



CHAIR:
The Honorable Sharon Keller
Presiding Judge, Court of Criminal
Appeals

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS:
Honorable Sharon Keller
Honorable Nathan Hecht
Honorable John Whitmire
Honorable Brandon Creighton
Honorable Joseph "Joe" Moody
Honorable Andrew Murr
Honorable Sherry Radack
Honorable Vivian Torres

MEMBERS APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR:
Mr. Alex Bunin
Honorable Jon Burrows
Honorable Richard Evans
Mr. Don Hase
Honorable Missy Medary

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
Geoffrey Burkhart

Report from the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) For the June 29, 2018 Texas Judicial Council Meeting

Introduction

Here is a brief TIDC update. As always, we have a lot going on. If you would like any additional information, please contact Executive Director **Geoff Burkhart**: (512) 936-6999 or gburkhart@tidc.texas.gov.

TIDC Board and Committee Meetings

The TIDC [Policies and Standards Committee](#) met March 8th to discuss recent policy and fiscal monitoring findings, as well as the 2017 Indigent Defense Plan and contract review processes. The [full board](#) met immediately afterward to discuss the upcoming FY19 Discretionary Grant cycle and address policy and fiscal monitoring findings. During the meeting, former TIDC Executive Director **Jim Bethke** was awarded the 2018 Robert O. Dawson Indigent Defense Distinguished Service Award. The Award honors the late Professor Robert O. Dawson's outstanding contributions to indigent defense. Jim has dedicated his career to indigent defense and has greatly improved the way Texas provides counsel for its poorest citizens accused of crimes. The [Grants and Reporting Committee](#) met on May 31st to consider new discretionary grant requests for the upcoming FY19 grant cycle.



The [full board](#) met again on Wednesday, June 13th in Kerrville, Texas to discuss FY19 Discretionary Grant requests and to report on the fiscal and policy monitoring programs.

TIDC Strategic Planning

On June 13th, TIDC board members and staff traveled to Kerrville, Texas for Strategic Planning. The group had a productive discussion about TIDC's successes, persistent indigent defense deficiencies, long-term goals for the agency, and strategies for the upcoming legislative session that will help guarantee continued improvement. The discussion was facilitated by Meadows Institute's **Dr. Tony Fabelo**.



Staff Update

Claire Buetow joined TIDC as a Policy Analyst on Monday, May 14th. Claire previously served as a Staff Attorney at the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA), where she evaluated and improved indigent defense systems across the country. Claire received her Juris Doctor from the George Washington University Law School and her Bachelor of Arts degree from Oberlin College.



Scott Ehlers has been selected as the recipient of the 2018 State Bar of Texas Michael Moore Award, which was created by the Legal Services to the Poor in Criminal Matters Committee to recognize extraordinary contributions to improving the quality of criminal legal representation to indigent Texans. He will be recognized at the Advanced Criminal Law Course on July 23rd.

Geoff Burkhart will be traveling to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in July to serve as a neutral observe for criminal proceedings related to 9/11. Early this quarter, Geoff also helped create a group that gathers statewide indigent defense commissions from across the nation.

TIDC Workshops on Effective Post-Arrest and Indigent Defense Practices

TIDC and the Texas Justice Court Training Center cosponsored workshops on effective post-arrest and indigent defense practices in [Eagle Pass](#) on February 20th and in [Marfa](#) on May 18th. Approximately 60 people, including county officials,

attorneys, and law enforcement from across the state met to discuss proper pretrial practices from arrest to magistrate warnings and appointment of counsel. Materials from the workshops can be found [here](#).

Indigent Defense Trainings and Events



TIDC staff members have presented at several events, including the National Indigent Defense Leaders Roundtable in Chicago, the [7th Annual Excellence in Indigent Defense Series](#) at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, the 46th Annual County Treasurers' Continuing Education Seminar, and at the 5th Annual Texas Association of Pretrial Services (TAPS) in Galveston, Texas. Staff have also attended several presentations and training sessions, including Course Corrections: National Public Defenders Summit on Mental Health & Criminal Justice Conference, cosponsored by Equitas and the National Association for Public Defense in Denver, Colorado in March; an IBM Design Thinking training session at the Dell Campus in Austin; the American Bar Association's 13th Annual Summit on Indigent Defense Improvement in Chicago; and the National Juvenile Defender Center's Juvenile Contract Counseling Convening in Washington, D.C. Our fiscal and policy monitoring team traveled to Bexar, Midland, Hays, Smith, Hockley, and Cochran Counties for monitoring reviews. TIDC staff celebrated the right to counsel with a Gideon Day 2018 reception on Friday, March 16th. TIDC staff members have also led several writing workshops for TIDC and OCA staff.

Commission Publications

TIDC has issued numerous reports and publications in the past several months. Our Fiscal Monitor, **Debra Stewart** has been monitoring and examining selected counties' grant fund spending and issued Fiscal Monitoring Reports for [Webb County](#), [Brazoria County](#), [Zavala County](#), [Marion County](#), and the [Caprock Regional Public Defender Office](#). In early spring, TIDC published the [Annual Expenditure Report for Fiscal Year 2017](#) and the [Supplement to the Primer on Managed Assigned Counsel Programs](#).

Recent Articles and Media

ACROSS THE STATE

[El Paso County's poor getting better legal help after critical 2014 audit](#) (March)

[Study finds serious shortcomings in Travis County indigent defense](#) (April)

[Galveston County hit with bail lawsuit similar to Harris County case](#) (April)

[Texas Counties Forced to Shoulder Public Defender Costs](#) (May)

[His Clients Weren't Complaining. But the Judge Said This Lawyer Worked Too Hard](#) *(March)*

[Assessment of the Texas Office of Capital and Forensic Writs](#) *(April)*