



# CJA PANEL EVOUCHER TIP SHEET

The presiding judge reviews each CJA voucher for reasonableness. Describe each voucher entry with enough detail to allow the judge to assess reasonableness of the work performed and the amount sought for the services rendered. Include information helpful to orient the judge including the docket number if applicable, time in court, wait time, etc. Follow these billing tips for faster CJA voucher processing.

## BILLING TIPS

- TELL YOUR BILLING “STORY” TO THE JUDGE BY AVOIDING PERFUNCTORY PHRASES**  
Perfunctory phrases like “file review,” “trial prep,” “notes to file,” “work on motion,” “document review” tell little of the story about the entry. Break the task down into smaller increments with descriptive detail for each increment. For example: “reviewed key evidentiary documents and grand jury testimony” or “began drafting facts section of motion to suppress.”
- EACH TASK NEEDS A SEPARATE ENTRY; AVOID BLOCK BILLING**  
Block billing is the listing of a group of unrelated tasks under a single time entry. For example: “telephone conference with Dr. Jones about expert report; draft motion to suppress; travel to courthouse.” Block billing does not allow a judge to adequately assess the reasonableness of the time entered.
- COMMUNICATING WITH CLIENT, CLIENT’S FAMILY, PROSECUTORS, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS, OR PROBATION/PRETRIAL SERVICES OFFICERS**  
When the communication is with the client, note that and there is no need to further describe the communication. When communicating with all others identified above, briefly describe how the communication is related to the litigation of the case. (Do not include a description of assisting the defendant with a personal matter.) In addition, if the communication is in part for scheduling, briefly describe how it is not simply a clerical matter. For example: “Discussed parameters of and scheduled proffer with AUSA.”
- CONTEMPORANEOUS BILLING**  
The judges expect that your time will be entered daily if possible. Beginning with the appointment and the first appearance in court, a lawyer should begin to enter a claim for each task done in the case in eVoucher. During the case, claims should be entered contemporaneously. Receipts and invoices, when necessary for a claim, should be saved in .pdf format and uploaded to the system. At case conclusion, completion of the voucher will take just a few moments.

**JUDGE PREFERENCES FOR DETAILED BILLING**  
Some judges require more detail than other judges. Avoid terms like “review” and “revise.” Add words that inform the judge why the review or the revision merited the time, such as “evaluate,” “assess,” re-draft,” or “analyze.”

**TRAVEL**  
Include the travel destination and the purpose of the travel. Explain if mileage is not consistent with Google Maps, MapQuest, etc. (But uploading a map is not required.)

**ATTACH RECEIPTS**  
Attach itemized receipts to support expenses if possible. Copying expense should list the number of pages.

**REVIEWING DISCOVERY**  
Include at least a general description of what was reviewed. Bates numbers are not necessary. If discovery is reviewed over multiple sessions or is re-reviewed, make sure to use different descriptions (or “re-review discovery related to \_\_\_”) to ensure the entry is not flagged as duplicative.

**LEGAL RESEARCH**  
Briefly describe the subject and the purpose of the legal research. You do not need to include specific case names. However, the more descriptive you are, the easier it is for the judge to review your claimed research time for reasonableness.

**INCLUDE ALL WORK IN VOUCHER; DO NOT DELETE ENTRIES TO STAY UNDER THE “CAP”**  
Case compensation caps change annually. You can find the caps at [§ 230.23.20](#) of the *Guide to Judiciary Policy*. To stay under the “cap” you can write off activity as “no charge” if you decline to bill some of your time and expenses. (The cap runs with the defendant, not with the lawyer.) To waive the cap, contact CJA staff for assistance: [flmd\\_CJA@flmd.uscourts.gov](mailto:flmd_CJA@flmd.uscourts.gov)

**POTENTIAL SECRETARIAL WORK: ADD DESCRIPTION TO ENSURE COMPENSATION**  
Words like copy, print, download, schedule, file, etc. can be flagged as non-compensable “secretarial” work. Use descriptive words or topics like “preparing materials for trial” or “approve documents for mailing.”