



## **An Invitation to Join Central California Appellate Program's Panel of Appointed Appellate Counsel**

CCAP Has Been Dedicated to Improving The Quality of Indigent Representation in Criminal, Juvenile, Dependency & Mental Health Appeals For The Third & The Fifth District Courts of Appeal Since 1987.

Visit us online: [www.CAPcentral.org](http://www.CAPcentral.org)

## **Join The Panel For Receiving Court Appointed Cases In The Courts Of Appeal!**

Central California Appellate Program (CCAP) invites you to consider appointments in the Courts of Appeal by joining our appellate panel. CCAP is the appellate project that serves the Third and Fifth Appellate District Courts of Appeal, and we are looking for qualified attorneys who enjoy doing appellate work. A good appellate attorney has two solid qualities: 1) the ability to spot appellate issues, and 2) the ability to write an organized and persuasive argument. If you enjoy the hunt for issues, and have good research and writing skills, then you may be a good candidate for appointments in the Courts of Appeal. CCAP wishes to encourage these attorneys to accept the challenge of joining the state appellate panel to provide quality representation to indigent clients.

### **What Is An Appellate Project?**

Prior to the 1980's, lists of counsel available to handle appointed appeals were maintained by the various Courts of Appeal. But there was very little the Courts could do to ensure high quality appellate representation. The appellate projects were created to develop and oversee panels of attorneys who would be appointed by the reviewing court. Today there are five projects statewide; each project is assigned to serve a specific Court of Appeal. The projects classify the attorneys by skill levels, match them to cases appropriate to their qualifications, provide varying levels of direct assistance and training, recommend their compensation based on statewide guidelines, and monitor their overall progress to move towards more (or less) complex cases. State compensation rates depend on case complexity and range from \$80, \$90, up to \$100 per approved hour.

## **How Does One Become A Panel Attorney?**

To apply to CCAP's panel, go to [www.CAPcentral.org](http://www.CAPcentral.org). On your first visit, you will need to register, but it's free, and we do not share your information with anyone else without your prior permission. Under the "About Us" tab, you will see a link to "Join The Panel," where you can download a .PDF version of the application form. It can be filled out on your computer. Print it out and send it to us, along with writing samples as noted in the instructions. Panel attorneys may limit appointments by choosing preferred categories of cases (e.g., criminal, juvenile delinquency, juvenile dependency, and conservatorship).

### **What Is CCAP Looking For In An Applicant?**

Applicants should have some relevant research/writing experience – such as clerkships with or employment by judges, prosecution agencies, or defense firms, etc., whether for pay or not, or through private practice. It does not have to be extensive -- perhaps even six months to a year may suffice. The attorney need not already know all the answers, but should be comfortable with the legal jargon and their ability to research to find answers. For example, if the applicant is interested in criminal appeals, there are some basic concepts that he or she should be at least minimally familiar with, such as the general nature of the Determinate Sentence Law, the Strikes sentencing schemes, credit for time served, search and seizure law, the peculiar requirements for appealing guilty pleas (under Penal Code section 1237.5 and rule 30(b)), probation grants and limitations, jury trial practice, etc.

We carefully examine the applicants' writing samples. The sample chosen by the applicant should demonstrate not only a working knowledge of a relevant area of law, but also solid advocacy, organization and other appellate writing skills. In some instances, we may accept a less

experienced attorney whose work “shows promise.” Upon acceptance to the panel, CCAP will assist less experienced attorneys to provide guidance in developing writing skills, issue spotting techniques, and appellate advocacy in general. If the applicant’s resume shows that the attorney has written articles that have been published, or has taken courses to improve their writing skills, so much the better.

We also take into consideration seminars and other training the applicant has attended.

### **Who Are The Attorneys CCAP Is Trying To Recruit?**

CCAP wants attorneys who have the desire to make appointed appeals a significant portion of their practice. Although CCAP cannot guarantee that an attorney will be recommended for appointment on any particular quantity of cases, at least initially we hope that the attorney can take several cases per year. We have found that attorneys who take very few cases do not advance their appellate skills to the point where we can confidently assign them cases without extensive oversight. We need to be able to move attorneys from requiring intense assistance to where they can spot all of the issues and present well-written arguments without having to rely heavily on CCAP.

### **What Time Commitment Can The Panel Attorney Expect To Make?**

Upon accepting a new case appointment, the transcripts must be thoroughly reviewed, not just skimmed, for all possible errors. The issues must be thoroughly researched. And the arguments must be very carefully crafted, presenting the problem very clearly and persuasively, supported by pertinent case and statutory authority. Relatively simple cases should have the opening brief filed within 30 to 60 days after the appointment (with exceptions for cases with incomplete records). As the Courts of Appeal expect counsel to move

along this case timeline persistently, panel attorneys must budget their time accordingly, taking only as many case appointments as is feasible to move progressively through the cases. Most panel attorneys quickly learn how to carefully manage their caseload to balance meeting deadlines against other matters within their law practice.

### **What Project Panels Can An Attorney Join?**

There is no harm in applying to join more than one project panel. Most panel attorneys eventually join more than one panel once they learn how to manage their caseload and deadlines. In fact, once a panel attorney has gained sufficient appellate skills so that he or she is regularly receiving appointments on an independent basis from one of the projects, then the other projects are very likely to be interested in having that attorney on their panels as well.

#### Contact information:

##### **First District Appellate Project (FDAP)**

730 Harrison Street, Suite 201  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
415-495-3119

(For the First Appellate District)

##### **California Appellate Project-Los Angeles (CAP-LA)**

520 S. Grand Avenue, 4th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90071  
213-243-0300

(For the Second Appellate District)

##### **Central California Appellate Program (CCAP)**

2407 J Street, Suite 301  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
916-441-3792

(For the Third and Fifth Appellate Districts)

##### **Appellate Defenders, Inc. (ADI)**

555 West Beech Street, Suite 300  
San Diego, CA 92101  
619-696-0282

(For the Fourth Appellate District)

##### **Sixth District Appellate Program (SDAP)**

100 N. Winchester Blvd. Ste. 310  
Santa Clara, CA 95050  
408-241-6171

(For the Sixth Appellate District)