



**Office of the State Public Defender**  
Indigent Defense Improvement Division

**IDID Bulletin**  
**February 2025**

## Indigent Defense Updates

### OSPD DEIB Materials

In an effort to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in public defense, IDID shares resources created by OSPD's DEIB Unit. Attached is a resource for you to engage with and share at your leisure recognizing Black History Month.

### CARE Court February Virtual Meetup

**February 5th, 3:30-4:30 pm**

This meetup continues some of the discussions from the HomeBase consultations from last year, and will be in meeting format. Come to learn about the challenges that other counties are encountering as CARE Act Proceedings begin to move through the court process. We will discuss existing resources for onboarding new staff in CARE Court practice, as well as attempt to catalog trending issues throughout the state. Registration is required, and provides a calendar reminder, but you can also click through to register and join the meeting as it starts.

[Register here!](#)

### Public Service Loan Forgiveness for Public Defenders and Contract-Based Defenders

IDID is re-circulating OSPD's guide to Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) for California Defenders. This guide provides practical information to assist defenders with understanding federal PSLF eligibility, including information useful to contract-based defenders who may also be eligible for loan forgiveness.

The *PSLF for California Defenders* guide is available [here](#).

### Department of Justice 2025 Access to Justice Prize: Closing the Rural Justice Gap

[The Access to Justice Prize](#) funds innovative solutions to the crisis in access to justice. The 2025 award will focus on solutions that impact rural communities. Community-based and non-profit organizations; academic institutions; and local, state, tribal and territorial governments—including courts, public defender offices, and prosecutorial agencies, are invited to submit proposals aimed to expand access to justice within rural communities. Deadline for submissions is March 31, 2025.

# February 2025 IDID Training Events

*Unless otherwise noted these trainings are intended for criminal defense team members only, including attorneys, investigators, social workers, paralegals, mitigation specialists, law office professionals, and other job roles on defense teams.*

## 2/4

### **Racial Justice Act Legal Updates**

LISA ROMO, Racial Justice Attorney, Office of the State Public Defender  
BROOKE MCCARTHY, Non-Capital RJA Attorney, Office of the State Public Defender

**12:15 PM - 01:30 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

2024 was a busy year for the RJA! In this webinar, we will review the year's appellate court opinions addressing RJA issues. We will also identify hot pending issues and provide tips on how defenders can respond to the arguments we are seeing from prosecutors, in both prospective and retroactive RJA cases, at the trial and appellate levels.

*\*1 hour of MCLE Credit is offered for this training\**

## 2/11

### **The New Age of Sentencing Part 1: Aggravating Factors**

KRISTEN HADEN, Assistant Supervisor and Recruitment Coordinator, San Diego Primary Public Defender

**03:00 PM - 04:00 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Learn the most recent statutory and caselaw updates in the ever-changing landscape of felony sentencing. From dealing with aggravating circumstances to preserving the best record for appeal, this lecture will provide you with the necessary tools to best represent your clients at felony sentencing. This is Part 1 of a two-part webinar series on recent changes in felony sentencing.

*\*1 hour of MCLE Credit is offered for this training\**

## 2/12

### **The New Age of Sentencing Part 2: Enhancements and Beyond**

KRISTEN HADEN, Assistant Supervisor and Recruitment Coordinator, San Diego Primary Public Defender

**03:00 PM - 04:00 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Learn the most recent statutory and caselaw updates in the ever-changing landscape of felony sentencing. From dealing with enhancements to preserving the best record for appeal, this lecture will provide you with the necessary tools to best represent your clients at felony sentencing. This is Part 2 of a two-part webinar series on recent changes in felony sentencing.

*\*1 hour of MCLE Credit is offered for this training\**

## 2/13

### **Ethical Dilemmas in Social Work and Public Defense**

KEVIN BISHOP, Social Work Coordinator, The Colorado Office of the Alternate Defense Counsel

**12:15 PM - 02:15 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Social workers play an integral role in public defender offices by providing comprehensive support to clients by addressing underlying social issues. But what happens when the training of a social worker conflicts with their duties as a member of the defense team? In this session, licensed clinical social worker Kevin Bishop addresses the tension that may arise between these two necessary roles. This session will 1) provide an understanding of forensic social work in the criminal defense setting, 2) provide conceptual understanding of potential ethical dilemmas that may arise in a criminal defense setting, and 3) propose strategies to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice in social work.

*\*This course meets the qualifications for 2 Continuing Education for LCSWs, LMFTs, LPCCs, and LEPs as required by the California State Board of Behavioral Services, provided by NASW-CA.\**

2/19

### **Working with Prison Life Experts on Resentencing Hearings**

ADAM MORTERA, Executive Director, Juvenile Justice Advocates of California  
JOSE NOGALES, Forensic Gang Expert & Paralegal  
DOMINIQUE TANKS, Gang Expert & Youth Advocate

**12:15 PM - 01:15 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Prison life experts can play a crucial role in getting your client a favorable outcome at a resentencing hearing. In this webinar, experts Adam Mortera, Jose Nogales, and Domique Tanks will explain how their lived experience and expertise could positively impact a client's chance for success. At the end of this webinar, attendees will have an understanding of what to look for in their client's C-file to prepare for these hearings, will be able to identify ways lived experience experts can explain programming and prison life to judges, and how these experts can work with clients to prepare them for resentencing proceedings.

*\*1 hour of MCLE Credit is offered for this training\**

2/20

### **Defending Against Developmentally Disabled Civil Commitments**

CHARLENE MCKINLEY-POWELL, Deputy Public Defender, San Bernardino County Public Defender Office

**12:15 PM - 01:15 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Welfare & Institutions Code section 6500 allows developmentally disabled clients to be committed to the State Department of Developmental Services if they are found to be a danger to their self and/or others. While these petitions are not common, it is important that those working in public defense know how to properly defend against these commitments. In this training, attorney Charlene McKinley-Powell will provide guidance on how to litigate these hearings. At the end of this training, attendees will leave with a general understanding of the controlling law, steps to defend against these petitions, and guidance on how to communicate with developmentally delayed clients.

*\*1 hour of MCLE Credits is offered for this training\**

2/24

### **Opening with Your Theory**

GEORGIA SIMS, Asst. Deputy Public Defender & Training Director, Nashville Defenders

**11:30 AM - 12:45 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

An effective theory of the case can serve as a guidepost for making the myriad of decisions that are required before and during trial. Theory guides everything from investigation, in limine motions, voir dire, cross, evidence presentation, instructions, and of course opening and closing. It is particularly helpful in guiding your choices about how to open. This webinar will dive deeply into how you can construct an effective theory that will resonate with your jurors and empower you to tell your client's story at opening in a relatable, effective manner.

*\*1.25 hour of MCLE and Legal Specialization Credit in Trial Advocacy is offered for this training\**

# March 2025 IDID Training Events

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3/4

## **Fatal Peril: Research and Recommendations to Support Intimate Partner Violence Survivors Charged with Homicide Offenses**

ANDREA CIMINO, PhD, MSW, Social Scientist

DEBBIN MUKAMAL, Executive Director, Stanford Criminal Justice Center at Stanford Law School

**12:15 PM - 01:15 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

This webinar presents findings from a groundbreaking study of women incarcerated for homicide offenses in California. Key topics include the prevalence of intimate partner violence and homicide risk, and the incidence of probable traumatic brain injuries among respondents. Attendees will gain insight into the multiple pathways that lead survivors to incarceration and discuss strategies for defense attorneys to approach cases involving survivor-defendants with greater understanding and equity

*\*1 hour MCLE Credit is offered for this training\**

3/7

## **Fundamentals of Competence – The Experts**

JOHN PHILIPSBORN, Legal Forensic Mental Health Expert

**12:15 PM - 1:30 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

This webinar will focus on working with expert witnesses in competence to stand trial cases. After this webinar, you will have a better understanding of how experts working for the defense, prosecutor or court may assess competency differently. You will gain skills to prepare your experts for the assessment and for any resulting testimony, including tools for planning the direct and cross examination of mental health experts addressing competence.

*\*1.25 hour of MCLE and Legal Specialization Credit in Substantive Criminal Law and Procedure is offered for this training\**

3/17

## **Litigating Access to Social Media Material: A Defense Attorney's Journey**

DONALD LANDIS, Defense Attorney & Appellate Attorney

**12:15 PM - 01:30 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Dealing with social media is often a necessary part of criminal defense cases. This presentation will focus on how the defense can obtain social media and how to introduce it in court.

*\*1.25 hours of MCLE Credit is offered for this training\**

3/20

## **What Defenders Wish They Knew About Family Court: Representing Clients with Concurrent Family Court Cases**

MARY ANNE MENDENHALL, Director, Family Defense Initiatives, Office of the State Public Defender and Partners for Justice

**12:00 PM - 01:15 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Defenders often have clients who are dealing with their domestic violence or child abuse case in both criminal and family court. Come learn simple practical tools to help your clients maintain access to their children and have success in their criminal case, including how to handle the restraining orders issued at arraignment. The presenter will introduce a guide specifically created for public defenders and their clients who are navigating the family courts pro per.

*\*1 hour of MCLE Credit in Competence Issues is offered for this training\**

3/24

### **Social Media Investigations Part 1: Overview of Materials Available On-line**

MARIA SAPENE, Chief of Litigation Support, Office of the Federal Public Defender, Central District

**03:00 PM - 04:30 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Incorporating social media and online research into your fact and mitigation investigations can dramatically affect your understanding of a case. In this presentation, you will receive a general overview of materials available on-line and on social media. This is Part 1 of a two part series on social media investigations.

*\*1.5 hours of MCLE Credit is offered for this training\**

3/26

### **Social Media Investigations Part 2: From Planning to Live Search Techniques**

MARIA SAPENE, Chief of Litigation Support, Office of the Federal Public Defender, Central District

**03:00 PM - 04:30 PM** [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Incorporating social media (and on-line) research into your fact and mitigation investigations can dramatically affect your understanding of a case. In this presentation, you will be walked through an on-line investigation from planning to live search techniques.

*\*1.5 hour of MCLE Credit is offered for this training\**

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## **Other Training Opportunities**

*\*Provided for information only and are not affiliated with OSPD\**



### **AB 600 Virtual Meetup**

presented by University of San Francisco

**2/11/2025, 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM**

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



### **Capital Case Defense Seminar**

Live Training presented by California Attorneys for Criminal Justice

**2/14/2025 to 2/17/2025**

Monterey, CA

[More Information and Registration](#)



### **Pediatric Failure to Thrive: When is it Child Neglect?**

Webinar presented by Godoy Medical Forensics

**2/14/2025, 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

Virtual

[More information and Registration](#)



### **Pediatric Strangulation: Not Just “Little Adults”**

Webinar presented by Godoy Medical Forensics

**2/18/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Virtual

[More information and Registration](#)



## **2025 Midwinter Meeting & Seminar**

Webinar presented by National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

**2/26/2025 to 3/1/2025**

Charlotte, NC

[More Information and Registration](#)



## **Sevilla on Civility: Civility is More Than a Requirement; it's a Professional Imperative**

Webinar presented by California Attorneys for Criminal Justice

**2/27/2025, 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM**

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)

## **Child Abuse: Beyond the Basics**

Webinar presented by Godoy Medical Forensics

**2/28/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



## **Alcohol and the Body: A Toxicologists Perspective**

Webinar presented by Godoy Medical Forensics

**2/28/2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Virtual

[More Information and Registration](#)



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The Office of the State Public Defender is a state agency founded in 1976 to represent indigent criminal defendants on appeal. Today, the agency has two divisions. The Appellate Division provides high quality appellate representation for those convicted of capital offenses. The Indigent Defense Improvement Division supports trial level indigent defense systems across California by providing defense attorney training and assistance to counties with public defense systems. See Gov. Code Section 15420(b).

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