

# JUVENILE COURT PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS PANEL

## PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The following are the Policy and Procedures regarding appointment of investigators in juvenile proceedings and procedures to be followed by Investigator Panel members.

### A. PANEL MEMBERSHIP

1. The Juvenile Court maintains a panel of private investigators who are available for appointment, to assist the parties and the Court in juvenile court proceedings. The panel shall be known as the Juvenile Panel of Private Investigators, herein referred to as the “Investigator Panel”.
2. Except as hereinafter provided, all appointments of private investigators in juvenile court proceedings must be made from the Investigator Panel.
3. The Investigator Panel is distinct from the criminal division panel, although there may be overlapping membership.
4. The membership of the Investigator Panel will be determined by the Juvenile Expert Evaluation Committee, herein referred to as the “Evaluation Committee”. The Evaluation Committee shall take into consideration the experience, past record, special qualifications, and good character of applicants for placement on the Investigator Panel.
5. Private investigators shall apply to be on the Investigator Panel by completing the [\*Panel Questionnaire\*](#) and sending it together with a resumé to the Evaluation Committee at [JuvExpertPanel@lacourt.org](mailto:JuvExpertPanel@lacourt.org). A private investigator must be interviewed by the Evaluation Committee before being placed on the Investigator Panel. The decision of the Evaluation Committee regarding the interviewee shall be final and shall be communicated to the applicant.
6. If the applicant is placed on the Investigator Panel, the applicant shall be sent a copy of these policies and procedures. All new Investigator Panel members will be on a one-year probationary period.
7. Investigator Panel members must notify the Evaluation Committee immediately at [JuvExpertPanel@lacourt.org](mailto:JuvExpertPanel@lacourt.org) of any changes in address, telephone numbers, email address, and fax number. Failure to do so may result in removal from the Investigator Panel.
8. The Evaluation Committee may also develop and promulgate additional criteria for appointment to the Investigator Panel.

## B. APPOINTMENT OF AN INVESTIGATOR PANEL MEMBER

1. An Investigator Panel member may be appointed from the panel on the motion of counsel under Evidence Code section 730.
2. The attorney who requested the appointment will submit an Order Appointing Expert form if in Juvenile Dependency Court or submit a proposed Order of Appointment if in Juvenile Justice Court.
  - a. In Juvenile Dependency Court, the panel member should receive the following items:
    - i. Copy of the appointing minute order; and
    - ii. Copy of the [“Order Appointing Expert – 730EC” \(LASC DEP 014\)](#).
  - b. In Juvenile Justice Court, the panel member should receive a copy of the signed order and appointing minute order.
3. A panel member shall be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee, as necessary, to determine whether they should continue on the Investigator Panel.
4. Panel members serve at the pleasure of the Court and may be removed from the Investigator Panel at any time without the Court having to show cause for such removal.

## C. RULES FOR INVESTIGATOR PANEL MEMBERS

1. Appointed investigators **shall not**:
  - a. Perform investigative services until an Order for Appointment, specifying a maximum fee, is signed by a judicial officer.
  - b. Incur fees, perform any work, or submit a Declaration for Payment which exceeds the previously approved maximum fee.
  - c. Represent in any manner that they are an officer, agent, representative, appointee, or employee of the Court, or any governmental agency, or that the investigator has the endorsement of any such entity (EXCEPT when making a claim for services.)
  - d. Obtain any statement, interview, document, article, or photograph by means of coercion, deception, deceit, misrepresentation, or artifice.
  - e. Perform services in the courtroom, except as a witness, without prior court approval.
  - f. Provide transportation or act as an escort for witnesses without prior court approval.
  - g. Provide monies, books, or supplies to any youth without court approval.

- h. Solicit business from any youth, whether the youth is represented by counsel or is in propria persona.
  - i. Appointees may perform investigative services only and shall not act as a legal runner (e.g., perform paralegal, secretarial, messenger, or personal services.)
2. Appointed investigators **shall**:
- a. Obtain advance approval from the Court for all expenses and services performed outside of Los Angeles County and adjacent counties (see, [Compensation for Travel Time and Reimbursement of Expenses for Court-appointed Private Investigators for Out-of-County Travel.](#))
  - b. Minimize fees whenever possible, consistent with rendering competent service.
  - c. Immediately notify the Court if an appointment is declined.
  - d. Request an in-camera hearing, from the appointing judicial officer, before incurring any expense which the investigator has reason to believe might be questioned as being unreasonable and unnecessary, even if the amount does not exceed the maximum fee authorized.
  - e. Maintain records for three (3) years from the date of the last service rendered.

#### D. PAYMENT OF INVESTIGATOR PANEL MEMBERS

- 1. A member of the Investigator Panel shall be paid at the hourly rate, or the hourly rate as set by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County.
- 2. An increase in the hourly rate may be requested in cases where extraordinary circumstances exist, as provided herein.
  - a. Hourly compensation authorized for necessary travel, except that time taken to drive to the first contact each day, is limited to the lesser of (a) the time it would take to drive from the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court to the first contact, or (b) the time taken to drive directly to the contact from the investigator's residence or business. Return travel from the last contact of the day to the residence or business is similarly limited.
  - b. The request must be submitted to the appointing judicial officer and include detail as to the extraordinary circumstances as well as a statement of recognition of the usual and customary hourly fee. .
- 3. Incidental expenses, including telephone recordings, photography, and parking fees will be reimbursed only when such expenses are properly documented and itemized.

4. Only the named, appointed investigator may perform work on the case.

#### E. CLAIMS OF INVESTIGATOR PANEL MEMBERS FOR FEES

1. All claims of panel members for fees shall be made in the Court's [ePACE](#) (Professional Appointee Court Expenditure) online system. Panel members should familiarize themselves with ePACE [instructions and information](#).
2. Claims must be submitted online in the [ePACE](#) application and must be submitted within 90 days from the last date of service. ePACE will provide three (3) late claim warnings to each claimant per case. The fourth and any subsequent late claim by a claimant on an individual case shall be reduced by 50% for claims submitted beyond 90 days from the last date of service. Claims not submitted before 180 days after the last date of service will be denied for payment.
3. A detailed description of work performed must be submitted. Names of witnesses or contacts interviewed must be supplied, as well as the location where the work was performed.

#### F. APPROVAL OF TRAVEL BEYOND LOS ANGELES AND CONTIGUOUS COUNTIES

1. A request for approval of out-of-county travel expenses: shall be submitted to the appointing judicial officer; must include a statement of good cause; must itemize all estimated expenses including, but not limited to, hourly fees, mode of travel, costs of lodging, and anticipated travel time.
2. Investigators must exhaust other avenues of investigation, such as telephone, U.S. Mail and electronic methods of communication, before seeking permission to travel out of Los Angeles County.

Reimbursement from PACE will be governed by the Court document titled "[Compensation for Travel Time and Reimbursement of Expenses for Court-Appointed Private Investigators for Out-Of-County Travel](#)".