

**OPD PUBLIC DEFENSE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
TRAINING REQUIREMENTS  
(as amended May 2016)**

Jurisdictions that apply for public defense funds shall require that all attorneys providing services annually attend at least 7 hours of trainings approved by the Washington State Office of Public Defense (OPD).

An approved training is a program or course of education in criminal defense offering instruction that improves an individual's substantive legal knowledge in the areas of criminal law, criminal procedure ethical knowledge or trial skills. Such training may include areas of civil practice in which an attorney provides public defense services such as dependency, civil contempt or civil commitment matters.

**PROCEDURE**

The CLE programs that OPD, the Washington Defender Association (WDA) and the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (WACDL) offer shall be considered "approved trainings." In addition, courses approved by the Washington State Bar Association shall be considered "approved training" if the programs are related to criminal defense and are sponsored or presented by the following organizations:

Washington State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Department;  
University of Washington School of Law; Seattle University School of Law;  
Gonzaga University School of Law; King County Department of Public Defense,  
the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, or the National  
Association of Public Defenders.

An attorney who has attended a course or program other than one of those listed above shall apply to OPD for approval before the program or by the end of the calendar year in which the course or program is held. OPD shall approve the CLE if taught by professionals knowledgeable in the applicable subject area and if the course will improve an attorney's substantive legal knowledge, ethical knowledge or trial skills. Approval shall be at the discretion of the OPD director. Appeals of denials of approval may be made to the OPD Advisory Committee.

**COMMENTARY**

This policy comports with RCW 10.101.050, which requires that "attorneys providing public defense services attend training approved by the Office of Public Defense at least once per calendar year." It is also consistent with the Public Defense Standards endorsed by the Washington State Bar Association, (Standard Nine: Training), which requires that attorneys providing public defense services should participate in regular training programs on criminal defense law, including a minimum of seven hours of continuing legal education annually in areas relating to their public defense practice."