



A Quarterly Newsletter from the North Carolina Office of Indigent Defense Services

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Welcome to Our First IDS Newsletter!

Welcome to our first IDS Newsletter! We are pleased to provide this service so every stakeholder may be informed of the latest endeavors, achievements, opportunities and resources. IDS Executive Director Mary Pollard and IDS Communications Specialist Amanda Bunch recently explored why public defense is so vital in our state. Read *Making a "Case" for the Institution of Public Defense* in [The North Carolina State Bar Journal, Summer 2023](#) issue (page 11).

eCourts Operating in Four Pilot Counties

The logo for eCourts features the word "eCourts" in a blue, sans-serif font. The "e" is lowercase and smaller than the "Courts", which is in all caps.

eCourts is officially live in four pilot counties: Harnett, Johnston, Lee, and Wake.

eCourts is the initiative of the North Carolina Judicial Branch to modernize our court system with the latest applications and technologies, moving the court system

to digital and cloud-based technology.

Find more information on the [eCourts hub on Juno](#).

As a courtesy, IDS provides updates and tips on eCourts relevant to our work as we all learn to navigate this new system. [Access our eCourts Tips](#) (provided by IDS) on our website.

Money Matters: Notes from the Fiscal Team



From left to right: Kalpana "KB" Bhatt, Priscilla Sanders, Stephanie Aikens, Aaron Gallagher, Chad Boykin, Tracey Hinson, Shannon Simmons, Shante Partin.

Fiscal staff in Raleigh--a team of only five--key more than 10,000 fee applications by hand every month.

While IDS is currently paying fee apps within 45 days of receipt from the court, we've recently made some changes designed to help us pay you faster. We hope to work with necessary outside partners to implement technical solutions in the future designed to provide greater efficiency and transparency in contrast to our current paper-based system.

Our fiscal team prides itself on receiving a clean audit every year. When we advocate for increased funding for PAC attorneys, it is very important to have that clean audit to show that we are careful stewards of taxpayer dollars. We rely on the attorneys to ensure that the fee apps are accurate and complete. See our [Tips for Prompt Payment](#). If the paperwork has errors, we must return it, which results in delayed payment.

IDS does not control when fee applications are received from the court but will help investigate outstanding payments. If an attorney has not been paid within 45 days of submission, the attorney should:

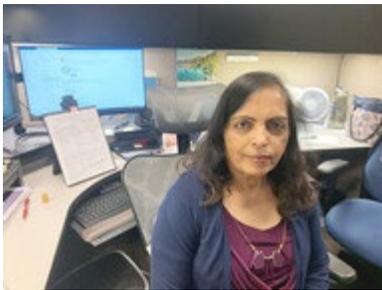
- Contact the [IDS representative](#) assigned to the attorney's county. Provide that representative with specifics about the fee app such as case number and date submitted.

If no response has been received within 24 hours from the date of the inquiry, please contact fiscal officer [Aaron Gallagher](mailto:Aaron.Gallagher@nccourts.org) at 919-890-2188. The attorney may also contact the Executive Director [Mary Pollard](mailto:Mary.Pollard@nccourts.org) at 919-354-7208.

Meet the "Fantastic Five" Faces behind the Fee Apps

Stephanie Aikens, Accounting Specialist 2
Nash – Rowan Stephanie.Aikens@nccourts.org
919-890-1649

Stephanie joined the IDS team in March 2023. Prior to serving in this role, she spent two years with the Department of Insurance and two years with the Department of Environmental Quality where she learned about accounting. Stephanie is a full-time mom. She has three daughters—one who is a freshman at Western Carolina University. With one child “out of the nest,” time at home is quieter, but bittersweet as the family adjusts to life with a college kid. Stephanie stays busy with her 18-year-old and four-year-old.



Kalpana "KB" Bhatt, Accounting Specialist 2
Rutherford – Yancey Kalpana.Y.Bhatt@nccourts.org
919-890-2357

Kalpana "KB" joined the IDS team in March 2023, after three years with the N.C. Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC), and several years with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) before that. KB is a first-time grandmother; her granddaughter is just six months old and is currently finding out that her voice really carries. KB is married with one son and one daughter. She visits her parents in India

once a year to help with finances, doctor visits, to “make them happy,” and do things that need to be done. KB is a regular volunteer for festivals at the temple in Morrisville. KB also enjoys walking on trails and aims to walk at least three miles per day to stay healthy and strong.

Tracey Hinson, Accounting Specialist 3
Cleveland – Guilford Tracey.K.Hinson@nccourts.org
919-890-1646

Along her professional journey, Tracey has worked for the Department of Public Safety (DPS), a local public school system, and the NCAOC in addition to IDS. With about 18 years of service to the state, Tracey re-joined IDS in August 2021. With her youngest daughter now a college student studying to be a veterinarian, Tracy and her husband are empty nesting for the first time. Tracey enjoys taking care of the chores and shopping for the house, and taking care of their three dogs, two cats, and one bearded dragon! Plus, she has 4 “granddoggies” who are loved like grandchildren and get way too many treats.



Shante Partin, Accounting Specialist 3
Halifax – Moore Shante.M.Partin@nccourts.org
919-890-1648

Shante has worked for the state of North Carolina for 23 years. Prior to coming to IDS, she worked for the N.C. Department of Revenue (NCDOR), N.C. Vital Records / N.C. Public Health, and in the Child Support and Comptroller’s Office. This August will mark her second-year anniversary with IDS. Shante has a husband and three children ages 21, 17, and 14, all of whom keep her active and sharp. Shante has a newfound passion for

gardening—of the flowery kind, not the vegetable kind.

Priscilla Sanders, Accounting Specialist 3
Alamance – Clay Priscilla.D.Sanders@nccourts.org

919-890-1647

This October will mark Priscilla's 27 years of working with the state of North Carolina. She began working as a temp in fiscal services with the NCAOC, which then led to a full-time position. Priscilla is a seasoned veteran; she has been working as an accounting specialist for IDS since its inception. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with her 11 grandchildren, whom she loves dearly. She says she likes to spoil them and then send them home.



IDS Forensic Science Education Series



IDS and the Mecklenburg County Public Defender's Office provide regular continuing education to dozens of North Carolina criminal defense and parent attorneys, investigators, and mitigation specialists who attend the IDS Forensic Science Education Series. Together, we offer monthly 90-minute webinars on various forensic

disciplines and preparations for Daubert/702 challenges. These webinars typically take place at **12:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month.** [Register here.](#)

NEW RESOURCES!

Private Investigator Directory



IDS has launched a [searchable database of private investigators](#) that will help attorneys find investigators for court appointed criminal cases.

Attorneys may access the database on the IDS website, enter in the criteria for their specific case, and get a list of investigators that fit their needs.

Searchable criteria based on specific case needs include location, languages spoken, and area of expertise.

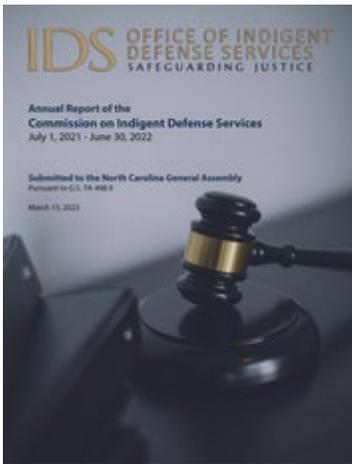
CLE and Training Calendar

The IDS website now features a [new webpage](#) that is a one-stop-shop for all known CLE and training opportunities.

Upcoming CLEs and training opportunities include:

- [Secondary Traumatic Stress](#)
- [2023 Higher-Level Felony Defense Training](#) - Register by August 30
- [Adverse Childhood Experiences 101](#)
- [Bridging the Gap VII Mitigation Conference](#)

FY2022 Annual Report Now Available



In Case You Missed It: The [FY2022 Annual Report on the Commission for Indigent Defense Services](#) was published March 15, 2023. The annual report is required by [G.S. 7A-498.9](#). Our publication includes a variety of reports, data, cost analysis, and recommendations.

The Indigent Defense Services Commission and Office are committed to developing a statewide system of public defense that provides quality representation in the most cost-efficient manner possible. This report also includes our requests to the General Assembly make public defense a priority in the 2023 legislative long session and appropriate necessary funding for its support.

Highlights from the Spring 2023 Public Defenders Conference

The 2023 Public Defenders Conference, held in May in Winston-Salem, was a great success. Several awards were presented during the opening ceremony on the first day.



North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Newby presented his first Certificate of Excellence Award to an outstanding public defender.

[Max Ashworth, Defender District 5, New Hanover /Pender](#)
[Chief Justice's Certificate of Excellence Award](#)

The North Carolina Association of Public Defenders (NCAPD) presented two awards, each named for legendary public defenders in North Carolina.



Bob Ward, Defender District 26, Mecklenburg
Wally C. Harrelson Public Defender Award for Excellence

Ronald H. Foxworth, Defender District 16B, Robeson
The James Williams Award for Racial Equity

The **NCAPD** also revealed a new logo during the conference featuring a purple column and scales of justice.

N.C. Association of Public Defenders Celebrates Juneteenth

The photo collage below is from the Juneteenth event held in Durham this year, co-sponsored by the North Carolina Association of Public Defenders. In addition to earning an hour of CLE, attendees enjoyed a program packed full of fantastic performances.

A special thanks goes to the esteemed panelists and performers, N.C. Central University for hosting, and to all who had part in planning this inaugural event.

Panel members were:

- Supreme Court of North Carolina [Associate Justice Michael Morgan](#)
- Supreme Court of North Carolina [Associate Justice Anita Earls](#)
- The Honorable Gregory A. Weeks, superior court judge (Ret.)
- NCCU Professor Irving Joyner, Panel Moderator

Special performances were given by:

- Black Angels, St. Joseph's AME Church Music Ministry
- Dasan Ahanu, 2023 Piedmont Laureate
- The One Voice Traveling and Acting Troupe of Hillside High School
- Pline Mounzeo, Congolese Drumming
- The Dexter Moses Trio, Jazz Ensemble



June 19, 2023

We want to hear from you!

The IDS Newsletter will be published quarterly in July, October, January, and April. We look forward to presenting you with fresh information relevant to your work with each new issue. Please [share information](#) from your office about services, awards, milestones, trainings, and more!

[Tell us what you think](#) about this newsletter!



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You are receiving this email because you are an employee of the N.C. Office of Indigent Defense Services, North Carolina Judicial Branch employee, community stakeholder, or have indicated you wish to receive these messages. If you have questions or comments, please contact Amanda.J.Bunch@nccourts.org.

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