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**OFFICE OF  
INDIGENT DEFENSE SERVICES  
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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Indigent Defense Experts  
Re: Expert Fee and Expense Applications (Capital Cases and Appeals)  
From: Office of Indigent Defense Services  
Date: Updated January 13, 2010

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Please note that prior funding authorization from the IDS Office is required for expert services. Please get a copy of this authorization from the attorney you are working with before commencing work on a case. Absent truly exceptional circumstances, the IDS Office will not compensate experts for amounts in excess of the prior authorization.

**I. Expert Services:**

**A. Prior Authorization Required:**

- Prior authorization is required for the use of any expert services in any case under the direct oversight of the IDS Office—*i.e.*, first-degree murder or undesignated degree of murder cases at the trial level, all capital and non-capital appeals, and capital post-conviction proceedings. Attorneys and experts are expected to monitor any expert spending and, absent exceptional circumstances, the IDS Office will not compensate experts for amounts in excess of the prior authorization.
- Unless otherwise indicated on the IDS Expert Authorization form, the maximum amount authorized includes both fees and necessary expenses.
- To obtain prior authorization in a potentially capital case at the trial level, the attorney of record should complete form IDS-028 and mail, fax, or email that form to the Office of the Capital Defender. If funds are being requested after a case has been finally disposed at the trial level, the Office of the Capital Defender no longer has authority to approve funds and the attorney of record must submit the request to the IDS Director, along with an explanation for why funds were not sought and obtained in a timely fashion.
- To obtain prior authorization in a capital post-conviction case, the attorney of record should complete form IDS-029 and mail, fax, or email the form to the IDS Office.
- To obtain prior authorization in a direct appeal, the attorney of record should mail, fax, or email a written request for funds to the IDS Office.
- If an expert plans to bill for the services of any other person pursuant to the expert's authorization, the attorney must seek and obtain specific prior approval for the services of that other person.

- The IDS Office will honor any Court authorizations for expert funding that were obtained before July 1, 2001, or those that result from any appeal to a Judge from a denial by the IDS Office. *See* Rules of the Commission on Indigent Defense Services, Rule 2D.4 (2001).

**B. Hourly Rates for Investigators and Mitigation Specialists:**

- Effective July 1, 2005, the maximum hourly rate for investigators is \$55.
- Effective April 17, 2006, the hourly rates for the three different roster levels of mitigation specialists are \$35 for a Mitigation Specialist I, \$45 for a Mitigation Specialist II, and \$60 for a Mitigation Specialist III.

**C. Policy Concerning Trial Attendance by Investigators and Mitigation Specialists:**

Effective April 1, 2004, IDS will compensate investigators and mitigation specialists for attending portions of a trial when their assistance is necessary, as long as that service can be provided within the amount pre-authorized for the investigator or mitigation specialist. However, IDS will not compensate investigators or mitigation specialists for attendance at an entire trial unless there are extraordinary circumstances justifying that attendance and the attorney of record obtains prior approval.

**D. Interim and Final Fees:**

- All expert fee applications should indicate whether the request is for interim or final payment.
- The IDS Office will only process interim expert fee requests when one of the following two conditions has been met: 1) the interim fee application covers a time period of 2 or more months; or 2) the interim fee application involves a payment amount of \$1,000.00 or more. Assuming those conditions have been met, an expert may submit an application for interim fees, which the IDS Director may grant in his discretion.

**E. The Expert Fee and Expense Application:**

- All expert bills in all cases under the direct oversight of the IDS Office should be submitted directly to the IDS Office, and not to the Administrative Office of the Courts or the State Controller's Office.
- Applications will be accepted directly from the expert, or from the attorney of record on behalf of the expert.
- Effective July 1, 2005, an expert fee application that is directed to the IDS Office should be comprised of four parts: 1) form IDS-003 ("Expert Witness Fee Application Award of Payment (Capital Cases and All Appeals)"); 2) one copy of the funding authorization from the IDS Office or Capital Defender; 3) one copy of the itemized time sheets; and 4) any required receipts.
- The expert's itemized time sheets must provide sufficient detail regarding the expert's services in the case to demonstrate that the claim for compensation is reasonable. At a minimum, the time sheets must reflect the expert's time broken down according to date, description of services, and amount of time in hours or parts thereof.
- Time sheets must be computer generated. Handwritten time sheets will not be accepted.

## **II. Reimbursable Expenses:**

### **A. Prior Approval Not Required:**

The following necessary expenses are reimbursable without prior approval from the IDS Office. If exceptional circumstances warrant the expenditure of higher amounts, the applicant must seek pre-approval from the IDS Office before incurring the expense.

#### **1. In-State Travel:<sup>1</sup>**

- a.** Mileage on Privately Owned Vehicles: Mileage is reimbursed at the current state rate. For all experts other than investigators and mitigation specialists, out-of-county travel only is reimbursable. Because in-county travel is often a core part of the duties of investigators and mitigation specialists, for fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after July 1, 2007, those experts can claim reimbursement for in-county mileage. For fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after February 16, 2009, the mileage rate is \$0.35 per mile.
- b.** Rental Vehicles: Absent special circumstances, if you choose to rent a vehicle for case-related travel, you will be reimbursed for the lesser of the following: 1) the cost of the rental vehicle plus gasoline; or 2) the mileage reimbursement you would have received if you had driven your personal vehicle. You must attach a receipt to be reimbursed for rental car expenses.
- c.** Meals: Meals will only be reimbursed if there is an overnight stay; meals will then be reimbursed according to the current state authorized per diem, with one per diem per overnight stay. Receipts are not required. For all fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after July 16, 2007, the in-state per diem is \$34. For all fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after August 1, 2009, the in-state per diem will be \$35.15.
- d.** Lodging: The actual costs of over-night lodging will be reimbursed, not to exceed the current state authorized rate – \$63.75 for all fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after July 16, 2007 and \$65.90 for all fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after August 1, 2009. In addition, actual taxes incurred are reimbursable. A valid hotel receipt is required, and credit card receipts are not accepted.
- e.** Other: Any other travel-related expenses (e.g., parking) must be supported by receipts.

#### **2. Long-Distance Telephone Calls**

The actual costs of case-related long-distance telephone calls will be reimbursed only if supporting phone bills are submitted.

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<sup>1</sup> Reimbursement rates for travel-related expenses are based on the current travel allowances for State employees. See G.S. 138-6.

**3. Photo-Copying:**

**a. Black and White Copies:**

In-house copying costs are reimbursable at a rate not to exceed \$0.10 per page for single-sided copies and \$0.16 for double-sided copies. The applicant must indicate the number of copies prepared and the price charged per page. The actual cost of out-of-house copies are reimbursable with a receipt or documentation on the number of copies prepared and the amount paid per page, at a rate not to exceed \$0.10 per page for single-sided copies and \$0.16 for double-sided copies.

**b. Color Copies:**

In-house color copying costs are reimbursable at a rate not to exceed \$1.00 per page. The applicant must indicate the number of copies prepared and the price charged per page. The actual cost of out-of-house color copies are reimbursable with a receipt or documentation on the number of copies prepared and the amount paid per page, at a rate not to exceed \$1.00 per page.

**4. Facsimiles:**

- The cost of sending facsimiles from a personal or office machine is reimbursable at a rate not to exceed \$0.05 per page.
- The actual cost of sending facsimiles from an outside machine, such as a hotel facsimile machine, is reimbursable with a receipt.

**5. CDs/DVDs/Audiotapes:**

- The cost of blank CDs, DVDs, or audiotapes is reimbursable at a rate not to exceed \$1.00 each.

**6. Expedited Delivery:**

- Absent exceptional circumstances, IDS will not reimburse an expert for expenses associated with expedited or overnight delivery of documents. If exceptional circumstances exist, the expert must attach to the fee application a brief explanation of those circumstances.

**7. Computerized Research:**

- The actual case-related costs of computerized legal research (e.g., Lexis-Nexis and Westlaw) will be reimbursed only if receipts are provided.
- Courtsearch, NC 123, DMV and DOC searches, etc.: The actual costs of any such computerized searches will be reimbursed only if receipts are provided. If actual costs are not incurred, you will be compensated for your time according to your hourly rate, but will not be compensated any amount per search.

**8. Other Expenses:**

**a. Miscellaneous:**

For all “other expenses” that cumulatively exceed \$25.00 (e.g., postage, film (purchased by the roll or in bulk), etc.), an applicant must submit receipts or supporting documentation.

**b. Overhead:**

Normal overhead expenses, such as case notebooks, paper, push pins, etc., will not be reimbursed.

**B. Prior Approval Required:**

Necessary expenses associated with out-of-state travel are reimbursable only with prior approval from the IDS Office.

**a. Travel Costs:** Reasonable and pre-approved travel costs will be reimbursed with receipts.

**b. Meals:** Meals will only be reimbursed if there is an overnight stay; meals will then be reimbursed according to the current state authorized per diem, with one per diem per overnight stay. Receipts are not required. For all fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after July 16, 2007, the out-of-state per diem is \$36.25. For all fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after August 1, 2009, the out-of-state per diem will be \$37.50.

**c. Lodging:** The actual costs of over-night lodging will be reimbursed, not to exceed the current state authorized rate – \$75.50 for all fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after July 16, 2007 and \$78.05 for all fee applications received at the IDS Office on or after August 1, 2009. In addition, actual taxes incurred are reimbursable. A valid hotel receipt is required, and credit card receipts are not accepted.