

SUPREME COURT OF COLORADO

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE

APPOINTMENT OF STATE-FUNDED COUNSEL IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASES

Chief Justice Directive 14-01 Amended Effective October 1, 2021

This policy is adopted to assist the administration of justice with respect to the appointment of counsel in juvenile delinquency cases pursuant to Title 19. This policy does not cover appointments made pursuant to Titles 16 and 18, appointments of guardians ad litem for minors, or child's legal representatives (Office of the Child's Representative (OCR) appointments). For information concerning appointment of counsel in adult criminal cases, refer to Chief Justice Directive 04-04. For cases involving a state paid attorney appointed in the best interest of children and paid by the OCR, refer to Chief Justice Directive 04-06.

I. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

- A. The United States Supreme Court, in a case entitled *In re Gault*, 387 U.S 1 (1967), determined that juveniles in delinquency proceedings have the same right to counsel as adults in criminal cases. The Colorado General Assembly codified and expanded this constitutional right, which is addressed in Article 2.5 of Title 19. The Colorado General Assembly codified this constitutional right by stating that juveniles accused of delinquent acts have the right to the assistance of appointed counsel if the juvenile and the juvenile's parent, guardian, or legal custodian lack adequate resources to retain counsel. This right remains throughout the proceedings unless the juvenile makes a knowing, intelligent, and voluntary waiver of his or her right to counsel. The Colorado General Assembly statutorily expanded this constitutional right by providing that, irrespective of indigency, counsel for a juvenile should be appointed if the juvenile is detained and has not retained counsel; a juvenile requests counsel and the juvenile's parent, guardian, or legal custodian refuse to retain counsel for the juvenile; if the court determines that appointment of counsel is necessary to protect the interests of the juvenile or other parties; or if the juvenile is in the custody of the State Department of Human Services or a County Department of Social Services.
- B. State funds are appropriated to the Office of the Public Defender (PD) to provide for the representation of indigent persons in juvenile delinquency cases pursuant to §21-1-103, C.R.S. (2014). In addition, the Office of the Public Defender may be appointed in certain juvenile delinquency matters irrespective of indigency, pursuant to §19-2.5-305(2) and §19-2.5-605, C.R.S. State funds are appropriated to the Office of Alternate Defense Counsel (OADC) to provide for the representation of persons in juvenile delinquency cases in which the Public Defender declares a conflict of interest pursuant to §21-2-101, C.R.S., et seq.

II. INDIGENCY DETERMINATION

- A. Any juvenile in a delinquency case, or the juvenile's parent, guardian, or legal custodian, requesting court-appointed representation on the basis of indigency must complete Form JDF219, Application for Public Defender, signed under oath and submit it to the Public Defender for review. Pursuant to §21-1-103(3), C.R.S., the Public Defender will make the initial determination of eligibility for state-funded representation in accordance with the fiscal standards.
- B. An indigent juvenile is one whose financial circumstances or whose parent's, guardian's or legal custodian's financial circumstances prevent the juvenile from having equal access to the legal process (Attachments A, B, and C).
- C. In all cases, the court retains jurisdiction to determine whether the juvenile is indigent based on all the information available. Upon receipt of the finding by the Public Defender on the issue of eligibility for representation in accordance with the fiscal standards, the court shall review the juvenile's application for Public Defender. Based on a review of all information available, the court shall enter an order either granting or denying the juvenile's request for appointment of the Public Defender. The court may use the judicial district's Collections Investigator(s) to provide a recommendation to the court relative to the above determinations, if additional analysis is needed. If the court determines the juvenile and juvenile's parent, guardian, or legal custodian are not indigent, the court may still appoint counsel for the juvenile if: a juvenile requests counsel and the juvenile's parent, guardian, or legal custodian refuse to retain counsel for the juvenile; if the court determines that appointment of counsel is necessary to protect the interests of the juvenile or other parties; or if the juvenile is in the custody of the State Department of Human Services or a County Department of Social Services.
- D. An attorney appointed by the court on the basis of indigency shall provide timely notice to the court in the event financial related information is discovered that would reasonably call into question the juvenile's or the juvenile's parent, guardian, or legal custodian's inability to pay such costs. The court shall have the discretion to reassess indigence. Based upon a reassessment of the juvenile's financial circumstances, the court may terminate a state-paid appointment. or continue the appointment.

III. GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL

A. Appointment of Public Defender

1. Appointments on the Basis of Indigency: Except as described in paragraphs 2-4 below, to be eligible for representation by the Public Defender a juvenile and a juvenile's parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian in a delinquency case, must be indigent, as defined above and determined by the PD, subject to review by the court.
2. Juvenile in Custody/Detention Hearing: All juveniles in custody will be represented by counsel at his/her detention hearing. If the juvenile does not retain counsel, the PD, or in the case of conflict, the OADC, will represent the juvenile at the detention hearing. No indigency application need be taken for detention hearing representation.

3. Appointments Irrespective of Indigency: Irrespective of indigency, the PD shall be appointed in all juvenile delinquency matters if the juvenile requested counsel and the juvenile's parent(s), guardian, or legal custodian has refused to retain private counsel; if the court finds such representation is necessary to protect the interest of the juvenile or other parties involved in the case; or, if the juvenile is in the custody of the State Department of Human Services or a County Department of Social Services. In the event the PD has a conflict, Alternate Defense Counsel shall be appointed as provided in in this directive.
4. Appointments To Assist in Motions Under Rule 35(c) of the Colorado Rules of Criminal Procedure: A juvenile may be represented by the PD to assist in motions under Rule 35(c) if the court does not deny the motion under Crim. P. 35(c)(3)(IV). If another attorney represents the defendant and withdraws, the PD may be appointed if there is no conflict with such representation.
5. Appointments for Appeals:
 - a. The court may appoint counsel for a juvenile for appeal for any of the reasons listed in this directive.
 - b. When a juvenile has an Alternate Defense Counsel attorney for the trial in a delinquency case, the PD shall be appointed to represent the juvenile on appeal unless the court determines that the PD has a conflict of interest.

B. Appointment of Alternate Defense Counsel

The OADC shall maintain a list of qualified attorneys for use by the courts in making appointments. Upon appointment of an Alternate Defense Counsel attorney, the clerk shall notify the OADC's designee. No more than one attorney may be appointed as counsel for a juvenile receiving OADC representation, except in specific exceptional circumstances. Accordingly, upon specific written request by counsel for appointment of an additional attorney to assist in the defense of a juvenile, the OADC may approve appointment of an additional attorney for good cause shown. Such requests should be made in writing and directed to the OADC. Alternate Defense Counsel shall be appointed under the following circumstances:

1. Conflict-of-Interest Appointments: The PD shall file a motion or otherwise notify the court of its intent to withdraw in all cases in which a conflict of interest exists. The court shall appoint an Alternate Defense Counsel attorney to represent juveniles in cases in which the court determines that the PD has a conflict of interest and removes the PD from the case. The OADC is responsible by statute to handle all PD conflict cases. Therefore, the OADC shall establish policies and procedures to cover instances when Alternate Defense Counsel has a conflict.
2. Appointments To Assist in Motions Under Rule 35(c) of the Colorado Rules of Criminal Procedure: A juvenile may be represented by conflict-free counsel to assist in motions under Rule 35 if the court does not deny the motion under Crim. P. 35(c)(3)(IV) and if the

Attachment A, CJD 14-01, Amended April 2024

Applicant Name _____ **Court** _____

Case Number _____ **Case Name** _____

FISCAL STANDARDS - ELIGIBILITY SCORING INSTRUMENT

Use information from Form JDF208 and information provided by applicant during screening interview. Circle the points in the category that applies Total at end.

| Factor | At or below guidelines | Up to 10% above guidelines | 11% to 75% above guidelines (Not eligible if income is more than 75% above guidelines.) |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <p>Section 1. Income Guidelines Gross income from all members of the household who contribute monetarily to the common support of the household. Income categories include: wages, including tips, salaries, commissions, payments received as an independent contractor for labor or services, bonuses, dividends, severance pay, pensions, retirement benefits, royalties, interest/investment earnings, trust income, annuities, capital gains, Social Security Disability (SSD), Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI), Workman’s Compensation Benefits, Unemployment Benefits, and alimony.</p> <p>Gross income shall not include income from TANF payments, food stamps, subsidized housing assistance, and veteran’s benefits earned from a disability, child support payments or other public assistance programs.</p> <p>NOTE: Income from roommates should not be considered if such income is not commingled in accounts or otherwise combined with the Applicant’s income in a fashion which would allow the applicant proprietary rights to the roommate’s income.)</p> | <p>150 points</p> | <p>100 points</p> | <p>0 points</p> |

SECTION 1. TOTAL POINTS _____

Section 2. Expenses vs. Income

(Expenses for nonessential items such as cable television, club memberships, entertainment, dining out, alcohol, cigarettes, etc., shall not be included.)

Monthly expenses exceed income by over \$100 = **50 points**

Monthly expenses are within \$100 of income = **25 points**

Monthly income exceeds expenses by over \$100 = **0 points**

SECTION 2. TOTAL POINTS _____

Section 3. Charge (most severe) vs. Assets which could be used to pay defense costs (Assets to include cash on hand or in accounts, stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, equity, and personal property or investments which could readily be converted into cash without jeopardizing the applicant’s ability to maintain home and employment.)

| Assets | Class 1 to Class 3 Felony or Habitual Offender Related | Class 4 to Class 6 Felony | Class 1 to Class 3 Misdemeanor or Jailable Traffic |
|------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
| \$0 - \$750 | 150 Points | 125 Points | 50 Points |
| \$751-\$1,500 | 125 Points | 100 Points | 25 Points |
| \$1,501-\$2,500 | 100 Points | 75 Points | 0 Points |
| \$2,501-\$5,000 | 75 Points | 50 Points | 0 Points |
| \$5,000-\$7,500 | 50 Points | 25 Points | 0 Points |
| \$7,501-\$10,000 | 25 Points | 0 Points | 0 Points |
| Over \$10,000 | 0 Points | 0 Points | 0 Points |

SECTION 3. TOTAL POINTS _____

TOTAL POINTS, SECTIONS 1,2,3 _____

- **150 or greater** **Indigent - Eligible for Public Defender** (Note: Reimbursement of costs of representation may be ordered by the court pursuant to Section 21-1-106, C.R.S.)
- **Less than 150** **Not Eligible for State-Funded Counsel**

EXCEPTION REQUESTED TO [ALLOW or DISALLOW] APPOINTMENT OF [PUBLIC DEFENDER] or [ALTERNATE DEFENSE COUNSEL (if PD conflict)] NOTWITHSTANDING THE ABOVE SCORE. (Documentation justifying request is attached.)

Evaluated by (printed name) _____
Date _____ **Signature** _____

Attachment B, CJD 14-01, Amended March 2026

INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES (amended January 13, 2026)

| Family Size | Poverty Guideline | Monthly poverty level | Monthly Income* | Monthly Income plus 25% | Yearly Income* | Yearly Income plus 25% |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | \$15,960 | \$1,330 | \$1,663 | \$2,078 | \$19,950 | \$24,938 |
| 2 | \$21,640 | \$1,803 | \$2,254 | \$2,818 | \$27,050 | \$33,813 |
| 3 | \$27,320 | \$2,277 | \$2,846 | \$3,557 | \$34,150 | \$42,688 |
| 4 | \$33,000 | \$2,750 | \$3,438 | \$4,297 | \$41,250 | \$51,563 |
| 5 | \$38,680 | \$3,223 | \$4,029 | \$5,036 | \$48,350 | \$60,438 |
| 6 | \$44,360 | \$3,697 | \$4,621 | \$5,776 | \$55,450 | \$69,313 |
| 7 | \$50,040 | \$4,170 | \$5,213 | \$6,516 | \$62,550 | \$78,188 |
| 8 | \$55,720 | \$4,643 | \$5,804 | \$7,255 | \$69,650 | \$87,063 |

* 125% of poverty level as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services.

*For family units with more than eight members add \$592 per month to "monthly income" or \$ 7,100 per year to "yearly income" for each additional person

Poverty guideline is \$ 5,680/year.

Source: Federal Register (91 FR 1797, 01/15/2026)

FISCAL STANDARDS: PROCEDURES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR COURT-APPOINTED COUNSEL ON THE BASIS OF INDIGENCY

A determination of indigency is necessary for certain appointments addressed in Chief Justice Directive 14-01. Any juvenile, or the juvenile's parent, guardian, or legal custodian in a delinquency case, requesting court-appointed counsel on the basis of indigency must apply for counsel as described below. The Public Defender and court staff will determine the applicant's eligibility for appointment of counsel in accordance with the following procedures:

- The juvenile or the juvenile's parent, guardian, or legal custodian shall apply for the Public Defender by completing the Application for Public Defender, form JDF219.
- If the juvenile is in custody and has not retained his or her own counsel, the court shall appoint the Office of the Public Defender, or in the case of a conflict, the Office of the Alternate Defense Counsel to represent the juvenile at the detention hearing. See §19-2.5-305, C.R.S.
- If the income of a juvenile defendant's parents, guardian, or legal custodian is at or below the income eligibility guidelines and he or she has no assets, as determined on form JDF219, the Public Defender may automatically elect to represent the defendant, and will submit the form JDF219 to the court to demonstrate eligibility.

If the income of a juvenile defendant's parents, guardian, or legal custodian is more than 75 percent above the income eligibility guidelines, the Public Defender will note that the defendant is ineligible for court-appointed counsel, and will submit the form JDF219 to the court to demonstrate ineligibility.

- If eligibility or ineligibility cannot be determined as described above, the eligibility-scoring instrument (Attachment A, Chief Justice Directive 14-01) will be completed, using information obtained on form JDF219. The form is designed to use income and expenses to determine basic eligibility, with an added factor for assets available to pay for an attorney. The points assigned in the "asset" category take into account both the dollar value of the assets and the class type of charges against the juvenile. This is to address variations in the types of expenses that might be incurred due to the nature of the charges.
- The total score will determine whether the juvenile will be represented by the Public Defender (or the Alternate Defense Counsel in case of Public Defender conflict) on the basis of indigency or due to the parents, guardian, or legal custodian refusing to retain private counsel. The Public Defender or juvenile may request an exception to the eligibility determination based on the score and may submit documentation of the reasons for the exception to the court, which then has the opportunity to make an appointment decision based on all of the information.