

Practice Standards

December, 2012

Section VIII, Facilities and Support Services

1. Public defender offices should have a budget for operating expenses that provides for a professional quality office, library, and equipment comparable to the prosecutor's office.

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2. Public defender office budgets should include funds for procurement of experts and consultants, ordering of minutes and transcripts on an expedited basis, and for the procurement of other necessary services.

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3. In all assigned cases, reasonable compensation for expert witnesses necessary to preparation and presentation of the case shall be provided, subject to prior approval by the Office of the State Public Defender. Expert witness fees should be maintained and allocated from funds separate from those provided for legal services.

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4. All public defender offices, and all contract attorneys, shall make arrangements to maintain the confidentiality of client information. This includes physical security for confidential documents, exhibits, and electronic communications. Part of this obligation includes requiring outside contractors that may have access to confidential information to sign a confidentiality agreement on a form provided by the Office of the State Public Defender. Examples of personnel who might be required to sign such an agreement are IT personnel who have access to counsel's computer system and janitorial personnel who have physical access to counsel's office.