



**STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENT DEFENSE SERVICES**

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I. Executive Summary

Pursuant to NRS 180.320(2)(f), the Department of Indigent Defense Services has developed an exciting new program to encourage law students and recent graduates to explore and commit to careers in indigent defense. The program is called LASSO (“Law Student Supervision Operation”) and it is designed to provide real-world and hands-on public defense experience to students, under the mentorship of experienced public defense attorneys.

Under the program, the Department will coordinate with law schools to place first and second-year law students in summer training programs with experienced public defenders. The LASSO program will also offer incentives to recent graduates to accept employment in rural public defender offices, including stipends to cover relocation and study materials for the Nevada Bar Exam.

LASSO consists of three different funding tiers: (1) A \$6,500 stipend for first year law students to work in a qualifying public defender’s office; (2) A \$10,500 stipend for second year law students to work in a qualifying public defender’s office; (3) a \$15,500 stipend for those law graduates who accept employment in a qualifying office, as well as an additional \$6,500 bar study stipend for these same graduates.

II. Definitions:

“Qualifying Office”: Office at the state or unit of local government who provides legal representation as defined in NRS 180.004. This term can include indigent defense services providers that have a contract to provide first-line primary indigent defense services for a county. Federal and municipal offices are not eligible. The office also must be able to provide supervision for the limited practice of law under Supreme Court Rule (SCR) 49.1, 49.3, or 49.5.

“Rural county” is defined as a county with a population of less than 100,000 people. An individual seeking to practice in a rural county under SCR 49.3 shall have priority in receiving the stipend.

“Underserved county” is defined as a county within Nevada which the Department has determined is struggling to fill indigent defense services vacancies in their qualifying office(s) and would benefit from LASSO.

“First-year student” is defined as a student enrolled in a law school approved by the American Bar Association and who has completed at least thirty (30) semester credit hours, or the equivalent.

“Second-year student” is defined as a student enrolled in a law school approved by the American Bar Association who has completed at least forty-five (45) semester credit hours, or the equivalent.

A **“supervising lawyer”** shall be defined by SCR 49.3(4).

III. Narrative

A. Training Materials

LASSO will provide up to **15** stipends to cover preparation for the Nevada Bar Exam. Qualified individuals will receive a \$6,500 stipend to purchase training materials to prepare for the Nevada Bar Exam. The individual must accept employment at a qualifying office in the State of Nevada and preference will be given to those accepting employment in qualifying rural county offices.

B. Training and Retention

LASSO will provide up to 30 stipends for the following training opportunities:

- 1. Scout Tier:** up to **10** students @ **\$6,500 stipend** per student.
 - a. Provide summer training opportunities and support for first-year students to work and train in a rural Nevada qualifying office for at least 10 weeks (as agreed by the student and supervising lawyer).
 - i. Ten summer training opportunities with a Qualifying Office (“Public Defender”).
 - ii. The summer training shall be led by a supervising lawyer that is continuously and personally present through the following activities:
 1. Assisting and counseling the student in the activities and reviewing such activities with the student, to the extent necessary for the proper training of the student and protection of the client.
 2. Reading, approving, and personally signing any pleadings, briefs, or other papers prepared by the student before filing; reading and approving any documents prepared by the student for execution by any person before submission to that person; and reading and approving any

correspondence prepared by the student before mailing.

3. And being present for any appearance by a student before a court or administrative tribunal, if allowed.

2. Trigger Tier:

Up to **10** students @ **\$10,500 stipend** per student.

- a. Provide summer training opportunities and support for second-year students to work and train in a rural Nevada qualifying office for at least 10 weeks (as agreed by the student and supervising lawyer).
 - i. Ten summer training opportunities with a Qualifying Office (“Public Defender”).
 - ii. The summer training shall be in compliance with SCR 49.3 and led by a supervising lawyer that is continuously and personally present through the following activities:
 1. Assisting and counseling the student in legal practice activities and reviewing such activities with the student, to the extent necessary for the proper training of the student and protection of the client.
 2. Reading, approving, and personally signing any pleadings, briefs, or other papers prepared by the student before filing; reading and approving any documents prepared by the student for execution by any person before submission to that person; and reading and approving any correspondence prepared by the student before mailing.
 3. And being present for any appearance by a student before a court or administrative tribunal.

3. Silver Tier:

Up to **10** limited practice practitioners @ **\$15,500** per training stipend.

- a. To qualify, individuals must accept employment at a rural public defender office and be qualified to practice law by either having either passed the Nevada bar or qualify for a limited practice certification under SCR 49.1 or 49.5.
 - i. Ten positions with qualifying offices in rural Nevada.
 - ii. New hires will be provided with hands-on practice opportunities in the rural public defender offices. The individuals will handle cases, learn local rules, and have an earlier opportunity to improve their skills in providing indigent defense services.

IV. More Information

For more information, please email didscontact@dids.nv.gov with a subject line of LASSO.

Please fill out an interest form using the following link:
<https://forms.gle/E55qNDMvzW5V6m2w7>