



CPCS MENTAL HEALTH LITIGATION DIVISION CERTIFICATION TRAINING TO REPRESENT PEOPLE FACING CIVIL COMMITMENT AND RELATED FORCED MEDICATION PETITIONS – FALL 2023

The Mental Health Litigation Division (MHL) of the Committee for Public Counsel Services is seeking qualified attorneys to represent clients in civil commitment and forced medication cases in the District and Boston Municipal Courts. In Massachusetts, people experiencing psychiatric distress can be involuntarily detained at psychiatric facilities, committed for up to six months or a year, and treated with anti-psychotic medications against their wishes. These substantial deprivations of liberty entitle people to court-appointed counsel to ensure that all their rights under the law are protected. Civil commitment cases offer frequent and fast-paced litigation experience, client contact, and the satisfaction of providing zealous client-centered advocacy to people who are marginalized because of their mental health challenges.

Certified attorneys will be reimbursed for their work at the rate of \$65.00 per hour.

CERTIFICATION PAYMENT: In addition, you may be eligible for a “Certification Payment” in the amount of \$2,372.50 if you successfully complete the entire course, ***and within one year of completion you take at least ten (10) civil commitment cases and bill at least 200 hours.***

Application Submission:

Admission to the MHL trial panel is by application only. All attorneys who accept CPCS assignments are required to maintain professional liability insurance. **Completed applications must be submitted by Wednesday, August 9, 2023** MHL will notify applicants on or about August 23 whether they have been admitted to the training program and with further instructions about how to register. The link to our online application is at the end of this announcement.

Training Format and Requirements: *Please review this carefully to make sure this format and the dates work for you considering your work/family/other obligations.*

This intensive mini course is a hybrid training with the first class meeting in-person at the CPCS Boston office followed by five live online (Zoom) sessions and substantial online learning through our learning management system (Talent LMS).

The first class will be held at 75 Federal Street on **September 11** from **1:00 - 4:00 PM**. The live Zoom sessions will be held **1:00 - 4:00 PM** on the following dates: **September 15, 19, 22, 26, and 29**. For those who observe the High Holidays, please be aware you may have less time to do the asynchronous work between the fourth and fifth sessions so plan accordingly.

Attorneys accepted into the training must also complete an in-person mock hearing for one half-day on either **October 10, 11, 12, 13 (to be scheduled once the class registration is complete)**.

The online learning will include watching recorded lectures and other videos, reading articles and cases, and completing some quizzes and written assignments. Some of this work must be completed before the training begins; the rest must be done between the live sessions. **You should expect up to 8-10 hours of this online work per week; this is in addition to the time in the live sessions.** The live sessions include discussions and small group skills exercises that you prepare for in advance. The course concludes with a mock trial where you will be able to practice what you learned in the first part of the course and get constructive feedback from experienced mental health attorneys before taking your first commitment case.

The registration fee for the training is \$250*, which includes all materials. Please do not submit payment until after receiving confirmation that you have been accepted into the training, at which point you will receive payment and registration instructions.

Certification Requirements:

Certification is based on successful completion of the training course, including all live sessions, all required materials in the learning management system, and a mock trial. Attorneys who have successfully completed the course training requirements are provisionally certified and assigned a mentor. Attorneys are expected to take at least three cases in their first six months on the panel and maintain an active mental health practice. During the period of the attorney's provisional certification, the attorney must work cooperatively with the mentor as required by the MHLD Mentor Program requirements. The mentor will periodically report to the MHLD Trial Support Unit about the attorney's progress towards full MHLD panel certification. The MHLD Trial Support Unit office will determine when and whether the attorney will: (a) be certified and permitted to take additional assignments without supervision of a mentor, (b) be permitted to take additional assignments with continued mentor supervision, (c) be permitted to continue to take cases with a limitation on the number of cases allowed and/or type of cases assigned or (d) be removed from the panel and have his/her cases reassigned.

If you have any questions, please email MHLD Training Director Beau Kealy at bkealy@publiccounsel.net.

PLEASE CLICK HERE TO APPLY (no fee to submit application)

Note: to submit your application, you must press "Submit" at the bottom left-hand side, below the signature. If you are not able to complete the application in one sitting you may press the "Save" button, on the bottom right-hand side, and you will receive a link to use when you are ready to complete the application. Your application must be complete in order to be considered.

If you need reasonable accommodations in order to complete the application, please email bkealy@publiccounsel.net or call (617) 910-5714

****We do not want the cost of this training to be a barrier for interested attorneys who are dedicated to representing our clients against petitions for commitment and forced medication. If the cost of this training would be a financial hardship, please contact Beau Kealy when you submit your application to discuss a confidential fee waiver.***