

IDS

Appointed Advocate

JANUARY 2026



Happy New Year!

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."***



Left to right: Shannon Simmons, Amanda Bunch, Aaron Gallagher, Christopher Sadler, Joshua Hummel and Chad Ellis Boykin. (Not pictured: Joseph Oder)

OASIS is Statewide

As of December 10, 2025, the [Online Attorney State Invoice System \(OASIS\)](#) was successfully implemented in all 100 counties for attorneys who do noncapital adult criminal cases. With this new, faster way of requesting payment, IDS pays a subset of indigent defenders within 30 days of invoice. And we believe this calls for a little celebration.

We appreciate the cooperation of the NC AOC, which allowed us access to the tools we would need to build a site that would work alongside eCourts.

Thank you to the OASIS site developers, training team, payment gurus and innovative thinkers. These professionals are all IDS staffers with extra skillsets beyond the scope of what they were hired for. They are a talented team dedicated to improving your experience with the agency. Thanks to their shared vision to modernize and expedite payments for you, IDS is moving away from being at the mercy of "snail mail" and hand-processing thousands of paper fee apps day after day.

The agency will expand OASIS to other case types later this year. Please stay tuned to the OASIS webpage and your inbox for future updates.

Need credentials? [Click HERE](#)

Reminder!



The new Rules and changes to the billing and expense policies for noncapital criminal and non-criminal case types became effective January 1, 2026.

Here is where to go on the IDS website to access the important information you need to know:

Go to www.ncids.org and click on the red bar near the left-hand side of the screen.



IDS Staff Spotlight

Aaron Gallagher

IDS Fiscal Officer

Aaron has been with IDS for four years and has two decades of experience working in state government. Prior to joining IDS, he was the Business Officer for the Division of



Probation/Parole, and he served as a State Budget and Management Analyst on the Justice and Public Safety team at the Office of State Budget and Management.

At IDS, his top responsibilities are:

- To direct IDS accounting and budget operations
- To oversee IDS revenue generation through the set-off debt program
- To ensure the delivery of excellent customer service to all IDS stakeholders

One fun fact most people do not know about Aaron is that he has officiated 38 professional soccer matches. Aaron enjoys traveling with his wife and two sons, attending his children’s sporting events and officiating soccer.

"I always stand ready to help resolve any payment delays or other payment issues. This demonstrates our appreciation to you, and IDS’s commitment to the hard-working attorneys who take on court appointed cases."

Aaron’s favorite flavor of ice cream is Stracciatella gelato in Italy.

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Shannon Simmons
IDS Accounts Payable Supervisor

Shannon has been with IDS for almost three years as accounts payable supervisor. She has almost 25 years of experience as a state accounting employee. Prior to joining the IDS fiscal team, she worked for the NC AOC Accounts Payable Division and prior to that, the Secretary of State AP Division.

At IDS, her top three duties are:

- To process payments to Private Assigned Counsel (PAC) and Managed Assigned Counsel (MAC) attorneys
- To handle employee reimbursements
- To address payment inquiries from the field

One fun fact most people do not know about Shannon is that she LOVES Atlantic City and going to the casinos. She loves fishing and working on carpentry projects. Shannon has two sons as well as two dogs—“Chip,” a Chocolate Lab, and “Tonka,” a bulldog.

"I can assist with making sure PAC and MAC attorneys are correctly setup in our NCFS system for payments, and I can also answer questions and provide payment details for you."

Shannon’s favorite flavor of ice cream is cherry vanilla.

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January 2026

- [Reminder!](#)

- [IDS Staff Spotlight](#)
- [The North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission is Here to Help](#)
- [Bryant Presented with the North Carolina Capital Defender's Award](#)
- [New Guide for Working with Experts](#)
- [Tech Tip: Attorneys' Use of AI](#)
- [Need Help with eCourts? You Can Call the NCAOC Help Desk](#)
- [Quick Links](#)

The North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission is Here to Help



Created in the early 2000s after several high-profile exonerations, the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission was designed to take a fresh, independent look at claims of actual innocence.

The Commission has grown from a small three-person team into a statewide agency that reviews more than 230 claims each year and has helped exonerate 16 individuals.

Its work brings together judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victims' advocates, and community members to ensure cases are examined from every angle. Along the way, the Commission also prioritizes support for crime victims and public education, with a goal of helping to strengthen trust in North Carolina's justice system.

Guest writer and Executive Director of the Commission, Laura Pierro, provides a deep dive into what the Commission does and how it can help attorneys and clients.

[Click HERE](#) to read her article and to access a story about Clarence Roberts—a man who was wrongly convicted, in prison and who was set free just last spring.



Bryant Presented with the North Carolina Capital Defender's Award



At the November 21, 2025, meeting of the IDS Commission, Duane K. Bryant was honored as the inaugural recipient of the North Carolina Capital Defender's Award given under Capital Defender Robert Sharpe's tenure.

His career spans more than four decades, including work as a prosecutor, public defender, and private practitioner, along with distinguished service in the Army National Guard, where he retired as a major in the Judge Advocate General's Corps.

In his remarks, Bryant spoke candidly about the moral weight of capital defense and the faith that sustained him through difficult moments. "When they come to us, they are God's people, but they don't appear to be," he said, explaining that his work was rooted in a personal commission to "find those angels and to protect them."

He credited his wife, colleagues, and mentors for reminding him of that calling during his darkest

hours, underscoring that the work was never solitary, even when it felt overwhelming. More than once, Bryant emphasized that the award belonged not to him alone, but to the many people who “held the flag” alongside him throughout his career.

Bryant closed by sharing scripture that continues to guide his life and work, drawn from Hebrews 13:1–3: “Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don’t forget to show hospitality to strangers... Remember those in prison as if you were there yourself. Remember those being mistreated, as if you felt the pain.”

He said he chose the passage to express his heart and to capture the spirit of the award itself—a call to compassion, courage, empathy and enduring service.

'Bootcamp' Series Available for Trial Lawyers



BIG NEWS!

New Education Series Launches for Criminal Defense Attorneys

In collaboration with IDS, the UNC School of Government announces its new education series: **Bootcamp for Trial Attorneys.**

Whether you are brand new to criminal defense, or you just need a refresher, **Bootcamp for Trial Attorneys** is designed to provide information you need to get better outcomes for your clients.

Note: The videos in the series are not being offered for CLE credit at this time but will be made available for CLE credit through the School of Government website in the near future. For now, the videos are available to all attorneys as a free resource to learn more about the covered topics.

Education and training team members from IDS and the School of Government plan to continue expanding the “**Bootcamp**” offerings. In the meantime, check out the featured session below.

FEATURED SESSION:

Common Evidence Issues in District Court

Description: An overview of common evidence issues defenders face when handling misdemeanor cases in District Court. Topics include: introducing evidence, making objections, Confrontation, Rule 609, and authentication of video and digital evidence. (45 minutes)

Link to Content: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/11961587?video=1151928836>

Password: attorney

New Guide for Working with Experts

IDS has prepared the [Expert Witnesses in NC Criminal Cases](#) to provide information for any professional considering serving as an expert witness in indigent criminal defense cases, as well as best practices for NC criminal defense attorneys working with expert witnesses.

Still here for you:

The [IDS Experts Database](#) is still readily available for you to browse



anytime you are in need of an expert for a case. The database includes state and defense experts searchable by name or area of expertise.

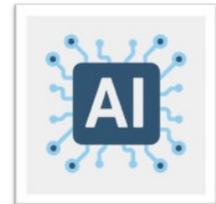
Note: The list was compiled based upon the experts' work in prior cases or requests to be added and is not based on any assessment of whether an expert is qualified or is the appropriate expert for a specific case. If you are searching for an expert to retain you must do your own due diligence to evaluate the expert.

Be sure to bookmark www.forensicresources.org for 24-7 access to resources designed to help you better understand forensic evidence and achieve better outcomes for clients.

Tech Tip: Attorneys' Use of AI

For our Tech Tip this quarter, IDS staff recommended guidance on when and how to use AI in the legal field.

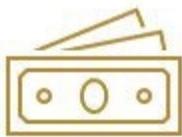
Please check out the [State Bar ethics opinion on attorneys' use of AI](#). It addresses some "frequently asked questions."



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.

Quick Links



[Fee App Payment Dates](#)



[PAC Fund Updates](#)



[New Payment System](#)



[Experts Database](#)



[Investigator Directory](#)



[Forensic Resources](#)



[Training](#)



[Trial Resources](#)



[UNC SOG Feature](#)

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