



JOIN THE CAUSE!

APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN FOR CPCS'S NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED

ZEALOUS ADVOCACY TRAINING (ZAT)

The Private Counsel Division (PCD) and The Youth Advocacy Division (YAD) of CPCS are seeking qualified attorneys to join our statewide network of Bar Advocates representing clients in criminal and delinquency matters in Massachusetts courts.

Through our nationally recognized ZAT program and panel membership, attorneys gain training, mentorship, and institutional support needed to provide high-quality representation and make a meaningful impact in communities across the Commonwealth.

Bar Advocates serve as independent contractors under the umbrella of the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS).

Apply through the Application Portal [HERE](#).

Applications are preferred by the priority deadline of March 20, 2026, but will be accepted on a rolling basis until the training is filled.

ABOUT CPCS & OUR MISSION

CPCS provides representation through two divisions participating in this certification training.

Private Counsel Division (PCD)

The PCD provides representation to approximately 80% of indigent criminal defendants in Massachusetts through assigned private attorneys in the district and superior courts.

Our mission is to provide excellent legal services to each client by assuring all assigned attorneys meet high performance standards in their representation. We support private attorneys' work by providing access to mentors, supervisors, resources, experts, and continued legal education.

Youth Advocacy Division (YAD)



The Youth Advocacy Division (YAD) ensures that every child facing charges in Juvenile Court has access to zealous legal representation that incorporates a Youth Development Approach, resulting in fair treatment in court.

Working collaboratively, YAD staff attorneys, juvenile defense private panel attorneys, social workers, and support staff provide comprehensive, client-centered services. Together, they advocate in courts, schools, and communities to develop strategies for our clients to achieve long-term success by:

- Providing legal advocacy in court and at school;
- Advocating for alternatives to detention and confinement;
- Assessing the needs and strengths of clients;
- Using trauma-informed and Positive Youth Development models to create holistic service plans;
- Building active and productive community partnerships to ensure seamless access to needed services;
- Supporting youth throughout the court process and beyond; and
- Connecting youth to a network of positive and supportive adults and programs.

YAD provides leadership, training, support, and oversight to a diverse and collaborative juvenile defense bar across the state.

Through individual representation and systemic advocacy, YAD also partners with other state agencies, as well as community organizations and local agencies, to work toward creating safer and healthier communities. YAD is continuously active in taking a leading role in the fight against racial and ethnic disparities in Massachusetts' educational and juvenile justice systems.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Attorneys who wish to accept misdemeanors and concurrent felonies in the District Court or assignments of Juvenile Delinquency cases must complete a four-step process.

1. Apply for and gain admission into a county bar advocate program.
2. Obtain approval as a state vendor through the CPCS Private Counsel Payment Unit
3. Complete Zealous Advocacy Training (ZAT)
4. Receive certification from CPCS

CERTIFICATION TRAINING DETAILS



The training is a mix of in-person sessions, live Zoom sessions, and substantial self-directed learning and will take place on the following dates:

Welcome & Introduction (Zoom)

Thursday, April 23 | 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Pre-Work (Self-directed)

April 24-27

In-person sessions (9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. | Boston & Worcester)

April 28 – 30 (Tuesday – Thursday)

May 7– 8 (Thursday – Friday)

May 12–13 & 15 (Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday)

ASSIGNMENTS & COMPENSATION

Case Assignments

Attorneys will be assigned duty days through the bar advocate program to obtain cases.

Compensation

Hourly Rates

- **\$75/hour** for district and juvenile court level cases *until* August 1, 2026
- **\$85/hour** for district and juvenile court level cases *effective* August 1, 2026
- **\$95/hour** for superior court and Youthful Offender cases *until* August 1, 2026
- **\$105/hour** for superior court and Youthful Offender cases *effective* August 1, 2026

Certification Payments

CPCS offers certification payments to reward your commitment.

District Court Panel

Attorneys accepted to the District Court panel will receive a **\$5400.00 certification payment** after billing 600 hours on 30 separate dockets within 18 months of successfully completing the training. *Case duty days do not count toward the required hours.*

YAD Panel

Attorneys accepted to the YAD panel will receive a **\$5655.00 certification payment**, or **\$255.00** if also receiving the district court certification payment, after billing 200 hours on 10 separate dockets within 18 months of successfully completing the training. *No case duty days count toward the hours.*

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS & SUPPORT

Attorneys must adhere to CPCS's performance standards and meet other requirements outlined in the *CPCS Assigned Counsel Manual*. Those standards and requirements can be found [here](#).

New panel members will be assigned a mentor who provides support, introduces them to court personnel, helps them learn local practices, attends initial court hearings, and offers assistance.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about becoming a member of the CPCS Trial Panel, the certification process, or the upcoming training, please contact:

Rose King for district court: rking@publiccounsel.net

Erica Cushna for juvenile court: ecushna@publiccounsel.net

Join a statewide network of attorneys committed to excellence in public defense.

Apply [HERE!](#)

