

Opportunities for Attorneys to Do Child Welfare Trial and Appellate Work on the Private Attorney Panels of the CPCS Children and Family Law Division

Presenters

Carol Rosensweig, CAFL Trial Panel Director
Andrew Cohen, CAFL Director of Appeals

The Committee for Public Counsel Services is the state agency charged with the responsibility for providing and overseeing attorneys appointed to represent indigent clients where there is a statutory or constitutional right to counsel. The Children and Family Law (CAFL) Division provides legal representation to children and parents in child welfare matters, including care and protection proceedings, children in need of services cases (CHINS) (status offenses), actions to terminate parental rights, and guardianships. The CAFL Division has seven staff offices. However, over 90% of CAFL clients are represented by private attorneys throughout the Commonwealth who are trained and certified to accept these appointments.

The CAFL Division is looking for qualified attorneys to add to our panels of attorneys who do child welfare work on the trial and appellate levels. This challenging field requires excellent litigation skills, client relations skills, and a willingness to work with troubled families. Admission onto the panels is by application only. Trainings for the trial panel are offered in the summer (in western Massachusetts) and fall (in Boston). The training consists of three days of substantive law lectures and two days of intensive trial skills training. This program has been customized for the practice of child welfare law. To be certified for the CAFL appellate panel, attorneys must complete a one-day appellate training program and either (a) have trial panel certification or (b) attend the three-day substantive law portion of the trial panel training program.

The current compensation rate set by the legislature for CAFL panel attorneys is \$50.00/hour.

Carol Rosensweig is the Committee for Public Counsel Services Children and Family Law (CAFL) Division Trial Panel Director. She was the Attorney in Charge of the Brockton CAFL office from its inception in September 2006 until April 2007. Prior to her CPCS employment, Carol was a solo practitioner in Somerville, where she was a member of the CPCS delinquency, CAFL, and criminal panels, accepting appointments in the Juvenile, District, and Probate Courts to represent adult and child clients. Carol co-authored, with Rebecca Pries, “Kids and the Law: A User’s Guide to the Court System,” a book published in bi-lingual editions (English-Spanish and English-Khmer).

Andrew Cohen has been with the CPCS Children and Family Law (CAFL) Division for fourteen years, two as a trial attorney in the Salem staff office and twelve in the Boston administrative office. In his current position as Director of Appeals, Mr. Cohen oversees the CAFL appellate panel, conducts trial and appellate trainings, and maintains a small trial and appellate caseload. His appeals include Care and Protection of Sophie and Adoption of Vito, as *amicus curiae* briefs in Custody of Lori and Adoption of Sherry. He has authored several articles and book chapters on evidence and parent representation.