

TEXAS INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION

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INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION ANNOUNCES

\$20 MILLION IN GRANTS TO COUNTIES

Also presents Gideon Award to Wichita County & Salutes Two Departing Members

AUSTIN – The Texas Indigent Defense Commission announced today the award of \$20 million in formula grant funds to Texas Counties to help improve attorney representation systems for the poor. Under the Constitution and Texas state law, each county is required to develop a system to provide attorneys to those charged with a crime who cannot afford to hire counsel. All 254 counties are eligible to receive funds under the formula grant program if they submit their annual indigent defense expenditure report and biennially submit their indigent defense plans that meet the requirements of state law. Funds are awarded based on a formula that considers each county's population and indigent defense costs incurred.

“The Commission recognizes the many variations among Texas's 254 counties and the different corresponding challenges they face as they work to ensure that the rights of the accused are protected,” said Sharon Keller, the presiding judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals and Commission's chair. “We remain committed to the distribution of available state funds that is fair and equitable to all counties and takes into consideration the different circumstances of counties in every region, large and small, urban, rural and suburban.”

The Commission also today recognized Wichita County and its Public Defender Office with the 2012 Gideon Recognition Award for their participation in and contributions to a study entitled “Wichita County Public Defender Office: An Evaluation of Case Processing, Client Outcomes, and Costs.” The study establishes the efficacy of public defenders in Wichita County and is a significant contribution to the indigent defense knowledge base that will help develop and improve standards-driven programs in Texas and nationally.

Finally, the Commission saluted two long-serving members who are leaving the Commission for their outstanding service and commitment to ensuring justice for all Texans. State Senator Jeff Wentworth of San Antonio has served on the Commission since 2006, and State Representative Pete Gallego of Alpine has served as a member of the Commission from 2002 to 2003 and 2009 to 2012.

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