

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

ADDENDUM TO THE PRISONER CIVIL RIGHTS PANEL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION  
A PILOT PROGRAM ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF JUDGES January 12, 2026<sup>1</sup>

Reasons for the Pilot Program

In recent years, there has been a significant decline in the number of cases referred to the Prisoner Civil Rights Panel (“Panel”) in which member firms have accepted appointment by the Court. The Court remains committed to using the Panel to assist in representing pro se prisoner civil rights plaintiffs. Therefore, the Court will implement a modification to the program calling for direct assignment to member firms prior to a case being placed on the Panel extranet.<sup>2</sup> The Court will assess the modification’s impact on the number of cases accepted and determine whether to adopt the modification permanently.

Pilot Procedures

1. Each member firm shall have one designated point person (“Designee”) for appointments, who shall receive the assignment from the court and communicate with the Panel Administrator as set forth below. Each firm has discretion to designate its Designee, and is responsible for updating the Panel Administrator and Panel Coordinators of any change in the identity and/or contact information of the Designee. The Panel Coordinators will keep an alphabetical list of member firms and the Designee for each firm (the “Panel List”).

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<sup>1</sup>This Pilot is an addendum to the Prisoner Civil Rights Panel Program Description originally approved by the Board of Judges on December 20, 1993, amended as of June 6, 2005, and June 18, 2012.

<sup>2</sup>The term “extranet” refers to the Court’s system for listing Panel cases on an electronic database, accessible only to Panel member firms and attorneys, on which Panel attorneys may review information about the case and indicate their willingness to be appointed by the Court. The platform the Court uses for the extranet may change from time to time, and the current platform is box.com.

2. Upon entry of an order referring a case to the Panel, the Panel Administrator will forward to the Panel Coordinators a copy of the referral Order, the Complaint, the Docket, and the Case Referral Sheet (collectively the “Case Packet”). The Panel Coordinators will then forward the Case Packet to firm Designees as follows:

a. The Coordinators will send the Case Packet via email to a Designee for screening in order using the Panel List.

b. The Designee will have fourteen days to review the Case Packet and advise the Coordinators whether or not the firm will accept the case, and, if accepting, identify attorney(s) in the firm to be appointed. If the Designee accepts, the Coordinators will advise the Panel Administrator who will forward a draft appointment order to the chambers of the presiding judge.

c. This process will be repeated until three successive Designees have declined to accept the case. When that occurs, the case shall be placed on the court’s extranet where it can be reviewed by any member firm or attorney under the previously existing procedures.

d. When next forwarding a new Case Packet, the Coordinators will begin with the next firm on the Panel list, so that all member firms have an equal chance of accepting appointment in a Panel case.