



## TEXAS INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION

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### **TIDC Releases Caseload Guidelines for Court-Appointed Attorneys in Appellate and Juvenile cases**

AUSTIN, Texas - The [Texas Indigent Defense Commission](#) (TIDC) released the [Juvenile Addendum](#) and [Appellate Addendum: Guidelines for Indigent Defense Caseloads](#) presenting the findings of two new caseload studies based on data collected from defense lawyers statewide. Stephen F Hanlon, General Counsel for the National Association for Public Defense, said “Texas is leading the nation in developing a body of reliable data and analytics to ensure reasonable workloads for public defenders.” The reports recommend caseload guidelines that will help ensure attorneys have enough time to devote to their cases. The studies add to the research completed last year with the state’s [first criminal defense weighted caseload study](#) to determine appropriate maximum caseloads for trial representation. The full juvenile report is available [here](#) and appellate report [here](#) on the Commission’s website.

Prior to the study, the best available caseload standards were published in 1973 by the National Advisory Commission (NAC) on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. Since then important changes have occurred that extend the time required for competent and effective defense representation. “I am delighted to see that the TIDC is releasing additional workload studies utilizing the well-accepted Delphi methodology,” says Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law Norman Lefstein. “These studies are essential in order to address the crisis in public defense when lawyers have far too many cases assigned to them.”

The *Juvenile Addendum* recommends that for the delivery of reasonably effective representation, defense attorneys should carry an annual full-time equivalent caseload of no more than 168 juvenile cases or 16% fewer than allowed under NAC standards. The *Appellate Addendum* recommends that defense attorneys should handle no more than 31 appellate cases per year, compared with a maximum of 25 cases recommend in the NAC standards.

The study was conducted in collaboration with the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, and an expert Delphi panel of lawyers. The research was conducted by the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University. Lead investigator Dottie Carmichael notes, “Weighted caseload studies like these are an important part of a larger movement toward clear standards for public defense.”

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