

The Judicial Conference Committee on Defender Services (Committee), at its June 2019 meeting, approved a recommendation to update the experience-based hourly rate ranges for certain experts and other service providers (collectively “service providers”) in Criminal Justice Act (CJA) “mega cases.”¹

The rates are listed below:

Category	Experience-Based Hourly Ranges
Law Students	\$15 - \$25
Paralegals	\$75 - \$125 - higher end of range for paralegals with specialized skills, such as IT competencies to perform complex litigation support
Investigators	\$75 - \$125 - higher end of the range for investigators with specialized skills, such as foreign-language fluency or mastery of one or more relevant areas of forensic science
Mitigation Specialists	\$125 - \$175 - higher end of the range for mitigation specialists with specialized skills, such as foreign-language fluency; mental health expertise; or mastery of relevant legal standards
Jury Consultants	\$150 - \$225

¹ CJA panel attorney mega cases are representations that qualify for case budgeting under the CJA Guidelines. They include all capital representations and non-capital representations that appear likely to become, or have become, extraordinary in terms of potential cost—i.e., attorney hours are expected to exceed 300, or total expenditures (for appointed counsel and services other than counsel) are expected to exceed an amount equal to 300 times the prevailing CJA panel attorney non-capital hourly rate, rounded up to the nearest thousand. Federal defender organization (FDO) mega cases are representations whose anticipated costs cannot be subsumed within an FDO’s existing budget and whose funding requirements exceed authority that the Committee has delegated to DSO to increase an FDO’s budget. Because FDOs are funded through budgets approved by the Committee, service provider funding requests in FDO mega cases are reviewed by the Committee’s Budget Subcommittee rather than by presiding judges, as is done in CJA panel attorney mega cases.