

County of Goliad



MIKE BENNETT
COUNTY JUDGE

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Goliad, Texas 77963
mbennett@goliadcountytexas.gov

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July 3, 2019

Joel Lieurance
Texas Indigent Defense Commission
209 W. 14th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Lieurance:

In February, 2019, the Texas Indigent Defense Commission conducted fiscal and policy monitoring reviews in Goliad County. During the process, there were three issues identified that needed to be addressed. Below, please find our response to those concerns:

1. Fiscal: inclusion of civil case attorney fees with criminal indigent defense expenses and confusing case tracking in juvenile cases:

The County has a new County Auditor who has been made aware of these issues and is developing and following appropriate procedures to correct this. In addition, Goliad County is now contracting with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, who acts as the public defender for the County, which will eliminate most opportunities for confusion.

2. Requests for counsel not be transmitted to appointing authority promptly:

Procedures already outlined in the County plan have been reviewed with the Justices of the Peace, the jail administrator, and the County Sheriff, and they were reminded of the 24-hour transmittal requirement. They now scan and email the requests to the County Judge's office, where the appropriate appointing orders are prepared.

3. Timeliness of appointments:

Completed requests are scanned and emailed to the County Judge's office. Determination of eligibility is made, and orders are prepared on the same day, if it is a working day, or on the next working day, if the request is sent on a holiday or weekend. Those orders are then emailed immediately to the public defender's office. If the County Judge's office is then notified of the inability for a Texas RioGrande Legal Aid attorney to act in the case, an attorney is appointed from the "wheel" of available attorneys.

If you have questions about this response, please contact us at 361-645-3337 or by email addressed to pmartin@goliadcountytexas.gov.

Sincerely,

Mike Bennett
Goliad County Judge