



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Jason Ysais
Director – Marketing, Communications and Media Relations
P: 213-896-6558
E: jysais@lacba.org

Los Angeles County Bar Association Establishes Independent Juvenile Defender Program

The first appointed counsel program in California to provide a full range of social welfare and legal services to support juvenile defendants and their attorneys

LOS ANGELES – JUNE 9, 2017 – The Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA), one of the largest voluntary metropolitan bar associations in the country, has established the LACBA Independent Juvenile Defender Program (IJDP) in partnership with Los Angeles County to provide legal services to youth charged with crimes in the Los Angeles County juvenile delinquency system.

“We are extremely pleased to work with the County of Los Angeles to create the Independent Juvenile Defender Program. This innovative approach will provide a wide range of social welfare and legal services, with the goal of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders,” said LACBA President Margaret P. Stevens.

IJDP’s Directing Attorney, Cyn Yamashiro, said, “We are implementing a best-practices and holistic mode of representing youth. LACBA’s Independent Juvenile Defender Program integrates psychological and familial assessments to identify the core reasons the minor has come into contact with the juvenile justice system. In addition, IJDP provides our attorneys with ancillary resources to support their clients, including social workers, investigators, writs and appellate support, and academic and entitlement advocacy.

“Before IJDP, appointed counsel was required to provide all ancillary resources from a single fee awarded by the court, approximately \$350. Further, the attorneys had to petition the courts for funds to provide their clients with social workers, investigators, and appellate counsel. Now, these resources are readily available to them through our program,” he added.

IJDP attorneys are available on site daily at each of the eight Juvenile Delinquency Districts of the Los Angeles Superior Court – Compton, Eastlake, Inglewood, Lancaster, Long Beach, Los Padrinos, Pomona, and Sylmar. In instances when both the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender are conflicted out of a case, IJDP attorneys will represent the juvenile defendant.

Current IJDP attorneys are experienced criminal defense attorneys who have extensive juvenile and adult trial experience. Those attorneys who wish to join IJDP must complete a specific curriculum designed to insure competence in the juvenile delinquency system. Additionally, LACBA hosts brown bag/office hours for attorneys new to the program, and provides ongoing training and real-time support.

Prior to accepting the appointment as directing attorney, Yamashiro was a professor and founding executive director of the Center for Juvenile Law and Policy at Loyola Law School, where he established the first juvenile delinquency policy and defense legal clinic and taught classes in advanced criminal litigation skills, juvenile law, and trial advocacy. Yamashiro has also been published in the area of indigent defense delivery systems and how different systems affect dispositional outcomes.

An experienced criminal trial attorney, Yamashiro had his own criminal defense practice and served as a Los Angeles County Deputy Public Defender. He has tried 52 cases to jury and litigated over 200 bench trials in municipal, juvenile, and superior court. L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas appointed Yamashiro to the Los Angeles County Probation Commission, where he served as president for two years.

Yamashiro leads an in-house staff of eight, including:

- A writs and appeals attorney to answer practice questions and provide written legal support for attorneys and file writs on behalf of IJDP clients;
- A resource attorney to provide attorneys support on entitlements issues ranging from academic support to mental health services and foster care, in addition to carrying his own caseload;
- A social worker to prepare bio-psychosocial assessments of youth and their families for use in developing the guilt and disposition stages of their cases, and to oversee a network of juvenile-specific social workers to provide support for IJDP clients; and
- An investigator who carries her own caseload and coordinates a network of investigators who are juvenile specialists.

Yamashiro estimates IJDP will handle up to 2,000 cases per year.

Attorneys who are interested in joining IJDP should contact Tracy Andrade, IJDP Program Coordinator, at tandrade@lacba.org or (213) 896-6429.

About the Los Angeles County Bar Association

The Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) is one of the largest voluntary metropolitan bar associations in the nation, with nearly 18,000 members. LACBA is engaged in advancing the administration of justice and meeting the professional needs of lawyers. For more information on LACBA, visit www.lacba.org.