

TITLE 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE
PART II - CRIMINAL PROCEDURE
CHAPTER 228 - DEATH SENTENCE

§ 3599. Counsel for financially unable defendants

- (a) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, in every criminal action in which a defendant is charged with a crime which may be punishable by death, a defendant who is or becomes financially unable to obtain adequate representation or investigative, expert, or other reasonably necessary services at any time either—
- (A) before judgment; or
 - (B) after the entry of a judgment imposing a sentence of death but before the execution of that judgment;
- shall be entitled to the appointment of one or more attorneys and the furnishing of such other services in accordance with subsections (b) through (f).
- (2) In any post conviction proceeding under section 2254 or 2255 of title 28, United States Code, seeking to vacate or set aside a death sentence, any defendant who is or becomes financially unable to obtain adequate representation or investigative, expert, or other reasonably necessary services shall be entitled to the appointment of one or more attorneys and the furnishing of such other services in accordance with subsections (b) through (f).
- (b) If the appointment is made before judgment, at least one attorney so appointed must have been admitted to practice in the court in which the prosecution is to be tried for not less than five years, and must have had not less than three years experience in the actual trial of felony prosecutions in that court.
- (c) If the appointment is made after judgment, at least one attorney so appointed must have been admitted to practice in the court of appeals for not less than five years, and must have had not less than three years experience in the handling of appeals in that court in felony cases.
- (d) With respect to subsections (b) and (c), the court, for good cause, may appoint another attorney whose background, knowledge, or experience would otherwise enable him or her to properly represent the defendant, with due consideration to the seriousness of the possible penalty and to the unique and complex nature of the litigation.
- (e) Unless replaced by similarly qualified counsel upon the attorney's own motion or upon motion of the defendant, each attorney so appointed shall represent the defendant throughout every subsequent stage of available judicial proceedings, including pretrial proceedings, trial, sentencing, motions for new trial, appeals, applications for writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States, and all available post-conviction process, together with applications for stays of execution and other appropriate motions and procedures, and shall also represent the defendant in such competency proceedings and proceedings for executive or other clemency as may be available to the defendant.
- (f) Upon a finding that investigative, expert, or other services are reasonably necessary for the representation of the defendant, whether in connection with issues relating to guilt or the sentence, the court may authorize the defendant's attorneys to obtain such services on behalf of the defendant and, if so authorized, shall order the payment of fees and expenses therefor under subsection (g). No ex parte proceeding, communication, or request may be considered pursuant to this section unless a proper showing is made concerning the need for confidentiality. Any such proceeding, communication, or request shall be transcribed and made a part of the record available for appellate review.
- (g) (1) Compensation shall be paid to attorneys appointed under this subsection¹ at a rate of not more than \$125 per hour for in-court and out-of-court time. The Judicial Conference is authorized to raise the maximum for hourly payment specified in the² paragraph up to the aggregate of the overall average percentages of the adjustments in the rates of pay for the General Schedule made pursuant to section 5305³ of title 5 on or after such date. After the rates are raised under the

preceding sentence, such hourly range may be raised at intervals of not less than one year, up to the aggregate of the overall average percentages of such adjustments made since the last raise under this paragraph.

(2) Fees and expenses paid for investigative, expert, and other reasonably necessary services authorized under subsection (f) shall not exceed \$7,500 in any case, unless payment in excess of that limit is certified by the court, or by the United States magistrate judge, if the services were rendered in connection with the case disposed of entirely before such magistrate judge, as necessary to provide fair compensation for services of an unusual character or duration, and the amount of the excess payment is approved by the chief judge of the circuit. The chief judge of the circuit may delegate such approval authority to an active or senior circuit judge.

(3) The amounts paid under this paragraph⁴ for services in any case shall be disclosed to the public, after the disposition of the petition.

Footnotes

¹ So in original. Probably should be “section”.

² So in original. Probably should be “this”.

³ So in original. Probably should be “5303”.

⁴ So in original. Probably should be “subsection”.

(Added Pub. L. 109–177, title II, § 222(a), Mar. 9, 2006, 120 Stat. 231; amended Pub. L. 110–406, § 12(c), Oct. 13, 2008, 122 Stat. 4294.)

Amendments

2008—Subsec. (g)(2). Pub. L. 110–406 inserted “or senior” after “active” in second sentence.