

Best Practices for CJA eVoucher

Stay current! The Southern District of Ohio Court maintains a dedicated CJA webpage for counsel and service providers at <https://www.ohsd.uscourts.gov/criminal-justice-act>.

eVoucher Account

All counsel and service providers must establish the following accounts to access eVoucher and to receive compensation. Without the accounts, an appointment cannot be created and vouchers cannot be submitted. Only electronically submitted vouchers are accepted for review, approval, and compensation.

- eVoucher account.
- Login.gov account.
- Vendor Manager Systems (VMS) account.

Voucher Types and Details

AUTH (Authorization) – required to request funds for expert service providers exceeding the statutory limit. Counsel should review the “CJA Service Provider Rates” chart on the CJA webpage for appropriate rates. If a higher rate is requested, contact the Circuit Budgeting Attorney to discuss justification. Be sure to document this consultation and include it in the required supporting memorandum.

*CJA counsel must complete and submit the AUTH to obtain approval **BEFORE** the CJA 21/31 is created. Once the AUTH is approved, counsel will be able to link the CJA 21 to the appropriate AUTH for funding and compensation. If the CJA 21/31 is prepared prior to approval, it must be deleted and created again.*

AUTH 24 – required to request transcripts from the court reporter(s). *An individual AUTH 24 must be created for each Court Reporter but multiple hearings attended by the same Court Reporter may be included on their AUTH 24.*

Any request for an expedited transcript must be indicated on the AUTH 24. Expedited transcripts require the presiding judicial officer’s prior approval because it affects the cost of the transcript.

Once the AUTH 24 is approved by the presiding judicial officer, the CJA Specialist will create the CJA 24 for the court reporter to enter appropriate page numbers and rates. It is then reviewed by the CJA Specialist and submitted for approval by the presiding judicial officers for payment to the court reporter.

CJA 20 – used by counsel appointed on a non-capital case for compensation. Once appointed, counsel will be able to create their CJA 20 and begin to add, save, or edit their Service claimed time or Expenses until it is submitted.

CJA 30 – used by counsel appointed on a capital case for compensation. Typically, a budget is discussed with the Circuit Budgeting Attorney and funding is obtained for such a case. Once appointed, counsel will be able to create their CJA 30 and begin to add, save, or edit their Service claimed time or Expenses until it is submitted.

CJA 21 – created by CJA counsel for the service provider’s services and expenses in a non-capital case for compensation. An established statutory limit is included with an appointment. An AUTH may be required for a separate funding amount that exceeds the statutory limit.

CJA 31 – created by counsel for the service provider’s services and expenses in a capital case for compensation. Typically, an AUTH has been approved for funding.

Supporting documentation **must** be attached to the CJA 21/31 vouchers when it is submitted and should include a detailed invoice for services rendered or expenses incurred.

BudgetAUTH – used to request approval of additional funds for an attorney and/or service providers on a budgeted case. Counsel will first consult with the Circuit Budgeting Attorney to discuss and complete the required spreadsheets for funding. The spreadsheets together with the memorandum in support and all other necessary supporting documents must be attached to the Documents tab at the time it is submitted for review. The presiding district court judge will review this document and then the circuit chief judge will approve the request for funding.

Travel AUTH – used to request funds for counsel or a service provider for travel funding. See eVoucher, locate under Links “Travel Regulations” for more details. Counsel should contact National Travel for assistance with appropriate rates for lodging and car rentals as well as airline tickets. Once a Travel AUTH is approved, notification is sent to National Travel; confirmation emails will be exchanged with the CJA Specialist, counsel and/or service experts with airline tickets details.

Airfare is paid by the Court with a Travel AUTH. The reasonable cost of the lodging, meals, ground transportation (car rentals) are reimbursable and should be included on the CJA 20/30 or CJA 21/31. *Detailed receipts and proof of payment* for travel expenses must be included on vouchers when submitted for review.

CJA 26 – is a fillable template that can be used to provide the justification for any *excess* amount sought. It is an alternative to a drafted memorandum in support and is NOT a stand-alone document. It should only be attached to the CJA 20 voucher’s Documents tab. *A submitted CJA 26 will be rejected back to counsel with a request to attach it to their CJA 20.*

See the Court’s webpage for “How to Request Excess Fees” because this updated procedure replaces the previous *ex parte* motion/order practice.

Voucher Creation

Ready to create a voucher for the first time or you have questions? Contact the CJA Specialist for one-on-one training or go to the Court's CJA webpage and click the link for **National CJA Voucher Training Materials** for online step-by-step procedures for the desired topic.

Click *SAVE* frequently to capture your time; eVoucher does *NOT* auto-save.

Tips for a CJA 20 voucher

eVoucher defaults to the correct hourly service rate by year and the mileage rate as established by the IRS.

On the voucher, tabs are broken out at the top of the screen: Basic Info, Services, Expenses, Claim Status, Documents, and Confirmation.

Basic Info – case details appear; counsel is able to confirm the appropriate bank detail is selected.

Services – claimed time is entered.

Expenses – claimed expenses, if any, are entered.

Claim Status – voucher status is entered as to the Start Date field (use the first date of your claimed time) and the End Date field (the last date of claimed service time or expense – whichever is the last date).

*Ensure all * fields on the Claim Status tab are completed before attempting to submit a voucher. Incomplete information will prevent successful submission.*

Documents – upload documents to support the voucher in PDF format and 10 MB or less in size.

Confirmation – Scroll to the bottom of the screen. Add a relevant note, as desired, in the Public/Attorney field. Click the box for the statement affirming the truth and correctness of the voucher, and then click “Submit” for the voucher to be electronically sent to the Court.

If there are no errors or warnings associated with the document, a **Success** message confirms the voucher is submitted and provides your voucher number. Retain this number for your records. *See the Guidelines at § 230.76 Record Keeping* – records must be maintained for three (3) years after approval of the final voucher for an appointment. The records are subject to audit.

Entering Claimed Time and Expenses

Claimed time is entered on the Services tab and incurred expenses are entered on the Expenses tab.

Important: Enter claimed service time using the appropriate **In Court** and **Out of Court** category. The required fields for Services entries are marked with *.

Date – use the actual date of service.

Service Type – select the In Court time and Out of Court category from the drop-down arrow.

In Court and Out of Court time ***must be in separate entries AND not combined.***

For example, attending the Arraignment use **a. Arraignment and/or Plea** under the *In-Court* categories but the meeting time with the client, prosecutor, review of pleadings, travel time, etc. is entered with specific *Out of Court* categories.

Hours - claimed time is entered in tenths of an hour. Google for a chart to convert minutes into tenths of an hour.

Description – provide a sufficient description for a reviewer to understand the nature of the services performed avoiding overly broad descriptions unless the service is privileged or sensitive in nature.

Compensable Service/Expense? Avoid secretarial type work as it is usually not compensable. See the Guide to Judiciary Policy at § 230.66 Non-Reimbursable Expenses, noting § 230.66.10 General Office Overhead and § 230.66.20 Items and Services of Personal Nature.

Discovery Review: Specify the type of discovery and volume such as, “Receipt and Review of X amount of discovery, paper files, videos, jail calls, etc., and the approximate amount of review such as, “Listened to 60 jail calls out of 130.”

Family/Friend Communication: Communication should only be case related, such as identifying potential witness(es) or requesting support letters, etc.

Legal Research: Indicate the specific issue(s) researched as long as it does not reveal otherwise privileged information.

Travel: Travel time must be entered as a round-trip. *For example,* if travel took 20 minutes each way, enter 0.70 hours (40 minutes total) in the Hours column. In the description, include: “Round trip to/from office to [location] for [event].” This travel entry is entered separately from other Services claimed on the same date—such as client meetings or court hearings.

When you complete your entry click ADD. Your entry to display as a line beneath the Services entry fields.

If you need to edit or remove, click the line to be revised for the details to appear in the Services entry fields again. Edit or Remove as desired.

Click SAVE to capture any revision.

Discovered some missed time? Enter the time and eVoucher will automatically update the time chronologically.

Expenses over \$50? Supporting documentation is required to be attached on the Documents tab, such as **a receipt/invoice AND proof of payment for each \$50 expense.**

If the expense is paid by **credit card**, ensure the payment detail is referenced on the invoice. If the expense is paid by **check**, include a scanned image of the cancelled check. If the expense is for in-house copies, reimbursement is made at \$0.10/page. If the cost exceeds \$50 include on a declaration on letterhead, stating, “*In-house copies made of 1,000 pages of discovery at \$0.10/page for \$100.*”

All food receipts or lodging receipts must be itemized and attached with proof of payment.

Tips for a CJA 21 voucher

The **CJA 21/31** are created by counsel for a service provider or a mentee. *Invoices and all supporting documentation must be attached to the Documents tab before the voucher is submitted.*

Review the invoice(s) to confirm the rate is within the Sixth Circuit’s rate range and all claimed time is reasonable and not excessive.

Entries are made by date on the Services tab similar to the CJA 20 voucher but there is no specific category to be selected. Itemize the services as on the invoice(s). Totals for the invoice and voucher must be the same or counsel will need to indicate why there is a discrepancy.

All **CJA 21/31** vouchers require counsel to follow a **two-step process** to submit the service provider’s voucher for Court review.

- Create the voucher first as the ‘expert’ and click submit. Locate the voucher on your Home Page, click on the Confirmation tab and submit it again.
- On your Home Page, review the Status column for the service provider’s voucher.
- If it is “*Submitted to Attorney,*” return to the Confirmation tab and submit it again.
- If the status is “*Submitted to Court,*” the voucher is successfully submitted and the Court’s initial review will begin.

Mentee vouchers – Review the CJA Training Panel Program document available on the Court’s CJA webpage for the compensation limitations, specifically VI. Compensation and Expenses of Training Panel Attorney. *Reimbursement will not be approved for services that duplicate the work on the appointed CJA panel member.*

If the invoice exceeds \$1,000, first create an AUTH to submit for review and approval before the CJA 21 voucher is created.

YIKES! I have a Warning!

eVoucher automatically analyzes any pending voucher to find issues. Counsel can also click on the Audit Assist button to determine what error or warning(s), if any, will need to be resolved before a voucher can be successfully submitted.

A pop-up notice will appear with the noting any issue(s) such as the voucher exceeds the statutory maximum, or dates of claimed service time is before the appointment date, or for service providers, their account is not current and must be updated before you submit their voucher. Note: *You may need to disable your Pop-Up blocker for the notice to appear.*

Contact the CJA Specialist at 513-564-7529 for assistance to resolve issues.

Voucher Review

Under the CJA Guidelines at § 230.33.10, the CJA Specialist conducts an initial screening of all submitted documents before transmitting them to the presiding judicial officer. This review checks for issues such as,

- Mathematical errors.
- Instances where the work is not compensable.
- Instances in which the work billed was clearly not undertaken or completed.
- Instances in which the billed hours are clearly in excess of that was reasonable required to complete the task.

Identifying Other Voucher Issues

- **Cases designated as complex** or those with an anticipated trial, appointed counsel is encouraged to consult with the Circuit Budgeting Attorney *early in the process*. This discussion can help determine whether a budget is appropriate and outline the steps for submission, particularly when counsel anticipates their fee will be exceeding the statutory maximum.
- **Submitting a voucher outside the 45-day time frame** would be considered late and require a brief memo of explanation. See the CJA Guidelines at § 230.13 Time Limits.
- **Adding an Associate to a CJA panel member's voucher?** Contact the CJA Specialist. Note: an Associate's hourly rate differs from that of the appointed panel attorney.
- **Payments are now made via electronic funds transfer** to the bank account listed in VMS. Paper checks will no longer be issued or mailed.
- **Should you designate an Authorized Agent?** When your VMS account is established, you may need to designate an Authorized Agent. For detailed instructions, refer to the CJA webpage and the associated Job Aid.

Rejected documents will be highlighted in goldenrod yellow on your Home Page. Counsel will also receive an automated email notification with issue details, and the same note will appear in the Attorney/Public field. Rejected vouchers must be **revised, saved, and re-submitted again** for review before approval.

Voucher Entry Examples

To help prevent delays or rejections during the voucher review process, refer to the chart below. It provides guidance on common entry issues and best practices to ensure submissions are accurate and complete.

<i>Preferred: Services Entries with Suggested Categories and Tips</i>			
Date	Service Type	Claimed Time	Description
6/12/25	Interviews/Conferences (<i>Out of Court</i>)	1.0	Mgt with client's mother re bond issue (0.20); phone call with client (0.20); mtg with client in jail (0.60) <i>Tip: Similar services on the same date may be combined in one entry.</i>
6/12/25	Obtain/Review Records (<i>Out of Court</i>)	2.0	Receipt/review (R/R) 200 pages of wiretap transcripts <i>Tip: Enough detail to support claimed time.</i>
6/12/25	Legal Research/Drafting (<i>Out of Court</i>)	4.2	Research issue of car search (3.0); began outline & initial draft of motion to suppress (1.2) <i>Tip: Topic & writing time noted.</i>
6/21/25	Detention Hearing (<i>In Court</i>)	0.5	Attended detention hearing (0.2), wait time due to large docket (0.3) <i>Tip: Includes succinct note for hearings that are typically quick but can be delayed with other issues.</i>
6/21/25	Travel (<i>Out of Court</i>)	1.0	Round trip to/from office to Court <i>Tip: Google Map are useful for accurate times and mileage.</i>
6/24/25	Obtain/Review Records (<i>Out of Court</i>)	0.1	R/R Order of Detention <i>Tip: Avoid use of excessive time to review small documents or notation entries.</i>
6/24/25	Legal Research/Drafting (<i>Out of Court</i>)	0.5	Draft & finalize discovery motions <i>Tip: Avoid using "filed" in entry.</i>
7/8/25	Other (<i>In Court</i>)	0.4	Attend Zoom PTC call with Court <i>Tip: Not all Court events are in person & may fall under a generic In Court category.</i>
<i>Preferred: Expense Entries with Tips</i>			
6/21/25	Copies	\$20.00	In-house copies; transcripts (200 pages x \$0.10/pg. = \$20.00) <i>Tip: State generally what was copied, cost & pages copied & calculation of the expense.</i>
<i>Avoid: Entries with Issues Noted</i>			
Date	Service Type	Claimed Time	Description

6/21/25	Other (<i>In Court</i>)	8.7	Met client's mother; call/conference with client; review discovery; legal research; attend hearing; travel <i>Issue Noted: Do not combine services; voucher will be returned to break out events into separate entries.</i>
6/21/25	Other (<i>Out of Court</i>)	0.2	Made copies of 200 pages <i>Issue Noted: Claimed time would not be compensable; secretarial in nature.</i>
6/24/25	Obtain/Review Records (<i>Out of Court</i>)	1.0	Order <i>Issue Noted: Review time must be reasonable; usually limited to 0.10/hr. unless document is very long such as a complicated order or charging document.</i>
6/24/25	Legal Research/Drafting (<i>Out of Court</i>)	5.0	Prepare 5 motions <i>Issue Noted: Standard motions without research should have reasonable, not excessive claimed time.</i>
7/8/25	Interviews/Conferences (<i>Out of Court</i>)	0.4	Attend Court call <i>Issue Noted: calls with Judge are In Court time unless it is a general call to Chambers about issue(s) with a case, etc.</i>

When Will I Be Paid?

After a voucher is submitted, it will be initially screened by the CJA Specialist before it is transmitted to the presiding judicial officer for review and approval. Depending on the voucher's amount, it may be submitted to the Circuit for additional review and final approval.

Once the voucher is "certified" for payment and closed during the day, it is sent that evening for disbursement via electronic fund transfer (EFT). The process runs Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. *Payees typically receive payment within a week.*

Review the status of your voucher on your Home Page under the Closed Documents field.

Payment Status	Definition
Pending	The voucher is certified and closed. eVoucher is awaiting confirmation from the payment system that the payment document has been created.
Awaiting Disbursement	A payment document has been created in the payment system but has not yet been sent to the Treasury.
Disbursement in Process	The payment has been sent to Treasury for disbursement. eVoucher is awaiting confirmation of payment from the Treasury and a trace number.
Paid	Treasury has deposited the payment.
Cancelled	The payment has been cancelled.