

October 23, 2008

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Criminal Justice Act Mentoring Program  
Approved for the Southern District of New York**

Chief Judge Kimba M. Wood announced that the Southern District of New York is implementing a mentorship program that will assign experienced members of its Criminal Justice Act Panel to act as mentors for attorneys interested in applying to the Panel. The Lawyers from the Panel provide representation in criminal cases to defendants who, based on their financial need, qualify for appointed representation funded under the Criminal Justice Act. Attorneys Peter Quijano and Anthony Ricco were instrumental in drafting the Program. They will serve as co-directors. While the Program is intended to improve the diversity of the Panel, the Program will be open to all interested, qualified attorneys.

Many state court practitioners do not qualify for the Panel because they lack federal experience. The Program will provide these attorneys with federal experience by pairing them with mentors and assigning them to a case that is of sufficient complexity to warrant the services of two attorneys. The mentee will work on the case under the supervision of the mentor, subject to the approval of the client and the district judge to whom the case is assigned. The mentee will provide the first fifteen hours of service pro bono, and thereafter bill for

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services at a reduced rate. The mentee will not bill for duplicative or non-essential services or for time spent solely on training. Participation in the Program will not guarantee appointment to the Panel.

The Program will serve as a model for others around the country. The Administrative Office of the United States Courts, in approving the Program, has noted that other districts have expressed an interest in adopting a similar mentoring program. The AO has stated that the experience to be gained from the Southern District's Program will assist it in deciding whether to implement similar programs in other districts.

Chief Judge Dennis Jacobs has approved the increased compensation of the proposal .

For further information, contact Peter Quijano at 212-686-0666 or Anthony Ricco at 212-791-3919.