

# TASK FORCE ON INDIGENT DEFENSE

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## **David Slayton Presented with Dawson Indigent Defense Distinguished Service Award**

AUSTIN – The Task Force on Indigent Defense today awarded the Robert O. Dawson Indigent Defense Distinguished Service Award to David Slayton, Lubbock County’s court administration director.

The Task Force presented the award to Mr. Slayton for his work to create innovative systems and procedures in Lubbock and across Texas that serve as models of efficient and effective indigent defense.

“David’s leadership and deep commitment to the protection of the constitutional rights of the poor has helped make Lubbock County a leader in indigent defense,” Judge Sharon Keller, the chair of the Task Force and presiding judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals, said. “His efforts have had concrete impacts on our criminal justice system that elevate the quality of justice available to those in need.”

Mr. Slayton helped develop the Regional Capital Public Defender Office, based in Lubbock, serving more than 100 counties across the state. He was instrumental in securing cooperation among the counties and getting the funding to develop this innovative office. The regional public defender helps participating counties provide high-quality defense representation while efficiently managing the costs capital cases.

Mr. Slayton also led the way to create the Lubbock Special Needs Defenders’ Office, a nonprofit program of the local defense bar that manages a group of private attorneys to more effectively serve defendants with mental illness. Based on the success of this model in ensuring quality defense services, Mr. Slayton has most recently built support to develop a similar managed assigned counsel office to coordinate representation for indigents in all felony and misdemeanor cases in Lubbock.

State officials from Lubbock joined the Task Force in saluting Mr. Slayton. "David is a gifted innovator and his ideas have resulted in improved administration of justice for all parties involved in our courts," Senator Robert Duncan said. "I appreciate his hard work on indigent defense issues such as the managed assigned counsel programs and West Texas Regional Capital Public Defender Office. This distinguished award is well deserved." State Representative Charles Perry said, "David Slayton has worked tirelessly to make improvements in the way Texas provides counsel for its poorest citizens accused of crimes. Through his service he has been able to provide justice in a cost efficient manner. His leadership in this area has been significant, and his hard work has benefited not only those in Lubbock County but all Texas citizens." State Representative John Frullo said, "I would like to congratulate David on receiving this prestigious award. I know we would all like to commend him for his hard work and remarkable effort to improve the way Texas provides indigent defense services."

### **About the Robert O. Dawson Award**

The Robert O. Dawson award honors the late Professor Dawson’s outstanding contributions to improving Texas’ indigent defense system and honors outstanding service and contributions to the improvement in the way Texas provides counsel for its poorest citizens accused of crimes.

## **About the Task Force on Indigent Defense**

The Task Force on Indigent Defense assists counties to provide quality representation in a cost-effective manner that meets the needs of local communities and the requirements of state and constitutional laws. We provide state funding, require local planning for indigent defense and reporting of expenditures, and provide an array of resources for counties to improve these services. For more information, visit <http://www.courts.state.tx.us/tfid/>.

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