# NCDC Trial Practice Institutes 2010
# Defender Office Manual

## The Application Process

We have come to expect that we will receive three to four times the requests for spaces in this program than we have room for. Therefore, we feel an obligation to serve as large a population of participants as possible. This limits our ability to accept a lot of really motivated people, and makes the admissions process pretty painful sometimes. This manual gives some background on how the admissions process works, and what your office can do to make it run smoothly for all of us.

The Trial Practice Institute (hereinafter TPI) is not a program for beginners. The experienced attorney often benefits more from attendance than the brand new one. Generally, in dealing with public defender offices, we use the training director's priority list in granting admission to attorneys. However, part of our decision on the number of spaces given an office is based on the appropriateness of its priority list. The participants in the program are divided into 12 groups of 8 for exercise purposes. This split is done based on several factors, mainly on experience level, but also gender, race, type of practice and not having two people from the same office or general location. To make this work, we must have a diversity of experience levels, locations, etc.

## Deadline and application fee information

Our regular deadline is March 15. NCDC has always charged a $25 application fee for each application. However, we will waive this fee for office applications and accompanying individual applications received by March 1.

## Can a substitution be made?

Sometimes, depending on several factors, including the state of our waiting list, how close we are to the beginning of the session, and the person you want to substitute. Call as soon as the situation arises, and we'll do our best. Don't send a substitute without prior approval from us. All substitutes must be approved by NCDC. If you think a substitution might need to be made, it would be better if we had the substitute's application already in hand.

## Can a former participant attend again?

Not usually. We offer several short programs on specialized topics which make good "refresher" courses for alums. Occasionally we accept alums who 'graduated' five or more years ago.

## Payment Procedure

Just remember, your payment history follows you. We know it's tough to get money out of a state/local/county government, but we need to know what's going on. Keep us informed of the name and phone number of the person who will be tracking our invoice(s).

Normally, each participant will receive an individual invoice for his/her housing and tuition (less any scholarship award) along with instructions to pass it on to the appropriate person. We're going to know who that person is, right? If you need one invoice for all your participants, let us know and we'll generate one for you. We must receive all payments for housing and tuition prior to June 1 for the June session or July 1 for the July session, unless you have a good reason and we know about it (in writing). We do accept purchase orders or specific written letters from public defender offices stating that the payment will be made after the session is completed, but this is only for participants accepted with their office's support.

## When should office applications be filled out?

Do it now, but no later than tomorrow, but do it right (fill in all the blanks). Feel free to send in changes any time. We must have the office application and individual applications by March 1 for waived fees, or March 15 with $25 fee for each individual application - no exceptions!

## When are admission decisions made?

The admissions process begins in March. A possible scenario goes like this: April 7th, we call you, saying you have 2 spaces. You've submitted 6 applications, and you have to choose the two lucky ones. If you've filled out your office application correctly, we could take the first two on your list, because they're prioritized. But, #1 left the office unexpectedly after you sent the application in, and #2 is out with a broken leg, #3 has a major trial set for late June to July. So we give you 24 hours to pick among the three remaining ones. You call us back on April 8th, and (when talking to the unlucky one who didn't get in) blame it on us that you only got two spaces. See how easy this is? We put your last person on the waiting list and hope he or she gets in soon.

Participants should hear from us definitely by April 30 if the application has been received by the deadline, either by phone or by letter. We don't admit anybody without an application - individual application, that is. It's part of the brochure. It asks for an individual applicant's name. This is a skills test. Please have an individual application completed for each person.

## Scholarship Policy

Our scholarship policy is to spread it as far as it will go, as long as it lasts. Apply early. Get that paperwork in and write a good essay about why your office needs it. Pitiful paystubs work well, too.

## Where else to go for scholarship help

In most states, there is a local affiliate of NACDL, comprised mainly of private attorneys. Several of these groups generate scholarship funds for the TPI each year, designating that the money be given to an attorney from the state.

Usually, a number of individuals contribute relatively small amounts to a fund which reaches a nice size. If you know members of your local affiliate, broach this idea with them (with your staff as the designated recipients, of course). Let us know if it works.

## Why can't everyone who applies be accepted?

We just don't have room. To maintain the quality of the program, faculty, etc., we hit critical mass at 96 participants per session. Not to mention space mass...the law school has no more rooms, the staff has no more mental room.

## What should be done after acceptance?

a) Have a party
b) Dance a lot
c) Pat yourself on the back
d) Wait for your invoice and your confirmation card to arrive. There will be one for each participant, and *they are sent directly to the participant (the invoice will be sent to the person designated as the billing person if that information is available to us).* The confirmation card will ask for housing preferences, smoking habits, roommate identity, diet restrictions, etc. It also requests CLE information, including bar numbers. Be sure they ask for CLE credit now!
e) Make sure they understand how much your office will pay toward housing when they choose a room type. This avoids "sticker shock" when they get billed for the extra single room charge. NOTE: No single rooms for scholarship recipients!
f) Send confirmation cards back...now!
g) Make your plane reservations. In the past, we have insisted that the best plan was to fly into Atlanta, but since 9/11 that may have changed. Be aware that transportation is more reliable when flying into Atlanta because there are shuttle services between Atlanta and Macon. There are only taxis between the Macon airport and the hotel, and those taxis are not sitting at the airport waiting to pick up fares, they will have to be called. Since the Macon airport is approximately 10-15 miles from the hotel, the fares will probably run more than $10 or so. On the other hand, lines for security checks will not be nearly as bad in Macon as they are in Atlanta. In the past, someone could get to Macon by shuttle in the time it would take to change planes and fly into Macon. That probably still is true, but there are transportation delays in Macon and security delays in Atlanta, and there is also the possibility that a Macon flight could be cancelled with little notice, so you can make your choice of destination based on that information. It is possible (no promises!) that if enough people fly into Macon, we may be able to arrange some sort of shuttle to the hotel, but that is only a small possibility at this point so do not let that affect your decision. If you have any other questions about this, please don't hesitate to call or email me at rosie@ncdc.net .

h) Don’t make hotel reservations... we do that!
i) Pay your invoice. (See payment procedure below for details.)

## What should be done if wait listed?

Send in your waiting list confirmation card...now!

We normally have a significant amount of activity on the waiting list, getting in at least 20-25 people from the list, so don’t despair. The longer someone can remain on the waiting list, the greater his/her chances of getting in. So keep those schedules clear. As we get cancellations, we fill the space immediately.

## What about cancellations?

Do it as early as possible, to give us the most time to fill the space. We won’t charge you for the space unless we cannot fill it. If the space is not filled, you will be responsible. It is best to put this information in writing to us, and if you fax the cancellation, please send a hard copy in the mail.

## What about meals?

As a rule, the only meals provided are: the opening night dinner and lunches during the week (Monday-Friday), with one other possible dinner. The hotel provides breakfast this year. All other meals are the responsibility of the participant.

## Paperwork

We must have an individual registration form (comes as part of the brochure) for each individual applicant. We need only one scholarship application per office if the office is the entity requesting financial aid. If an individual attorney is applying outside the standard office application and wants money, that person must complete an individual scholarship application.

## Office Application

This is fairly straightforward. This form includes both the standard information we need plus the information needed to consider your office for scholarship assistance. Any applicant you list will automatically be put onto the waiting list if not accepted in the first round of admissions. If an applicant prefers one session over the other, but could attend either, please rank the sessions with a "1" for first choice and "2" for second choice in the boxes.

Please prioritize your list! Put the attorneys you want in first, first. If you can’t prioritize them now (many of us have this problem, it’s OK), prioritize them later, but please send us a letter before March 15 with your list!

Don’t worry too much about a request for scholarship help influencing our decisions. Initial admissions decisions are relatively uninfluenced by that factor. Scholarship amounts are awarded after first-round admissions are made. We continue to receive scholarship donations through early April, so the final sum of money available is not known until then. Obviously, don’t ask if you don’t really need it. Secondly, don’t request single rooms if you request financial aid - it’s the rule! Every year we have at least one poor soul who goes into serious debt to get the funds to come.

**Don’t forget - please put any vital information such as cancellations in writing to us, and follow up a fax with a hard copy by mail!**

## For more information

If you need clarification, call us between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. weekdays at (478)746-4151 or fax us at (478)743-0160.

Important Dates:

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| March 1, 2010: | Application deadline in order to waive the $25 application fee for each applicant |
| March 15, 2010: | Application deadline for those sending a $25 application fee for each applicant |
| Late April: | Admissions decisions become available.<br>Notices are sent as soon as possible.<br><br>Confirmation cards due 10 days after admissions notices are mailed. |
| June 1, 2010: | Travel cards due for June session.<br>Payment of tuition/housing due for June.<br>Last day to cancel for June session. |
| June 13, 2010: | June session starts. |
| July 1, 2010: | Travel cards due for July session.<br>Payment of tuition/housing due for July.<br>Last day to cancel for July session. |
| July 18, 2010: | July session starts. |