


# CJA Newsletter

United States District Court, District of New Mexico

Clerk's Office

## INTERVIEW WITH THE HONORABLE KEVIN R. SWEAZEA, UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Included in this issue is another "In the Spotlight" section, this time with the Honorable Kevin R. Sweazea, who was appointed as a United States Magistrate Judge in May 2017. Thank you to the CJA Panel Representative for Las Cruces, Cori A. Harbour-Valdez, and the Honorable Kevin R. Sweazea for the time commitment involved in providing the interview. 

### Attention: eVoucher V5.1 release

#### Relevant Updates to the CJA Panel

- ❖ The ability to request additional funds to increase an existing authorization (see Quick Tip, below).
- ❖ Budget reports now include increases in authorizations.
- ❖ Additional instructions added to "Forgot Login" and Password Reset" pages.
- ❖ Standardized behavior for viewing audit notes – includes line audit notes on rejected and closed vouchers.
- ❖ Prevents entry of invalid TINs.
- ❖ Duplicate emails no longer sent to Attorneys upon appointment.

#### Contact Info & Important Links

- ❖ [US District Court, District of New Mexico website](#)
- ❖ [CJA Attorney Manual](#)
- ❖ [Updated - CJA Information Manual](#)
- ❖ [National CJA Voucher reference tool](#)
- ❖ [Website FAQs](#)

#### Financial Services:

Email: [financial@nmcourt.fed.us](mailto:financial@nmcourt.fed.us)  
 Phone: (505) 348-2145

### Mistake of the Month:

**Submitting a voucher more than 45 days after the entry of a judgment.**



Once the judgment is entered into the case, the attorney will have 45 days to submit their final attorney and service provider vouchers. In cases where the voucher exceeds the time limit, counsel must attach a detailed letter addressed to the presiding Judicial Officer explaining the reason for the delay. See more in the [CJA Information Manual](#).

## Quick Tip – Requesting additional funds on an existing Authorization

**Request Additional Funds**  
 Use this button to select an approved authorization that you would like to request additional funds for.



By selecting "Request Additional Funds" a list of all **closed** authorizations is presented for this representation and appointment. The user can then select the authorization to which the new request should be linked.

#### Request for Additional Funds on existing Authorization



When the user selects the authorization, the following screen is presented. Complete the request and submit.

When increasing funds on an existing authorization, the approved amount is added to the amount of the original authorization to which it is attached, and a link is established between the two documents. The **original authorization** is the authorization that holds the approved funds and is the **only** authorization presented when CJA21/31s are generated.

**For a full description, refer to the eVoucher online help.**

## Quick Tip – Reset Forgotten or Expired Password

With the recent upgrade of the CJA eVoucher system and to comply with security standards, you may be prompted to reset your password or receive a message that your password has expired. Passwords expire every 180 days. When changing passwords, users must specify a password that satisfies the new complexity rules and has not been used in the past 365 days. Users attempting to change their password to a previous password before the required time period has passed will receive a notification.

If your password has expired, click on the **'Forgot Login'** link to reset it.

Your password must be different than the previous password and be:

- at least 8 characters,
- at least one upper case character,
- at least one lower case character,
- at least one numerical character, and
- at least one special character (!,@,#,\$,%,&,-,+).

Each password link in the email is only good for 24 hours and is only good for one try.

**Important:** While the user is resetting their password, on the "Password Reset" screen, if the error "Your request could not be executed. Please try again or contact your administrator" is displayed, do not try to reset your password again immediately on this screen.

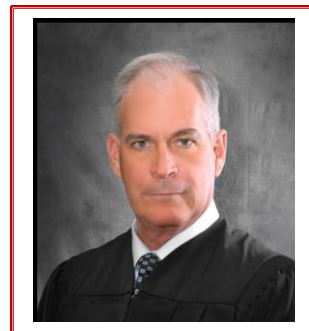
If you get the error above, one of the following things has occurred:

- The email link is older than 24 hours and has expired.
- The email link was used twice and is invalid.
- The username field entered on the password reset screen is not correct.
- The email field entered on the password reset screen is not correct.

If any of these occur, the user should return to the login page and pick "Forgot your login?" again and start the process over.



### THE HONORABLE KEVIN R. SWEAZEA, UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE



*By Cori A. Harbour-Valdez*

On May 3, 2017, Kevin R. Sweazea was appointed as one of the District's United States Magistrate Judges. The appointment is located in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Sweazea served as District Judge for the Seventh Judicial District (Catron, Sierra, Socorro and Torrance Counties). He was first appointed to the position in February 2001, by Governor Gary E. Johnson. He was then elected to the position in 2002 and retained by the voters in 2008 and 2014.

During his term as District Judge, he presided over thousands of criminal, civil, probate, domestic relations and children's court cases in the Seventh Judicial District courts, as well as many cases in other counties throughout New Mexico pursuant to New Mexico Supreme Court appointments. In addition, he regularly accepted designations to preside over civil cases in various State District Courts in New Mexico by agreement of the litigants in those cases. From 2005 through 2015, Judge Sweazea served as Chief Judge of the Seventh Judicial District Court.

Before his appointment to the State District Court bench, Judge Sweazea was in private practice. His law practice, based first in Albuquerque, New Mexico and then in Los Lunas, New Mexico, involved the representation of farmers, ranchers, businesses and individuals throughout New Mexico in the litigation of civil disputes, and in real estate and business transactional matters. Judge Sweazea also served as contract attorney for various municipalities and Boards of County Commission. He served on the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board from 1997 through 2001, and on the Socorro County Land Use Commission from 1996 through January, 2000.

Judge Sweazea attended New Mexico State University on a rodeo scholarship and was a competitive bull rider in college. He received a Bachelor of Accountancy degree from NMSU in 1985. He graduated from Baylor University Law School with a Juris Doctor degree in 1988. He and his wife, Jenny, a former school teacher, have been married for over 30 years. They have two children, who are both on rodeo and academic scholarships at NMSU. His family ranches Black Angus cattle in Mountainair, Estancia, and Quemado, New Mexico. Judge Sweazea and his children enjoy competing in team roping and other rodeo events.

I sat down with Judge Sweazea to find out what advice he has for attorneys appearing before him, his thoughts on CJA vouchers, *voir dire*, and setting conditions of release, as well as other observations from the bench.

**On CJA Vouchers:** Judge Sweazea has not encountered any problems with vouchers yet. He said he tries to process them promptly and is open to meeting with CJA attorneys to discuss any issues.

**On *Voir Dire*:** Being a Baylor Law grad, Judge Sweazea recognizes the importance of *voir dire*, noting that effective attorneys can exhibit their trial advocacy skills during the process. Based on his State Court experience, Judge Sweazea anticipates handling the preliminary portion himself and also allowing the attorneys the opportunity to question the panel. His philosophy is to give the attorneys the opportunity to try the case and he believes that begins in *voir dire*.

**On Setting Conditions of Release:** Judge Sweazea stated he appreciates the attorneys sharing personal history of the clients, including employment history, educational background, and family connections/support. He does not require documentation and stated an attorney's word is sufficient. He does prefer that family members attend the hearings, especially those wishing to serve as third party custodian.

**On Courtroom Procedures and Chambers' Preferences:** Judge Sweazea indicated he has no particular requests for proposed orders, specific fonts, etc. He does not get excited about such details. However, he advised that attorneys should be creative in their preparation and presentation. He has been pleased thus far with the CJA attorneys who appear before him. Judge Sweazea indicated CJA attorneys are very effective overall.