility for each level.

Grade 6 Attorney (Death Penalty)

1. At least 12 years criminal defense experience and membership in the California State Bar for a minimum of 10 years.
2. Attorney of record in at least one hundred (100) felony cases, fifty (50) of which were statutorily defined serious and violent felony cases and thirty (30) of those so defined were tried to completion to a jury.
3. Have completed at least one death penalty defense seminar and one homicide seminar within the previous 12 months.
4. Counsel wishing to serve as lead attorney in a death penalty case must have served as Keenan counsel in at least one death penalty case that was tried to completion to a jury.
5. Watch videotapes of previous Panel training held before your admission to the Panel and required for your level, before being assigned to your first case.
6. Meet all requirements for Grade 5 attorney.

Grade 5 Attorney (Keenan Counsel)

1. Meet all requirements for Grade 4 attorney.
2. Attorney of record in at least five (5) homicide cases, 3 of which were tried to completion to a jury.
3. Have completed at least one death penalty defense seminar and one homicide seminar within the previous 12 months.
4. Watch videotapes of previous Panel training held before your admission to the Panel and required for your level, before being assigned to your first case.

Grade 4 Felony Attorney (Homicides)

1. At least 10 years criminal defense experience and membership in the California State Bar for a minimum of 7 years.
2. Attorney of record in at least sixty (60) felony criminal cases. Twenty (20) of which must have been tried to completion to a jury. Ten (10) of those tried to completion to a jury must have been statutorily defined serious and violent felonies.
3. Counsel wishing to serve as lead attorney in a homicide case must have attended at least one homicide training program within the previous 12 months.
4. Watch videotapes of previous Panel training held before your admission to the Panel and required for your level, before being assigned to your first case.

Grade 3 Felony Attorney

1. At least 7 years criminal defense experience and membership in the California State Bar for a minimum of 5 years.
2. Attorney of record in at least forty-five (45) felony criminal cases. Fifteen (15) of the forty-five must have been tried to completion to a jury. Five (5) of the fifteen must have been statutorily defined serious and violent felonies.
3. Attended at least one trial skills training program within the previous 12 months.
4. Watch videotapes of previous Panel training held before your admission to the Panel and required for your level, before being assigned to your first case.

Grade 2 Felony Attorney

1. At least 3 years criminal defense experience and membership in the California State Bar for a minimum of 2 years.
2. Attorney of record in at least thirty (30) criminal cases. Seven (7) of the thirty must have tried to completion to a jury. In at least five (5) of the seven (7) cases that were tried to a jury, must have served as lead counsel.
3. Each attorney shall be mentored at his or her first felony jury trial by an attorney grade level 3, 4, 5, or 6.
4. Attended at least one trial skills training program approved by the Indigent defense panel Committee within the previous 12 months.
5. Watch videotapes of previous Panel training held before your admission to the Panel and required for your level, before being assigned to your first case.

Grade 1 Misdemeanor Attorney

1. Membership in the California State Bar for a minimum of 6 months.
2. Attorney of record or associate counsel in at least three (3) criminal cases, one (1) of which was tried to completion to a jury. Associate counsel is defined as counsel that attended and assisted in trial.
3. Attended at least one trial skills training program approved by the Indigent Defense Panel Committee within the previous 12 months.
4. Watch videotapes of previous Panel training held before your admission to the Panel and required for your level, before being assigned to your first case.
5. Each attorney shall be mentored in his or her first jury trial by an attorney grade level 3, 4, 5, or 6.
6. Attend all required training and meetings after admission to the Panel.