



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA**

CJA – eVoucher
Expert Guidance

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RESOURCES

CJA Attorney's Quick Reference

The [CJA Attorney's Quick Reference](#) document is a locally developed reference sheet outlining case maximums, interpreter rates, mileage rates, contact information and other helpful tidbits.

Iowa Southern Public Website – CJA Page

<https://www.iasd.uscourts.gov/cja-resources>

eVoucher Resources

https://evsdweb.ev.uscourts.gov/CJA_ias_prod/CJAeVoucher/Help/External/eVoucher.htm#t=Attorney%20Topics%2FAttorney%20Home%20Page.htm

US Courts Criminal Justice Act Guidance

<https://www.uscourts.gov/administration-policies/judiciary-policies/criminal-justice-act-cja-guidelines>

EXPERTS

CJA – Use of Expert Services

Appointed counsel is entitled to funding for fees and expenses with hiring an expert, investigator, or other professional (e.g. paralegals, interpreters, medical experts) to assist defense counsel in tasks necessary to an adequate representation. See [18 U.S.C. § 3006A\(e\)](#). The CJA Guidelines authorize CJA counsel to retain expert services without prior judicial authorization up to \$1,000 subject to review. For services exceeding \$1,000, counsel must seek prior judicial authorization by submitting an AUTH request in eVoucher.

The initial \$1,000 is a cumulative case amount (not \$1,000 per expert, expert type or attorney).

Example – If an attorney uses \$200 on paralegal services, \$400 on an investigator, and then anticipates \$640 for an interpreter, they will need to file an authorization request for the interpreter since it would exceed the cumulative \$1,000 without prior authorization.

Example – If one attorney begins the case and uses \$500 in paralegal services and then is replaced by a new attorney, the new attorney only has \$500 remaining for expenses not requiring prior authorization.

The attorney is responsible for monitoring the accrued service fees. If it is anticipated that the service provider will go over the \$1,000, the attorney must ensure that an AUTH is submitted before reaching the \$1,000 limit.

Expert Case Maximums

Expert Case Maximums	
	01/01/2024 to Present
Without Prior Court AUTH	\$1,000
District Court AUTH	\$3,000

Please note the limits are for service charges and do not include expenses.

AUTH – EXPERT AUTHORIZATION

Seeking Authorization for Expert Services

The CJA Guidelines authorize CJA counsel to retain expert services without prior judicial authorization up to \$1,000 subject to review. This amount is a cumulative case amount and not per expert. For services exceeding the \$1,000, counsel **must** seek prior judicial authorization by submitting an AUTH request in eVoucher. **The authorization is required to be filed and approved by the Court in eVoucher for expert services prior to rendering any services.**

It is recommended that counsel file an authorization request as soon as counsel recognizes that the client will require an expert service provider such as an investigator, interpreter, or medical expert. **Note:** The \$1,000 no prior authorization amount is rarely enough to cover the service charges incurred for these expert types. The \$1,000 no prior authorization amount is most commonly reserved for paralegal services.

No authorization requests should be filed on the docket. CJA counsel should file all expert authorization requests through eVoucher.

Failure to Request Pre-Authorization

Failure to obtain pre-authorization may result in a reduction or denial if counsel is unable to prove services could not await prior approval.

All authorization requests submitted after the fact must be accompanied by a written statement from the attorney explaining why the service could not await prior approval. Excuses such as “I forgot” or “I did not know I need prior approval” will not suffice. Additionally, an invoice must be attached to substantiate any services already expended.

Seeking Authorization for Expert Services – Retained Counsel

Retained counsel must file an initial request through CM/ECF to use CJA for expert funding. Upon approval of the Judge, existing panel members will be set-up in eVoucher with an expert only appointment to submit authorizations and payment vouchers. All funding requests must be filed through eVoucher. Retained counsel who are not on the panel and do not have access to eVoucher will work directly with CJA staff on submitting authorizations and payment vouchers.

Selecting an Expert

Counsel is responsible for selecting, contacting, and scheduling their own expert service.

Submitting an Initial Authorization

1. Navigate to the case appointment and select AUTH Create.
2. Select Create New Authorization.

3. Enter the total funding amount anticipated for that service provider on the case.
4. Select the type of service from the service type drop down.
5. Upload the completed Statement Supporting Expert Request and any other supporting documentation (e.g. expert CV) in the Documents tab.
6. Check “I swear and affirm...” and submit.

Statement Supporting Expert Request

The [Statement Supporting Expert Request](#) is a fillable pdf which is locally required to be attached by counsel to any authorization request. Please be as detailed as possible.

Requesting Additional Funds

Counsel is responsible for keeping track of the available funds remaining on the initial authorization. If funds on an existing authorization have been depleted and additional services are necessary, a supplemental AUTH request must be submitted through eVoucher and approved by the Court prior to additional services being rendered. To request additional funds:

1. Navigate to the case appointment and select AUTH Create.
2. Select Request Additional Funds.
3. Choose the existing authorization that needs to be increased.
4. Enter the amount you wish to add to the original authorization.
5. Select Create Authorization.
6. Add the completed Statement Supporting Expert Request to the Documents tab.
7. Navigate to the confirmation tab and submit.

Rejected Authorizations

Authorizations in rejected status are highlighted in yellow/orange in counsel’s inbox and require additional action to be taken. Please review the confirmation page for further direction from the Court on what action is required.

Expedited Requests

If an authorization request is urgent, please file the authorization as quickly as possible and notify Trisha_Ekdahl@iasd.uscourts.gov or Mindi_Shepherd@iasd.uscourts.gov of the urgency.

CJA 21 – PAYMENT VOUCHER

Expert Payment - Interpreters

To pay an interpreter, counsel must first create a CJA 21.

To create a CJA 21:

1. Navigate to the case appointment and select CJA 21 Create.
2. Select the Associated Authorization if applicable (should change blue or yellow once selected).
3. Select the appropriate Service Type drop down (e.g. interpreter/translator).
4. Select the Service Provider from the Expert drop down.
5. Select Expert for the Voucher Assignment.
6. Select Create Voucher.

Once the CJA 21 is created, the system routes the voucher to the interpreter for billing entry. Once the interpreter has entered their itemized billing, the voucher is submitted to counsel for approval. Counsel should review and confirm the itemized services were provided and submit to the Court for review and payment.

Expert Payment – Other

To pay paralegals, medical providers or investigators, counsel must both create and complete the CJA 21.

To create a CJA 21:

1. Navigate to the case appointment and select CJA 21 Create.
2. Select the Associated Authorization if applicable (should change blue or yellow once selected).
3. Select the appropriate Service Type drop down (e.g. paralegal, medical, investigator).
4. Select the Service Provider from the Expert drop down.
5. Select Attorney for the Voucher Assignment.
6. Select Create Voucher.

Once the CJA 21 is created, it appears on counsel's home page under both "My Active Documents" and "My Service Provider's Documents".

To complete a CJA 21:

1. Click on the Services tab to begin entering the expert's itemized claims for service by completing the required fields of Date, Description, and Hours (in tenths of an hour).

Note: To edit an entry after having added it, select it from the grid, make changes, and click Add. To delete an entry, click on it and click Remove.

2. Click on the Expenses tab to begin entering the service provider's expense claims by completing the required fields of Date, Expense Type, Description, and depending on the Expense Type, either Miles or Amount.
3. Click on the Claim Status tab. Ensure the start and end date match up with the service provider's first and last day of service.
4. Select the appropriate payment status (e.g. interim, final or supplemental).
5. Click on the Documents tab to upload the service provider's original invoice.
6. Click on the Confirmation tab and check the box affirming the accuracy of the information provided, then click submit.

Note: The voucher now appears on counsel's home page with a status of Submitted to Attorney.

7. Click into the voucher and navigate to the Confirmation tab.
8. Approve and submit to the Court.

Expert Expenses

Expenses incurred by investigators, experts, and other professionals are also reimbursable and do not count against the fee maximums.

Billing Frequency

Paralegal vouchers should be submitted at the conclusion of the case when the attorney voucher is filed. All other experts may bill after their service have been provided and do not have to wait until the end of the case. Interpreters are encouraged to combine multiple service dates on one voucher and not to submit one voucher per service.

Tracking of Funds

Counsel is responsible for monitoring the accrued service fees. If it is anticipated that the service provider will go over the \$1,000, the attorney must ensure that an AUTH is submitted before reaching the \$1,000 limit.

INTERPRETERS

Interpreter Rates

Interpreters charge based on their skill classification. The rates by classification are shown below. The half-day rate is paid for services up to and including four hours in one day; the full-day rate is paid for services in excess of four hours up to and including eight hours in one day.

Current Interpreter Rates					
Federally Certified		Professionally Qualified		Language Skilled	
Half-Day	\$320	Half-Day	\$280	Half-Day	\$190
Full-Day	\$566	Full-Day	\$495	Full-Day	\$350

Billing

Interpreters are encouraged to combine multiple service dates on one voucher submission and not to submit one voucher per service.

Appropriate Expenses

Only mileage, parking, and pre-authorized overnight travel expenses are permissible.

Written Translation of Documents

Typically, the translation of documents should be done verbally during an attorney client meeting with the assistance of an interpreter. Counsel should seek specific authorization for the written translation of any court documents (e.g. plea agreement, PSR, etc). If counsel fails to obtain approval for such translations, and the fees exceed the cumulative \$1,000 expert limit permitted without advanced approval, counsel may be responsible for paying the interpreter with his or her own funds.

Family Communication

If the interpretation is related to and supports a representational purpose (as opposed to a “service of a personal nature”), then a reasonable amount of interpreter services for family communication is allowable under the CJA.

eVoucher Access

Interpreters are given access and trained to complete their own billing in eVoucher. Counsel must create the CJA 21 and by selecting expert voucher assignment it will be routed to the interpreter for completion.

INVESTIGATORS

Subpoenas

Absent extenuating circumstances, service of subpoenas is the responsibility of the USMS and not the CJA. See: Guide Vol 7A, Ch. 2 230.66.50 (Service of Process). If the USMS is unavailable to serve a subpoena to a fact witness in time for a court proceeding, the circumstances should be documented, and prior approval obtained from the presiding judge before incurring expenses for service of process. The Judge may waive prior approval if they determine that timely service of necessary process could not await preauthorization.

Discovery

An investigator should not be retained for the purpose of reviewing discovery materials with the defendant or to attend court proceedings such as co-defendants' plea hearings, sentencing hearing, or trials on behalf of counsel.

PARALEGALS

Billing

Paralegal vouchers should not be submitted until the conclusion of the case. If it is a large case and interim billing is requested, the attorney should follow the same procedure as filing a CJA 20 interim request.

Law firms should bill what they typically bill clients for paralegal services as long as it is under the CJA attorney rate in effect at the time of service.

Counsel is responsible for monitoring the accrued service fees for paralegal services. If it is anticipated that the service fees will exceed the \$1,000, counsel must ensure that an AUTH is submitted before reaching the \$1,000 limit.

Appropriate Expenses

All overhead expenses should be included on the attorney voucher. Only mileage, parking and pre-authorized overnight travel expenses are to be included on the paralegal voucher.

EXPERT TRAVEL

Travel Authorization

Pre-authorization is required for any expert travel requiring an overnight stay or airfare purchase. Attorneys should use the TRAVEL authorization in eVoucher to submit any travel requests to the court.

Submitting a Travel Authorization

1. Navigate to the case appointment and select TRAVEL Create.
2. Complete all required fields on the Authorization Request tab.
3. Upload any expert travel estimates and/or supporting documentation in the Documents tab.
4. Check “I swear and affirm...” and submit.

Sample Authorization Request

Basic Info Authorization Request Documents Confirmation

Request For Travel*

* Required Fields

Name and Title of Person Traveling:	Jane Doe, MD	
Address of Person Traveling:	123 ABC Lane Phoenix, AZ 12345	
Travel From Location:	Phoenix, AZ	
Travel To Location:	Des Moines, IA	
Estimated Dates of Travel:	04/02/2025 - 04/06/2026	
Travel Requested: *	Estimated Cost:	Instructions for requesting amounts for the travel items:
Airline Tickets via CJA Government Travel Agency:	400.00	Complete the estimated dollar amount for each applicable line.
Ground Transportation:	100.00	The "Total Estimated Cost" field is automatically calculated based on the estimated amounts entered in the Travel line items.
Subsistence (Hotels & meals):	400.00	Complete information for one traveler per form.
Other:		
Total Estimated Cost:	900.00	
Total Authorized:		
Purpose and Justification:	Jane Doe, MD is needed to testify at the trial to be held 04/02-04/06/2026. Any other relevant details.	

Travel Arrangements

After the appropriate authorization is obtained from the court, the expert will be responsible for making all the necessary travel arrangements. Experts are eligible for government lodging rates and government contract airfares. They can use National Travel for assistance booking their lodging and airfare. We encourage use of National Travel because they have resources and relationships to negotiate reasonable fully refundable rates for airfare and lodging. If arrangements are made through

National Travel, the government contract airfare may be billed to the SDIA Centrally Billed Account with prior approval, but the hotel should be billed to the expert's card. The expert may call or email iasd_finance@iasd.uscourts.gov directly with any travel questions or concerns.

National Travel Contact Information

Phone: (800) 445-0668

Email: usctmc@nationaltravel.com

Meals

An expert **may not** claim a per diem for meals and incidentals. Meals and incidentals should be itemized and may not exceed the daily GSA established per diem for the locality.

GSA Per Diem Rates: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

Payment of Travel Expenses

Reimbursement for services and travel expenses should be submitted through eVoucher using a CJA 21 following the completion of the service/travel. Receipts must be submitted with the voucher for all travel expenses.

VENDOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (VMS)

The Vendor Manager System (VMS) is designed to securely collect tax and banking information to facilitate electronic funds transfers (EFT) for voucher payments approved through Criminal Justice Act (CJA) eVoucher. The account setup process for VMS should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Panel attorneys, expert service providers, and court reporters will be prompted to register in VMS after signing in to CJA eVoucher with Login.gov. An informational banner will appear in CJA eVoucher with a link to VMS.

Only one entity per tax ID number (TIN) may register and have only one associated bank account. If registering with an Employer Identification Number (EIN), an individual must be designated as responsible for managing the details of the firm/business entity. This individual is referred to as the Authorized Agent and is responsible for providing the tax and banking information. Once an EIN is registered, anyone else needing to use the same EIN for payments will be prompted to send a request to the Authorized Agent.

IMPORTANT: If multiple people will be registering with the same EIN, decide in advance who will be the Authorized Agent to maintain the business entity information and approve requests to use the EIN. If the Authorized Agent needs to be changed after an EIN is registered, contact Mindi_Shepherd@iasd.uscourts.gov.

During the registration process, an electronic W-9 form will be presented. On submission, VMS will verify that the TIN and name provided match IRS records. Once approved, the data will be available in CJA eVoucher when creating vouchers for payment.

VMS Features

- Secure Multifactor Authentication (MFA)
- Electronic W-9 Collection
- Vendor TIN/Name Validation with IRS
- USPS Address Validation of 1099 Addresses
- Collect EFT Banking Information
- Integration with CJA eVoucher
- Manages Employee/Business Relationships
- Only one vendor per TIN

Training materials may be accessed by visiting the link below.

<https://www.iasd.uscourts.gov/cja-resources>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Attorney Question: I am unable to modify the voucher you rejected back for correction, what do I do?

Answer: You will need to go into the voucher and reject it back. Once rejected, go back into the voucher and it will allow you to make the necessary changes.

Attorney Question: Do I claim law clerk services on my attorney voucher or paralegal voucher?

Answer: Work performed by a law clerk may be claimed on the CJA 20 if the type of work provided is equal to that of an associate attorney. If the work performed is clerical or paralegal in nature, it should be claimed on the CJA 21 voucher.

Attorney Question: How much should we charge for paralegal services?

Answer: The firm can bill what they typically bill clients for paralegal services as long as it is under the CJA attorney rate in effect at the time of service.

Attorney Question: I submitted an EX-PARTE Motion for an expert on CM/ECF and it was approved by the Judge. What do I do next?

Answer: EX-PARTE Motions for expert funding should not be filed on the docket. All authorization requests must be filed in eVoucher. Counsel must create an AUTH request in eVoucher to be submitted and approved by the Judge. Instead of completing the Statement Supporting Expert Request, you may attach a copy of your motion and approved order in the documents tab. If the AUTH is not filed in eVoucher you will not be able to submit CJA 21 vouchers to pay the expert.

Attorney Question: I'm trying to submit a paralegal voucher but am getting an error message saying that specialty services cannot be more than \$1,000, and if so, authorization is required. Can you help?

Answer: Paralegal services fall under specialty (expert) services and the same expert case maximums apply. Since the amount of the voucher exceeds \$1,000, you will need to file an authorization to be approved by the court before you can proceed with submission of the CJA 21.

Attorney Question: How do I know if an expert has an eVoucher account?

Answer: When creating a CJA 21, the expert's name will appear in the drop-down list. If your expert does not appear in the drop-down list, contact the CJA team. Do not attempt to create a CJA 21 for an expert whose name does not appear in the drop-down list.

Interpreter Question: I made a mistake on the voucher and the attorney is unable to process the voucher, how do we proceed?

Answer: The attorney will need to reject the voucher back to you and then you will be able to make the necessary changes and resubmit.