DO YOU WANT TO GROW YOUR LEGAL PRACTICE AND HELP CHILDREN AND PARENTS IN NEED? APPLY FOR OUR ON LINE TRAINING AND BECOME CERTIFIED TO HELP THESE FAMILIES!

For the last few years, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families has intervened in the lives of Massachusetts families at an alarming rate. Most of these families cannot afford to hire attorneys. Fortunately, in Massachusetts there is a right to counsel for parents and children in state intervention cases. Unfortunately, there are not enough certified attorneys who have the time and training to zealously represent all these families in need.  The Children and Family Law Division (CAFL) of the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) is inviting members of the private bar to apply for admission to the CAFL Trial Panel.  We are looking to increase the number of attorneys handling state intervention cases (typically referred to as “care and protection” or “termination of parental rights” cases) in the Massachusetts Juvenile Court.

Here is some information that might help attorneys decide whether they are interested in joining this panel of litigators.

1. Certification Training – We will be presenting a training via Zoom beginning March 8, 2023. Successful completion of the training will enable attorneys to be certified to accept assignments in care and protection and child requiring assistance (CRA) cases.

**Attorneys accepted into this training will receive a “Certification Payment” of $5032** upon the following: 1) successful completion of the CAFL Trial Panel Certification Training; and 2) within twelve months of completing the training the attorney (a) receives appointments on 12 care and protection cases, and (b) submits 600 hours of billing on care and protection cases.

The training will be a mix of live on-line sessions and substantial self-directed learning. The training will begin with an orientation via Zoom on **Wednesday, March 8, 2:00 – 4:00 PM**. The live Zoom sessions will be held from **1:00 PM – 4:30 PM** on the following dates: **March 13, 16, 20, 23, 27, and 30, April 3 and 6, and on April 12 (from 2:00-4:30).** Attorneys accepted into the training will also complete a one day mock temporary custody hearing on either **April 25, 26 or 27.**

1. Assignment – Care and Protection/Termination of Parental Rights cases begin, most often, with a petition being filed *ex parte* by the Department of Children and Families. The attorney’s responsibilities for the case begin immediately upon assignment, as they must prepare for a potential emergency custody hearing to take place within 72 hours of any *ex parte* order (the “72-hour hearing”). These cases frequently continue to be court involved for 15 months or more.
2. Compensation – Private attorneys are paid at the rate of $85/hour for their work on Care and Protection/Termination of Parental Rights cases.
3. Expectations Regarding Performance – Attorneys are required to abide by CAFL’s performance standards and meet other requirements set forth in CPCS’s Assigned Counsel Manual, found at <https://www.publiccounsel.net/assigned-counsel-manual/>.
4. Support – Each new member of CAFL’s private attorney panel is assigned a mentor. The mentor is available to support the attorney for the first couple of years of practice, to introduce the attorney to court personnel and others, to assist in learning local practices, to attend initial court hearings, and to provide other support and assistance.

Attorneys who are interested in pursuing this opportunity can find more information about the training and the application here: <https://www.publiccounsel.net/cafl/training/>. CPCS is committed to ensuring that the panel of attorneys accepting CAFL assignments is sensitive to the diversity of the client population it serves. We will give preference on a rolling basis to attorneys who submit completed applications by **Monday, February 6, 2023, although we will continue to accept applications in counties of need until the first day of training.** We encourage interested attorneys to apply early and not wait until the deadline.

Come help ensure that parents and children are receiving the due process and effective representation they deserve! Thank you for your interest in this dynamic, challenging multi-party litigation practice