



MAINE COMMISSION ON INDIGENT LEGAL SERVICES

June 9, 2021

MCILS Rostered Counsel

Via e-mail only

Re: **Communications and Registration**

Dear Counsel:

Please read this letter carefully and completely because it contains information that you will need while working with MCILS. MCILS continues work to streamline its internal operations to allow our limited staff to better serve our functions. This letter contains instructions for communicating with us, including file naming and email addressing conventions that you will need to adopt to ensure that we receive and process your materials effectively.

Registration

In the next week or so you will receive the 2021 annual renewal. Please complete and return that form to us by July 15, 2021. If you do not intend to renew your MCILS registration, please do us the courtesy of an email, rather than simply not reapplying. We will act on applications we receive on or before July 15, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. before issuing the August roster. If you would like to remain eligible for cases from August forward, please meet that deadline. If you have any questions or concerns, you would be well served by applying early, so that there is time to work out any issues.

If we do not timely receive your complete and qualifying form by the deadline, then we will not be able to renew you for the August roster. I anticipate that there will be time after August 1st to work through any outstanding issues but cannot now commit to a timeframe for reestablishing your eligibility on or after July 16th. Please do not put yourself in that position.

I do not anticipate that we will address specialized panel applications during the period beginning when we release the 2021 renewal form and August 1st. This is because the time we can devote to roster issues will be consumed with reregistration. If you are considering applying to join a specialized panel, please get your application in now.

Communication

We do our best to communicate with you as promptly and effectively as we can, but due to the continuing understaffing in our office, being responsive is challenging at times. To help us be responsive to you we ask that you communicate to us by email, rather than by phone. There may be times that a telephone call is important to help resolve an issue, and we can set up calls in those instances. At the beginning of a communication cycle, however, email is much more efficient.

We discourage the use of fax or USPS mail because there will be delays in the receipt of those communications.

We are also implementing new e-mail protocols. These protocols are necessary for us to process the torrent of information we experience daily. To that end:

1. If you have a communication to MCILS related to a case, your roster status, or a general operations concern, please use the address: MCILS@maine.gov. This address will distribute your email to the people who may need to see it, and we will address it. Examples of some of the types of emails that should be address to MCILS@maine.gov include requests to approve cases; questions about either roster eligibility or approval of specific case; questions about co-counsel; questions about whether an appointment extends to a collateral matter; requests for funds; and requests for payment of non-counsel invoices.
2. If you are engaged in a dialogue with a particular member of the MCILS staff, it remains appropriate to email that person directly.
3. All emails that pertain to a case in any way must contain the docket number for that case as the first thing in the subject line. The docket number must be precisely in the form used by the Court. This means that the year must be four digits, and that leading zeros should be included. A properly formatted docket number might read: WESDC-PC-2021-00001.
4. Emails for the following purposes must contain the following language immediately following the docket number:
 - a. Approval Request – for requests that MCILS approve a matter in defender data.
 - b. Funds Request – for funds request
 - c. Payment Request – for requests that we pay non-counsel vouchers.

For other emails, please use a descriptive subject line that uses complete words rather than abbreviations.

For example, a request for funds in my hypothetical PC case would have a subject line that reads:

WESDC-PC-2021-00001 Funds Request

5. Documents submitted to MCILS should be in pdf format. Documents you create should be machine readable. Requests for funds and similar documents should not be submitted in a word processor format or as image files. Pdfs you create should be printed to pdf, rather than printed to paper and scanned.

Please ensure that your staff is up to speed on these protocols. If you would like assistance learning how to print to pdf, or accomplish any other task to facilitate your work with MCILS, I am happy to help you. Please just ask.

Sincerely,

/s/ Justin W. Andrus

Justin W. Andrus
(Interim) Executive Director
MCILS