

TEXAS INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION

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INCREASED ACCESS TO INDIGENT DEFENSE DATA TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AUSTIN – The Texas Indigent Defense Commission today unveiled a new format for its public data site. Restructured from the ground up with the help of the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M, the site aims to make it easier for county and state officials to navigate the extensive amount of data maintained by the Commission. The Commission collects information on a wide variety of indigent defense expenditures and appointment trends, as well as the state indigent defense funds distributed to counties through formula and discretionary grant programs.

“With ten years’ worth of data in the archives, we thought we needed to improve the accessibility of our site—especially for those who are not familiar with indigent defense in Texas” said TIDC Chair Sharon Keller. “The new site takes what could be an overwhelming amount of information and makes it accessible and searchable in a logical, systematic manner.”

J. Gregory Shugart, Criminal Courts Administrator for Tarrant County, agrees: “I was familiar with TIDC’s previous data site, but the new format has allowed me to identify information I didn’t even know was there and provides the tools to enhance the goal of transparency for the Judges, County Commissioners, and the public.”

The new streamlined site was developed over the course of the previous year, and the Commission believes that the added value will be well worth the effort. “Enhanced functionality and ease of use make this site an invaluable tool,” said TIDC Executive Director, Jim Bethke. “Whether you are a power user or a once a year webster, the site is designed to answer your indigent defense questions.”

The public may visit the new TIDC data site at: <http://tidc.tamu.edu/public.net/>