

IDS

Appointed Advocate

OCTOBER 2025



Welcome to our October bulletin!

The **IDS Appointed Advocate** newsletter is shared with private attorneys--both MAC and PAC--who do court appointed work, once per quarter. Through its content, IDS will keep you informed about resources, best practices, fiscal and payment issues, Tech Tips, and other ways we offer assistance to appointed counsel. **"You never have to fight alone."**

Important Changes to IDS Rules, Billing Policies



On August 22, 2025, the IDS Commission approved some substantial changes to the billing and expense policies for noncapital criminal and non-criminal case types. These changes will be effective January 1, 2026.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the announcement you can't afford to miss.

[CLICK HERE](#) to go directly to the new IDS webpage dedicated to the rules and policy revisions.

Videography by the Judicial Branch Communications Office

IDS Staff Spotlight

Whitney Bishop Fairbanks

IDS Assistant Director and General Counsel

Whitney has been working with IDS for nine years. Prior to serving in her current role, she worked for the NCAOC as Assistant General Counsel, she was a Civil Defender Educator at



School of Government as well as an Assistant Public Defender for Durham County.

Her top three job duties at IDS are:

- To advise IDS commission, leadership, agency staff on legal matters, including personnel, policies, and litigation
- To coordinate the work and meetings of the IDS Commission and its various committees
- To provide policy and legal oversight for the MAC program and other agency agreements

One fun fact most people do not know Whitney is that she “made M&Ms in the way back.” Whitney is an avid reader. She is hopelessly devoted to her two pups, Quinn and Ruthie, and she loves college football (GO VOLS!)

“If you're a MAC or PAC attorney and need help, I can work with you on billing questions, or anything related to our rules and policies. I also handle other areas across IDS, so feel free to reach out even if your question isn't about MAC or PAC. I've been around for a while so if I can't help you, chances are good that I know who can.”

Whitney's flavor of ice cream is... all of them!

Angela Henderson
IDS Contracts Administrator

Angela has been with IDS for six years. Prior to working for IDS, she was the Senior EO/EA Specialist and EO/EA Specialist for the City of Durham, with 32 years of experience under her belt covering several departments: Equal Opportunity/ Equity Assurance (EO/EA), Finance, Human Relations, and City/County Planning.



As IDS Contracts Administrator, her top three responsibilities are:

- To prepare and manage the IDS MAC Adult Criminal and Juvenile Defender Contracts
- To process payments for MAC contract attorneys using the *defenderData* case management system
- To prepare the appointment lists for use by public defender offices and local clerks' offices

One fun fact most people don't know about Angela is that... She was a disc jockey for her college radio station. Outside work, you will find Angela active in her church, traveling with family or decorating cakes!

“I will be responsive to your inquiries by helping to solve your issue or, if I cannot help, I will refer you to the person who can.”

Angela's favorite ice cream flavor is strawberry.

October 2025

- [Important Changes to IDS Rules, Billing Policies](#)
- [IDS strongly encourages you to go ahead and set up ePay/direct deposit!](#)
- [It's here! Guidance to Start Your Own Law Firm](#)
- [Office of the Parent Defender Handles Civil Contempt Appeals](#)
- [Funding Could Be Available to Help with Your Law School Debt](#)
- [UNC School of Law Announces New Resource](#)
- [Are You Curious About Juvenile Defense?](#)
- [School of Government Launches New Podcast](#)
- [Need an Investigator? IDS Has You Covered](#)
- [Comparing Documents](#)
- [Need Help with eCourts? You Can Call the NCAOC Help Desk](#)
- [Quick Links](#)

IDS strongly encourages you to go ahead and set up ePay/direct deposit!

Over the past month, IDS has been made aware of multiple instances of check washing. The most recent occurrence was for \$4,000. And different firm lost two \$13,000 checks around that same time.

Important: IDS cannot reissue a “washed payment” until the bank has returned the money to the NCAOC, which can happen only after the fraud investigation.

Don't do yourself a disservice; [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up for ePay today.

It's just not "safe" to write a check anymore.

It's here! Guidance to Start Your Own Law Firm

With help from an NC IOLTA grant, Mark Atkinson, executive director of **The Incubator for Legal Practice and Innovation** (ILPI) is offering a series of videos and resources that provide guidance on the “business” of opening and running a private law office.

[Click HERE](#) to access the shared folder. | Note: You must download each file.

Office of the Parent Defender Handles Civil Contempt Appeals

The OPD wants to share some important reminders about civil contempt appeals.

Please read [this post on the IDS website](#) for details.

Funding Could Be Available to Help with Your Law School Debt



NCLEAF

NC LEAF is committed to providing forgivable loans to public interest attorneys with the least ability to repay their law school debt.

The 2025 application period is November 8 through December 13.

[Click HERE](#) for instructions on how to apply.

UNC School of Law Announces New Resource

Attorneys working on cases involving survivors of intimate partner violence now have a new resource available to receive mitigation assistance.

The Criminalized Survivor Detention and Justice Clinic is a new clinic at the UNC School of Law that focuses on the needs of “criminalized survivors”—those individuals who may have committed criminal acts that are substantially related to or are a consequence of having experienced domestic/gender violence. Although the clinic does not provide trial-level representation, they are interested in assisting defense attorneys in preparing mitigation reports to be used in plea negotiations or sentencing proceedings to assist judges in understanding the full scope of a defendant’s history, including their history of abuse, before sentencing. The clinic operates on an academic schedule and students are generally limited to Orange, Alamance, Durham, Chatham, and Wake counties but can also assist defense attorneys virtually when appropriate.

Additional information about the project is available [HERE](#).

A sample mitigation report (redacted and filed in a case in another state) is available [HERE](#) to provide an example of the type of report the clinic can provide.

Attorneys may contact **Professor Deborah Weissman** (weissman@email.unc.edu) if they have additional questions about the project or a case where they need mitigation assistance.

Are You Curious About Juvenile Defense? Save these dates...

Regional Youth Defender Forums are in person, day-long trainings open to all youth defenders and defense team members. Join the Office of the Juvenile Defender team for an informative session that includes updates to the law and opportunities for community-building.

A graphic with a blue background on the left and a photograph of a gavel and scales of justice on the right. The text on the left lists three forums: Western - October 24, 2025 at Wilkes Community College - Wilkesboro; Eastern - December 5, 2025 at Pitt Community College - Winterville; and Central - January 30, 2026 at Guilford Technical Community College - Greensboro. The website www.ncjuveniledefender.org is at the bottom.

**JOIN US AT YOUR
Regional Youth Defender Forum**

Western - October 24, 2025
Wilkes Community College – Wilkesboro

Eastern - December 5, 2025
Pitt Community College – Winterville

Central - January 30, 2026
Guilford Technical Community College – Greensboro

www.ncjuveniledefender.org

Visit

<https://www.ncjuveniledefender.org/training-calendar> for more information, or contact staff

in the Office of the Juvenile Defender (Yolanda.R.Fair2@nccourts.org,
Eric.J.Zogry@nccourts.org) for more information.

School of Government Launches New Podcast



New podcast launch August 25. Episode 21 of NC Criminal Debrief of covers recent cases from the North Carolina Court of Appeals and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on criminal contempt, drug recognition expert testimony, cannabis, and search and seizure.

[CLICK HERE](#) to listen.

Need an Investigator? IDS Has You Covered



The [North Carolina Private Investigator Directory](#) is a robust collection of detailed profiles of investigators from all over the state and beyond. IDS maintains this important resource for court appointed defenders and public defenders who are in need of a skilled investigator to work their case.

You can search by specialty, location, spoken languages, expertise, and more.

Can't find what you need? Send a direct email to [Beth Winston](#), a local PI who helps to maintain the directory. She can answer questions about specific profiles and help you connect with a suitable PI for your case.

Do you know someone who could be added to the PI directory? Share [this link](#)! There is a button at the bottom of the page where they can submit their information and/or edit their existing profile.

Comparing Documents

Let's say you receive additional discovery, and you want to identify where the new information is... There are tools that you might already have access to that can be helpful.

- **Adobe Acrobat Pro** has a **Compare Files** tool that directly analyzes two PDFs, highlighting any changes with a clear summary report. When we used this tool, it worked the best with documents that are substantially similar.



Note: If there are multiple kinds of changes, including minor changes like formatting, this tool can be cumbersome to use. But it can help you to find where new information has been inserted in a PDF. [Learn more >](#)

- **Microsoft Word** includes a **Compare** feature (under the Review tab) to show changes between two Word documents, plus a **View Side by Side** Note: Word cannot compare PDFs directly. If you want to compare PDFs using this tool, you must convert them first, which can affect formatting and may make the comparison less useful. [Learn more >](#)

Helpful hints: Use Acrobat for PDF-to-PDF comparisons; use Word for drafts in Word format.

Need Help with eCourts? You Can Call the NCAOC Help Desk

1. Call **919-890-2407**, wait for the prompts and choose **Option 2**.
 2. When asked for your User ID, say that you are calling from the general public.
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Quick Links



[Fee App Payment Dates](#)



[PAC Fund Updates](#)



[New Payment System](#)



[Experts Database](#)



[Investigator Directory](#)



[Forensic Resources](#)



[Training](#)



[Trial Resources](#)



[UNC SOG Feature](#)

The resources, links, and materials shared in this newsletter—including but not limited to sample motions, briefs, and external content—are provided for informational purposes only. While Indigent Defense Services (IDS) strives to ensure that shared content is accurate and useful, we do not guarantee its completeness, accuracy, or applicability to any particular case or circumstance. Users are encouraged to exercise their professional judgment and independently verify the relevance and suitability of any material before relying on it. If you encounter issues or have feedback, we welcome your input.

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