



## TEXAS INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION

209 W. 14<sup>th</sup> St., Room 202  
Austin, Texas 78701

512-936-6994 (Voice)

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**Contact: Marissa Kubinski**  
512-936-6994

### **Texas Counties to Receive Additional Appropriations for Indigent Defense**

AUSTIN – The Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) adopted a budget that allocates \$35 million to the indigent defense formula grant program. The budget reflects a \$15 million increase over the previous year thanks to legislative action to ensure that all dedicated funds collected specifically for indigent defense will again be available for that purpose. As a result, most counties will be eligible for a special formula grant disbursement in the new fiscal year that begins October 1. Counties in compliance with key provisions of the Fair Defense Act will be eligible to apply for formula grants. "We look forward to getting these dedicated funds out to counties in the coming months so that they can be put to work for indigent defense as intended," said Commission Chair Sharon Keller.

The Commission awarded discretionary grant funds to 21 Texas counties totaling more than \$10 million dollars. Among these are nine counties who will be collaborating to support implementation of a web-based indigent defense process management system initially developed by Bell County through grant funding from the Commission. The system is designed to improve representation and compliance with the Fair Defense Act through enhanced transparency, accountability and efficiency. These nine counties will join a collaborative effort through the Conference of Urban Counties TechShare Program to provide ongoing support, maintenance and development of the system. Commissioner and Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley said, "The application of technology has opened new opportunities to understand, manage and improve our indigent defense systems. These grants will help counties reap the benefits of innovation."

Finally, the Commission awarded a total of \$628,108 to Austin County, Dimmit County, Kleberg County, Smith County, and Willacy County for extraordinary indigent defense expenditures in a case or series of cases. To be eligible for extraordinary grant awards, counties must demonstrate the extraordinary nature of the case or series of cases and direct litigation costs for indigent defense services are the only allowable expenditures.

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