



Supplement to Ector County Monitoring Report: Additional Observations on Attorney Qualifications

Introduction

TIDC has historically monitored how counties admit attorneys to appointment lists, but not how counties review attorney performance.¹ TIDC is piloting key performance indicators related to attorney representation—caseloads, investigation, mental health resources and client contact—to assess counties’ procedures for ensuring effective and ethical representation. For this supplemental report, TIDC relies on counties’ expenditure reports and indigent defense plans as well as interviews and surveys.

During this pilot period, the following observations about attorney performance are not policy monitoring findings and do not affect TIDC funding. No response is required, though TIDC welcomes feedback.

Since its passage, the Fair Defense Act has required local jurisdictions to review qualifications for attorneys on the appointment list. Under Article 26.04(b)(5) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, counties must adopt procedures that ensure each attorney appointed from a public appointment list to represent an indigent defendant perform the attorney’s duty owed to the defendant in accordance with the adopted procedures, the requirements of this code, and applicable rules of ethics.

Part I. Performance Indicators

Performance Review

TIDC reviewed the indigent defense plans for the Ector County District Courts and County Courts² and interviewed local officials and staff to learn about procedures of oversight. The plans list the minimum qualifications for appointment lists based on charge level, with increasing levels of skill and experience required for more serious cases. The appointing court appoints the first qualified attorney whose name appears on the list, unless the court makes a finding of good cause for the appointment of an attorney out of order. The plan also states judges monitor attorney performance on a continuing basis to assure the competency of attorneys on the appointment list. The indigent defense plans provide for attorneys to be removed or suspended, as appropriate,

¹ Attorney qualifications for appointment lists are one of six core Fair Defense Act requirements that TIDC monitors. 1 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 174.28(c)(3).

² District and County Court Plan: <http://tidc.tamu.edu/IDPlan/ViewPlan.aspx?PlanID=309>

from one or more appointment lists by a majority vote of the Ector County Board of Judges.

Caseloads

Attorneys need to spend enough time on each case to perform their basic duties.³ In partnership with the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University, TIDC studied the maximum number of cases an attorney could handle in a year while providing ethical representation.⁴ The study found that, in Texas, a private attorney should dispose of no more than 226 misdemeanors, 128 felonies, 31 appeals, or a weighted combination of these cases annually. Ector County's indigent defense plan does not list maximum caseloads for attorneys on appointment lists.

TIDC examined FY22 appointed attorney caseloads as reported to our agency. In Ector County 42 attorneys disposed appointed felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, or appeals cases. Of these, 12% (5 of 42) had statewide appointed caseloads above TIDC's guidelines, with the highest being 2.7 times the Guidelines.⁵ When the attorneys' non-appointed work is included, 24% (10 of 42) had caseloads above the TIDC guidelines, with the highest handling 5.3 times the Guidelines.⁶ While the majority of attorneys appeared to have reasonable appointed caseloads, some attorneys caseloads were well above the Guidelines.

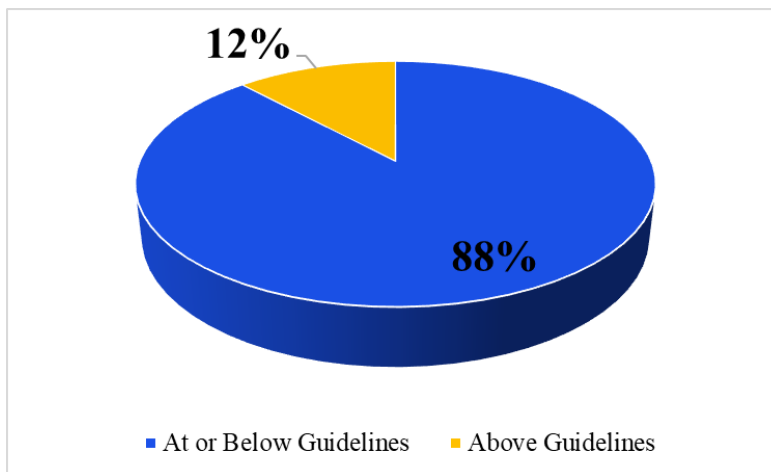
³ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.01. (See commentary: "A lawyer's workload should be controlled so that each matter can be handled with diligence and competence.")

⁴ <http://tidc.texas.gov/caseloads>

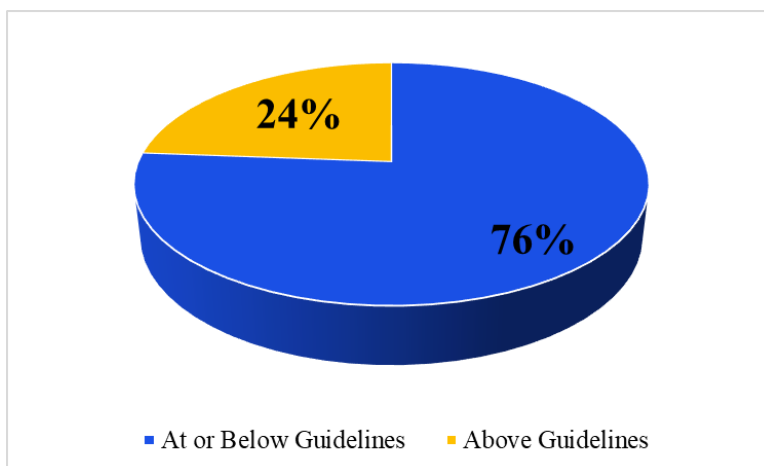
⁵ This calculation uses statewide appointed cases paid as reported by county auditors. It does not factor capital or juvenile appointments, civil appointments, or retained cases. TIDC's fiscal monitoring review found that the attorney detail report submitted as part of the annual Indigent Defense Expense Report (IDER) contained several inaccuracies. TIDC relies on this report to make an analysis of appointment distributions. The results shown here should be taken with caution as the accuracy of the reported data is questionable.

⁶ This calculation combines county auditor data with data from attorneys on the percent of their practice time dedicated to indigent defense, available at <http://tidc.tamu.edu/public.net/>. For this estimate, TIDC divides attorneys' statewide indigent defense caseload (excluding juvenile and capital cases) by their reported percent of practice time devoted to appointed criminal cases.

Ector County Attorneys' FY22 Statewide Appointed Caseloads vs. Texas Guidelines



Ector County Attorneys' FY22 Statewide Caseloads Based on Reported Time Spent on Appointed Cases vs. Texas Guidelines



Use of Investigators

Attorneys have a duty to investigate the facts of each case.⁷ Regardless of the client's wish to admit guilt, that duty includes determining whether the charges are factually and legally correct and informing the client of potential defenses.⁸ Some investigation can be performed by attorneys, other matters require a separate individual conduct the investigation. For example, an attorney cannot testify to facts that the attorney has investigated.⁹ Also, an attorney may need additional investigation capacity or specialized skills.

⁷ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.01.

⁸ STATE BAR OF TEXAS PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES FOR NON-CAPITAL CRIMINAL DEFENSE REPRESENTATION GUIDELINE 4.1(A).

⁹ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 3.08.

TIDC's caseload guidelines recommend that, on average, 5.3% of misdemeanor case time (28.5 minutes) and 7.7% of felony case time (85.3 minutes) be spent on investigation.¹⁰ One measurement of investigator utilization is the amount paid to investigators for indigent defense investigations. According to data reported by the Auditor's Office, in FY22, Ector County did not incur any investigator expenses for any of the three case types.¹¹

Client Contact

Attorneys have a duty to communicate with clients about their cases.¹² Attorneys should be in regular contact, especially when clients are in custody.¹³ They should attempt to contact out-of-custody clients and discuss their cases outside of court to ensure confidentiality¹⁴ and sufficient time to prepare.¹⁵ TIDC's caseload guidelines recommend that, on average, 13.9% (75 minutes) of misdemeanor case time and 16.1% (168.8 minutes) of felony case time is spent on client communication.¹⁶

The Ector County plan requires attorneys make every reasonable effort to contact the defendant by the end of the first working day after the date on which the attorney is appointed; and interview the defendant as soon as practicable after the attorney is appointed.¹⁷ Ector County Court personnel noted that they receive client complaints and sometimes the judges set status hearings to determine if an attorney has met with their client.¹⁸ Initial attorney-client visits or client contacts, however, are not tracked by Ector County Courts.

¹⁰ These recommendations are for cases that do not go to trial. More investigation time is recommended for cases that go to trial.

¹¹ TIDC's fiscal monitoring review found the annual IDER contained several inaccuracies, and it is possible reported investigator totals are inaccurate.

¹² TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.03. *See also* TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 26.04(j)(4)(1), requiring appointed attorneys to contact and interview clients as soon as practicable.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.05.

¹⁵ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.01.

¹⁶ These recommendations are for cases that do not go to trial. More communication time is recommended for cases that go to trial.

¹⁷ The order appointing counsel sets a specific deadline for attorneys to personally meet with clients within five days of the appointment.

¹⁸ TIDC observed instances in which defendants with appointed counsel entered guilty pleas without their clients present. In some instances, defendants had questions, but the attorney was not present to answer them. And in one case, TIDC observed an attorney strongly encouraging their client to accept a plea offer although the client repeatedly stated that he had not seen discovery or met with the attorney. Due to the lack of information, he did not want to enter a plea that day. After approximately thirty minutes, when counsel realized that the client was not entering a plea, the attorney became visibly and audibly frustrated and returned to his seat in the rear of the courtroom as his male client began crying. The attorney was relieved of the appointment, upon the client's request, when the case was called by the judge.

Summary

Ector County's indigent defense plans provide for attorneys to promptly meet with clients, but there is no tracking mechanism to ensure this always happens. The plans do not set maximum caseloads for appointed attorneys. While caseload guidelines recommend allocating between 5% and 7% of case work on investigation, the County currently spends \$0 of its indigent defense budget on criminal defense investigation.

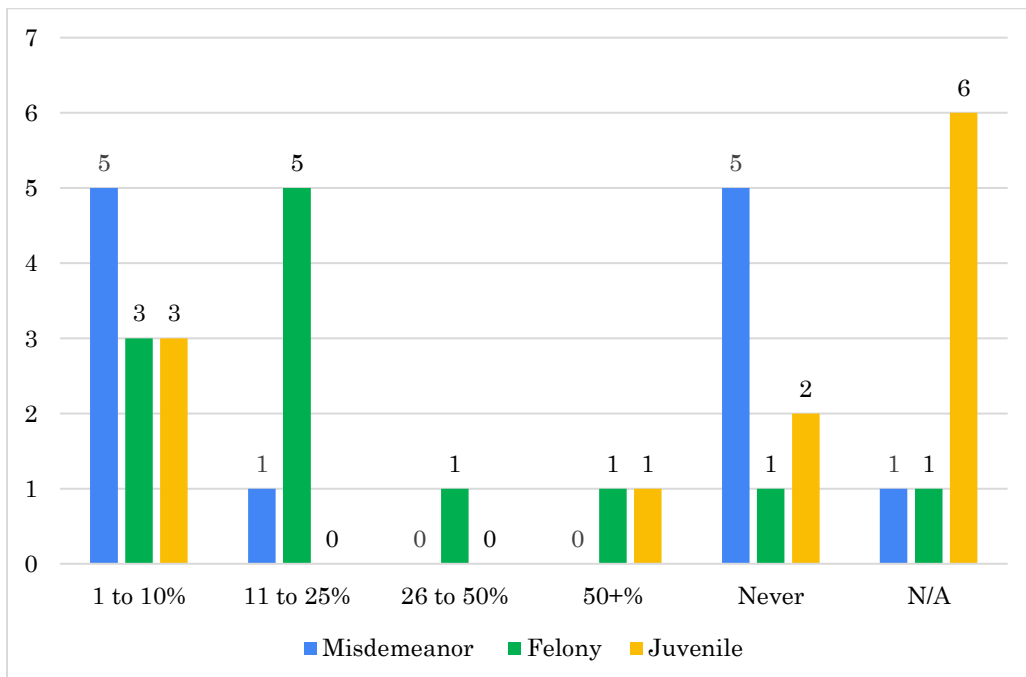
Part II. Indigent Defense Attorney Survey, Interviews, and Observations

In November 2023, TIDC distributed an online survey to Ector County indigent defense attorneys and received 12 responses. The survey addressed topics including the use of investigators and online courts, client communication, mental health, and voucher practices. Almost 92% of respondents (n=11) identify as private practitioners with the last attorney reported not "handling criminal cases currently." The findings in this sample may not be generalizable, or representative of all indigent defense attorneys practicing in the county, but the sample does help give an initial understanding of practices of indigent defense attorneys in Ector County. TIDC staff members made direct observations that are noted as well.

The Use of Investigators

Several questions address the use of and funding for investigation in Ector County. The survey asked questions regarding the frequency of use of investigators in the county in misdemeanor, felony, and juvenile cases (See graph below).

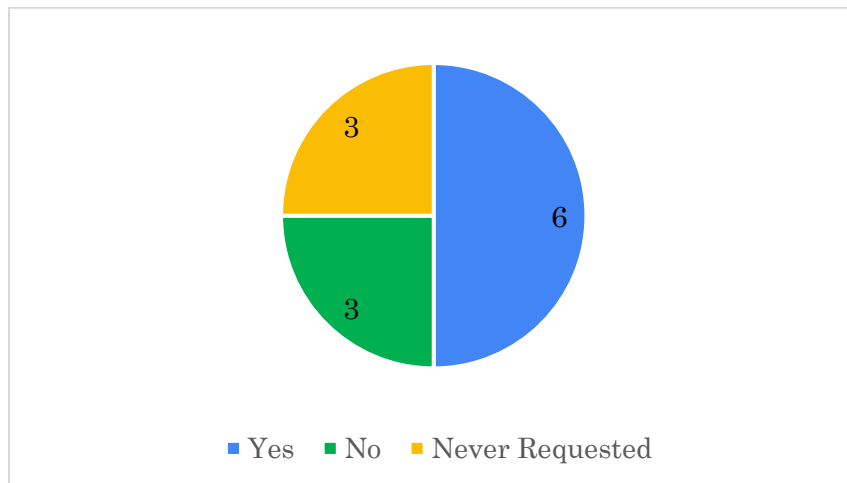
Percentages of Cases that Requested an Investigator Per Case Type



In Ector County, appointed attorneys do not appear to actively use investigators. In **misdemeanor cases**, 46% of the attorneys (n=5) reported never requesting an investigator, while about 54% (n=8) reported using an investigator in a small percentage of cases. In **felony cases**, the largest group of attorneys (n=5) reported requesting an investigator in 11 to 25% of their cases, while in **juvenile cases**, the majority reported using investigators in 1 to 10% of cases (n=3) or that it was not applicable (n=6). Almost half of respondents reported utilizing investigators 1 to 10% of the time on misdemeanors and a quarter of respondents reported using investigators 1 to 10% of the time for felonies and juveniles, however there were no reported investigator expenses.

Additionally, the survey asked defense attorneys about difficulties in receiving adequate funding for investigation (See pie chart below). A majority of attorneys (n=6) reported having difficulty receiving adequate funding for investigators.

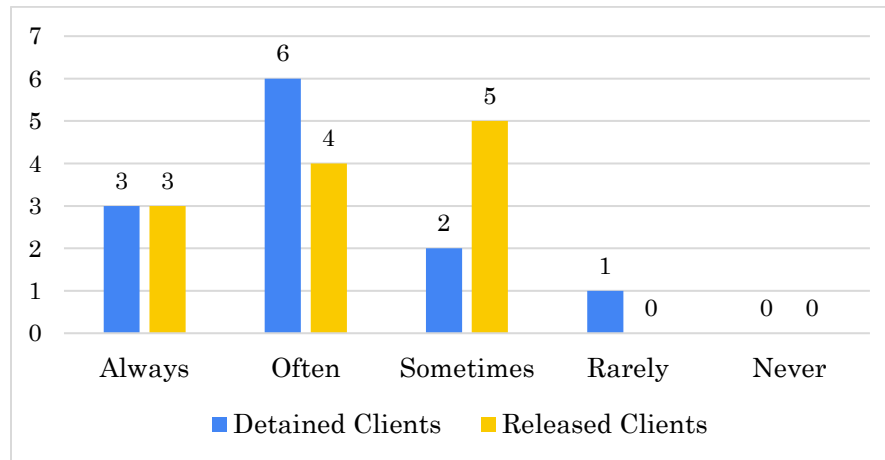
Attorneys Who Report Having Difficulty Receiving Adequate Funding for Investigators



Client Communication

The survey asked questions about the nature and location of attorney-client communications, including the biggest barrier to meeting with clients. The chart below reflects that attorneys practicing in Ector County reported they were “Often” or “Always” able to communicate effectively with clients.

Frequency of Effective Communication Between Detained and Released Clients

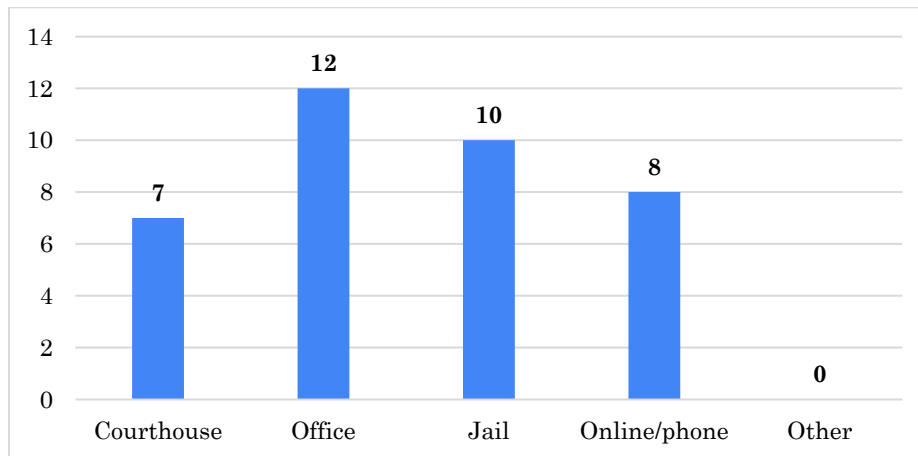


Attorneys reported they were “always” (n=3) or “often” (n=6) able to communicate with **detained clients**. Similarly, they were “often” (n=4) or “sometimes” (n=5) able to communicate effectively with **released clients**. During the review, TIDC staff spoke with jail staff and local attorneys. Jail staff stated detained clients are provided letters and stamps at no cost. However, one attorney noted that defendants need envelope money to write to an attorney.

The survey asked respondents to share the biggest barriers to meeting with clients (both detained and released). Their direct responses are shared at the end of the report. Attorneys were highly critical of the long wait times to visit jailed clients. Several attorneys highlighted the importance of incorporating Zoom in attorney jail visits to improve attorney-client communication. Attorneys reported that it has been difficult to meet with clients as there are only three private attorney rooms and attorneys are often left waiting hours before they are able to meet with their clients. One attorney reported access to zoom jail visits “would increase client satisfaction and attorney communication.”

The survey asked where attorneys met with clients (See chart below). Overall, the most frequent response for attorney-client meeting locations was office, followed by the jail, online/phone, and courthouse.

Location of Client Meetings



Mental Health Clients

During the Ector County policy monitoring visit, TIDC staff discussed current mental health services for detainees with jail staff and attorneys, while also reviewing dockets. Jail staff explained Ector County Jail has a contract with PermiaCare, the local mental health authority to perform initial mental health assessments and operate the jail's inpatient competency restoration program.¹⁹ When defendants arrive at the jail, they are examined at intake for both physical and mental health needs. If an individual needs mental health treatment, PermiaCare is called.

Under Article 16.22(a)(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure,

Not later than 12 hours after the sheriff or municipal jailer having custody of a defendant receives credible information that may establish reasonable cause to believe that the defendant has a mental illness or is a person with an intellectual disability, the sheriff or municipal jailer shall provide written or electronic notice to the magistrate. . . On a determination that there is reasonable cause to believe that the defendant has a mental illness or is a person with an intellectual disability, the magistrate, except as provided by Subdivision (2), shall order the service provider that contracts with the jail to provide mental health or intellectual and developmental disability services....

Under 16.22(b-1)(1), The magistrate shall provide copies of the written report to the defense counsel, prosecutor, trial court, sheriff, and others.

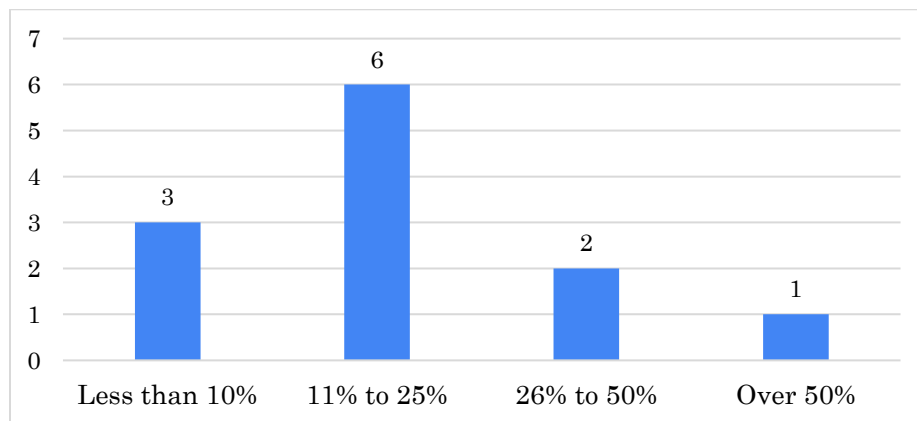
Jail staff were unclear about Article 16.22 procedures and indicated Permiancare sent the information to the Odessa Municipal Court. One trial court judge stated the court does not receive 16.22 evaluations. From case file review, TIDC staff noted some defendants were identified as having mental health issues later in the process by

¹⁹ See Permiancare Local Provider Network Development Plan for FY2023, <https://www.permiancare.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Permiancare-IDD-Local-Plan-FY2023.pdf>

attorneys rather than by jail staff after arrest. Mental health issues appeared to be frequently identified by defense attorneys filing motions requesting competency evaluations. One attorney expressed concerns about competency evaluations not always being ruled on with signed orders.

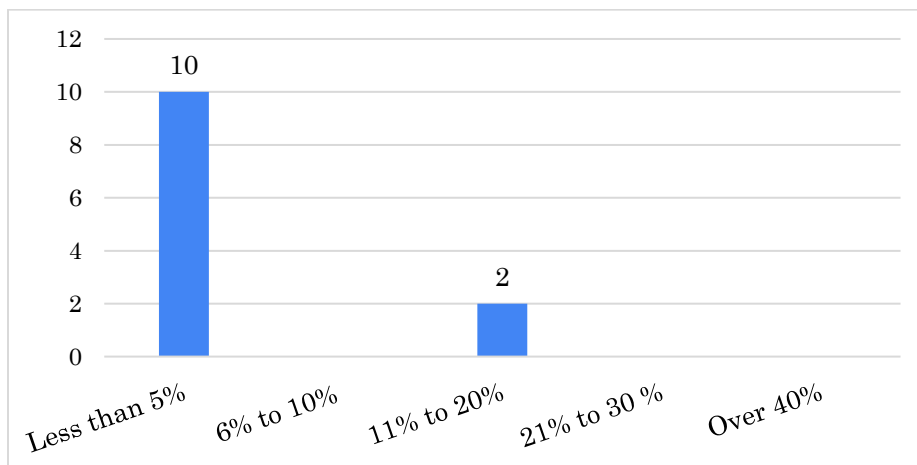
The survey asked attorneys about their experiences representing clients with mental health issues. The first inquiry focused on the percentage of appointed clients who have serious mental health issues. Overall, the largest group of attorneys (n=6) stated 11 to 25% of their clients have serious mental health issues (See chart below).

Percentage of Appointed Clients with Serious Mental Health Issues



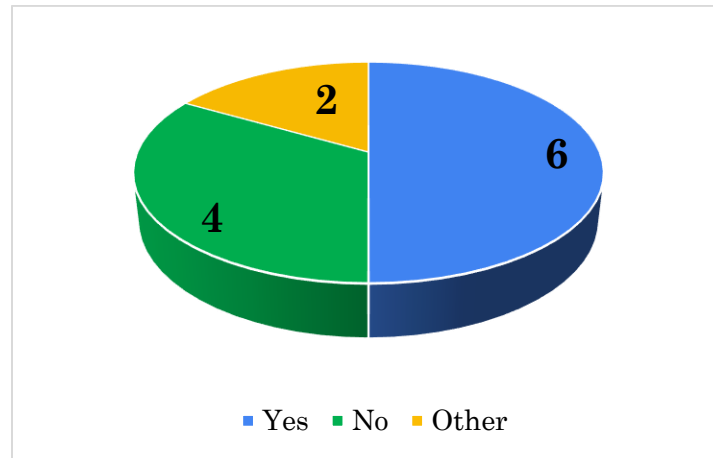
The survey next asked attorneys for what percentage of their appointed clients they receive Code of Criminal Procedure Article 16.22 mental health information. Most of the attorneys (n=10) reported receiving Article 16.22 information in less than 10% of cases (See chart below). Ector County should implement procedures that ensure Article 16.22 information is consistently provided to judges, defense counsel, and other statutorily required stakeholders.

Percentage of Cases where Attorney Receives Code of Criminal Procedure Art 16.22 Information



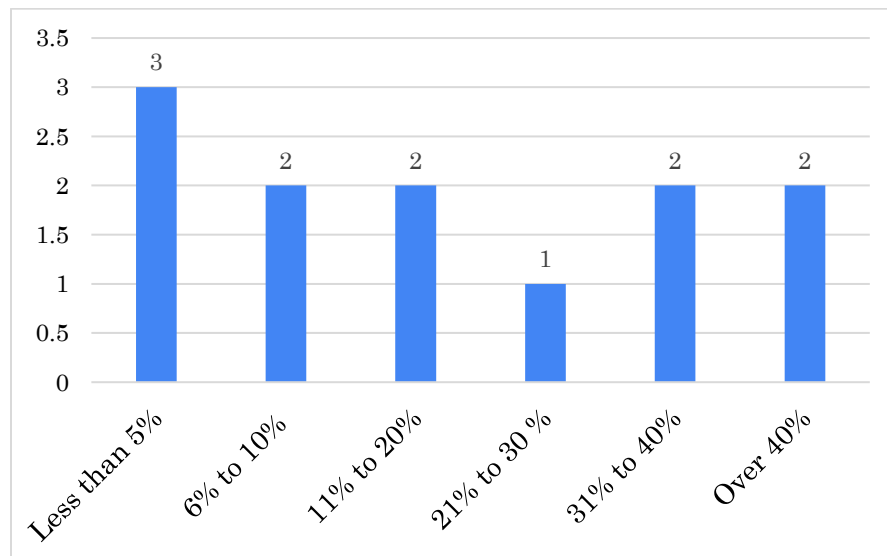
Most attorneys (n=6) reported successfully obtaining personal bonds for detained clients with mental health issues. Some responded with, “Occasionally, not in every case. It depends on the seriousness of the charged offense.” While one attorney stated, they “haven’t tried based simply in mh [mental health] issues.” (See chart below)

Attorneys Success in Obtaining Personal Bonds for Detained Clients



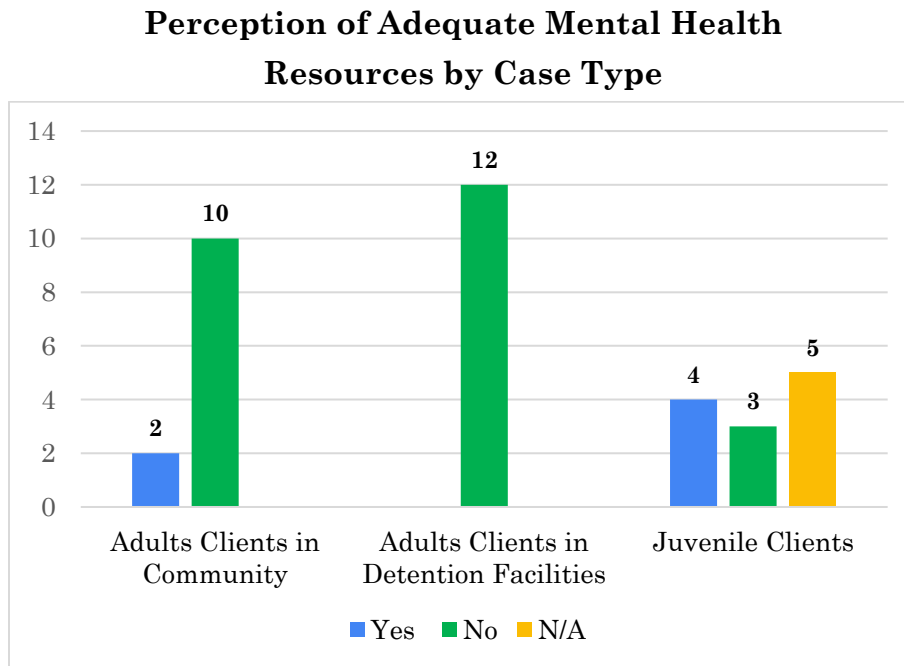
The survey asked attorneys in what percentage of appointed cases they requested clients with serious mental health conditions be examined for competency to stand trial. There were various responses which are depicted in the chart below.

Percentage of Appointed Clients where Competency Examination is Filed



The survey asked attorneys whether they believed there were adequate mental health resources for both adults in the community and detention facilities, and for juvenile clients. All the attorneys (n=12) responded “no” to adult clients having adequate mental health resources in **detention facilities**. Most attorneys (n=10) responded “no”

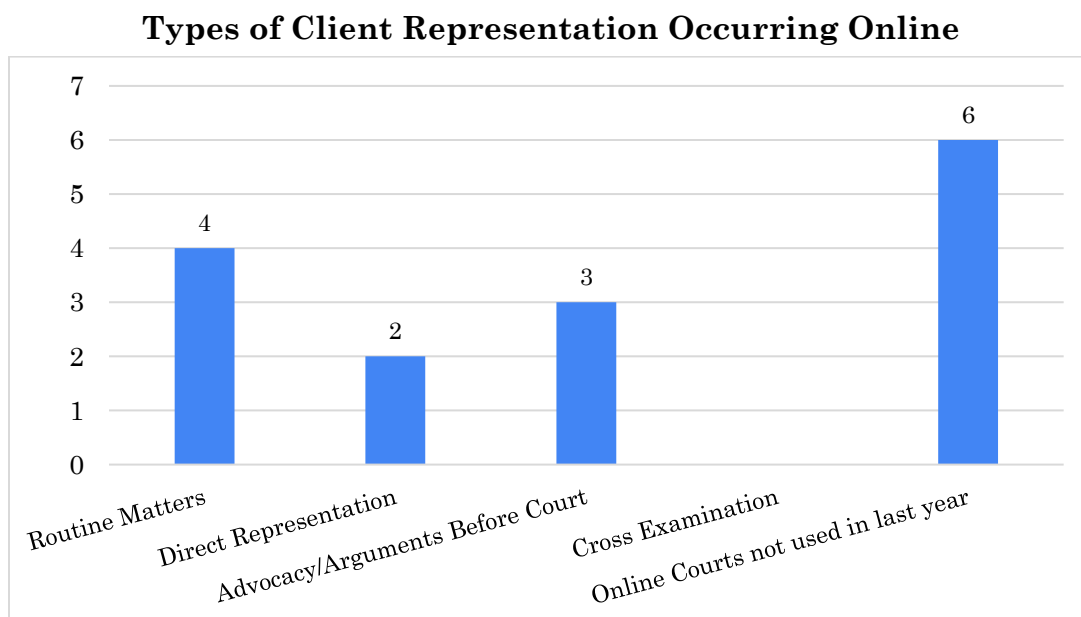
to adult clients having adequate mental health resources in the community. In juvenile cases most attorneys (n=4) believed there are adequate resources, while the remainder (n=3) responded “no” or “N/A”(n=5). (See chart below)



Online Courts

The survey asked attorneys about online hearings. The first inquiry focused on the types of hearings conducted online. Overall, more attorneys (n=7) stated that that they had not participated in online hearings (See responses in the index).

The next question explored aspects of client representation occurring in online hearings.

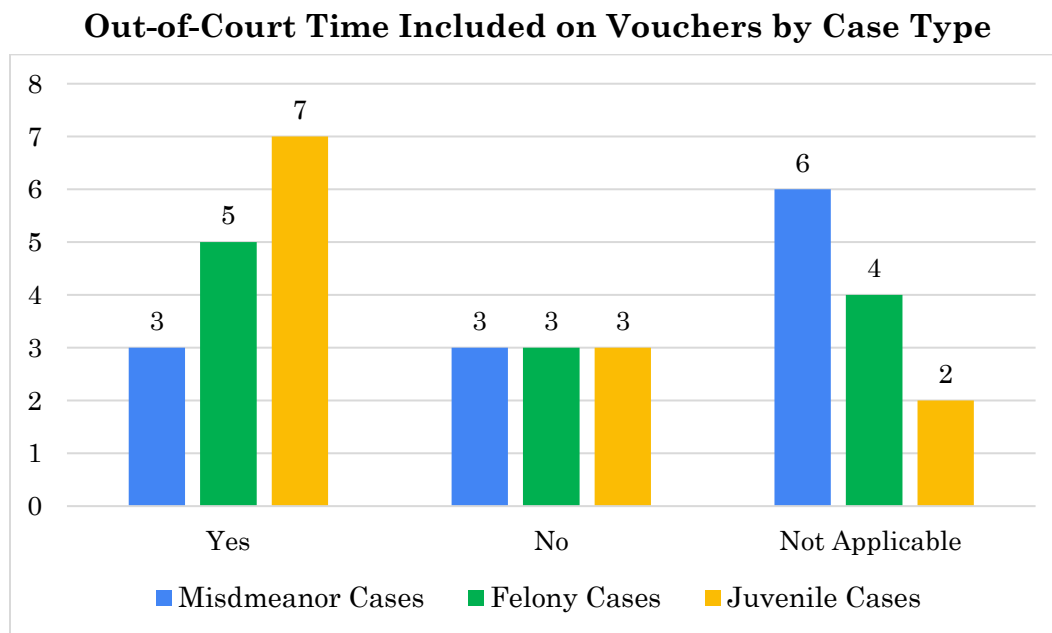


The chart above illustrates that the most frequent response was online courts were not used in the past year (n=6), followed by routine matters (n=4). Notably, several attorneys reported participating in online advocacy/arguments before court (n=3).

Finally, the survey asked attorneys to share their opinions about which hearings should or should not be held virtually. Generally, attorneys were open to more types of online hearings. In a previous question, one comment stated, “It would GREATLY help me service more clients more effectively if we could do so. I handle multiple counties across the State of Texas, and it is impossible to be everywhere at once, especially given how randomly and without adequate notice criminal courts just toss hearings on the calendar.”

Vouchers

The survey asked a series of questions about the inclusion of out-of-court time in payment vouchers for misdemeanor, felony, and juvenile cases (See graph below). Overall, respondents reported including out-of-court time in felony and juvenile case vouchers.



Survey responses are listed in the following pages.

Index to Questions requesting narrative responses.

For each question, the full text of respondent's feedback is included.

Investigation

- *Have you had any difficulties being reimbursed for investigative expenses incurred without prior approval? If yes, please explain.*
- *If you have other comments on investigations, please share them here:*

Client Communication

- *What are your biggest barriers to meeting with clients (both detained and in the community)?*
- *If you have other comments on client communication, please share them here:*

Mental Health Clients

- *If there are not adequate resources for adult clients with mental health issues generally available in the community in your jurisdiction, please explain.*
- *If there are not adequate resources for adult clients with mental health issues generally available in detention facilities in your jurisdiction, please explain.*
- *If there are not adequate resources for juvenile clients with mental health issues generally available in your jurisdiction, please explain.*

Online Courts

- *What types of hearings do you generally have online: (Select all that apply)*
- *If you have other comments on online courts, and which hearings should or should not be held virtually, please share them here:*

Vouchers

- *If you don't typically include out-of-court time, why not?*
- *If you have other comments on payment vouchers, please share them here:*

Ector County's Indigent Defense System

- *What is working well in the County's indigent defense system?*
- *What is not working well in the County's indigent defense system?*
- *What is working well in the County's juvenile justice system?*
- *What is not working well in the County's juvenile justice system?*
- *What suggestions do you have for improving the delivery of indigent defense services in the County?*
- *TIDC provides programs to improve indigent defense. How could TIDC help improve indigent defense in the County?*

Investigation

- **Have you had any difficulties being reimbursed for investigative expenses incurred without prior approval? If yes, please explain.**

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	7 responded “No” or “Always obtained prior approval”
•	1 responded “Yes”
•	4 did not respond

- **If you have other comments on investigations, please share them here:**

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Ector County Does not Approve Funds for Investigators on a Regular Basis
•	Felony judges do not like to appoint investigators so I haven't even tried to get one appointed in a misdemeanor case. I usually pay myself.
•	Not many investigators in area
•	None

Client Communication

What are your biggest barriers to meeting with clients (both detained and in the community)?

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Defendant cooperating
•	Difficulty seeing them in jail - there has to be a ZOOM alternative for attorneys - it's too burdensome and the wait is abhorrent to meet clients in jail. It is simply not possible to meet all clients in jail. But if we could ZOOM with them and jails were mandated to let us do so, that would immediately solve the problem.
•	Failure to maintain contact by client
•	Getting ahold of clients
•	If detained, getting in jail and being allowed to see them. So I guess my biggest barrier is the Sheriff's office.
•	Jail is slow to bring clients. Delay to understaffing, or indifference, or both.
•	Lack of contact info if in community; jail can be slow to bring clients so limits how many/how long you have
•	Lack of contact information
•	They won't show up to appointments
•	time, the jail does not have an efficient system for seeing clients. It can take hours to meet with 4 clients.
•	Unable to locate clients who are not in custody.

- **If you have other comments on client communication, please share them here:**

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	It appears that the attorney client communications are not private. Defense attorneys here do not use the phone. Must go to jail in person where we are stuck with 3 rooms and broken equipment to call with complaints.
•	None
•	PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE enable ZOOM client meetings for attorneys to meet with defendants in jail via ZOOM.
	There needs to be a better way to talk to jail clients in Ector County.

Mental Health Clients

If there are not adequate resources for adult clients with mental health issues generally available in the community in your jurisdiction, please explain.

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Lack of mental health services in general in this area
•	Medical professionals are out numbered with the number of defendants that need help.
	Minimal help for mental health clients. On;y resource is MHMR and its limited
•	No resources, They don't have a good program, competency wait months or years to get to Vernon's.
•	The jail is attempting in custody competency restoration. I am skeptical that the clients are truly being restored to competency.
•	The only client found incompetent that has received jail-based competency restoration is my capital murder client. All others waited and went to state hospital.
	There are too few examiners, therapists, support services, Caseworker, and psychiatrists.
•	We need PhD's not social workers

If there are not adequate resources for adult clients with mental health issues generally available in detention facilities in your jurisdiction, please explain.

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Few providers willing to work with detained clients
	Hard to get Regional mental health authority to go to the jail
•	I don't know because I don't have first hand experience and its hard to get first hand knowledge on these issues.
	I've had clients try for months on end to get mhmr to meet with them in the jail
•	Medical professionals are out numbered with the number of defendants that need help.
	MHMR only
•	The jail is attempting in custody competency restoration. I am skeptical that the clients are truly being restored to competency.
•	The jail will not give them the medication needed.
	There are some resources; biggest problem is delay to get to mental facility when found incompetent
	Too few therapists, support services, Caseworker, and psychiatrists.
•	We need PhD's not social workers

If there are not adequate resources for juvenile clients with mental health issues generally available in detention facilities in your jurisdiction, please explain.

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Medical professionals are out numbered with the number of defendants that need help.
•	N/A
•	Too few psychologist, therapists, support services, Caseworker, and psychiatrists.

Online Courts

What types of hearings do you generally have online: (Select all that apply)

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	2 responded “I have not practiced in online courts”
•	Arraignment/First Appearance, Misdemeanor pleas
	Detention Hearing
	Ector County is averse to online hearings.
•	Ector does zero criminal online
•	No ector county criminal courts do online
	Pretrial
•	We are no longer allowed to do any online hearings. It would GREATLY help me service more clients more effectively if we could do so. I handle multiple counties across the state of Texas, and it is impossible to be everywhere at once, especially given how randomly and without adequate notice criminal courts just toss hearings on the calendar.
•	We no longer have any online hearings in Ector County

If you have other comments on online courts, and which hearings should or should not be held virtually, please share them here:

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Ector County Felony or Misdemeanor court does NOT hold ANY hearings online.
•	We desperately need the ability to have attorney-client meetings with defendants in jail online. Jails are so slow and time consuming and so physically far away that it is not possible to meet with clients in jail nearly as much as we need to. This would also greatly help with reviewing evidence with detained clients.
•	N/A
•	Non contested matters should be handled online.
•	No other comments

Vouchers

- **If you don't typically include out-of-court time, why not?**

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Courts just don't accept it, so we get ripped out of over 75% of our time and effort.
	N/A
•	The fee structure is a flat appointment fee
•	There's flat fees that incentivize defense attorneys to rush the case through. I don't do that, but you can't get a judge to sign a bill for 4K after you've worked a sjf case for a year, even if it results in dismissal. I went off the appointed list about six months ago and only take retained now
•	They won't pay it.
•	We are paid \$600 for misdemeanor pleas and \$800 for felony pleas. The amount of time to cover misdemeanors and state jail felonies is usually sufficient at a rate of \$150 per hour for these clients.

- **If you have other comments on payment vouchers, please share them here:**

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Ector County Needs a payment schedule and indigent defense plan.
•	flat fees
•	N/A
	None
•	See above.

Ector County's Indigent Defense System

- **What is working well in the County's indigent defense system?**

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	2 responded "Not much"
•	Attorney appointment, speed of pay
•	County promptly pays, discovery is received within a day or two of arraignment.
•	Evaluation of qualified
•	Excellent judges.
•	Population control over the poor. That's the reality of it. Not pretty to think about, but that's what our Justice system has become
•	Very very few things

- **What is not working well in the County's indigent defense system?**

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Appointments are not given by a list, there are clear preferences/list of attorneys on list is not public—not even the judges seem to know who is or isn't on the list
•	Impossibility to adequately visit detained clients and review evidence with them. We need a ZOOM option.
•	Just about everything
•	Not enough attorneys
•	See previous answer
•	Still too many cases not being set for jury trials, especially in the 358th District Court, which has only had 3 or 4 jury trials in 2023.
•	The pay scale for appointments
•	Too few lawyers; we are overwhelmed with clients.
•	Underpaid, not enough attorneys on the list.

- **What is working well in the County's juvenile justice system?**

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	2 responded "N/A"
•	Attorney appointment, case movement
•	Detention hearings
•	Generally working very well
•	Mostly everything

- **What is not working well in the County's juvenile justice system?**

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	3 responded “N/A”
•	Alternative programs
•	In cases where CPS also involved, CPS doesn’t cooperate generally
	Not enough attorneys
	Pay rate

- **What suggestions do you have for improving the delivery of indigent defense services in the County?**

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Appointments by list order or similar method/publicly available list of attorneys on appointment list
•	Better court appointed pay for plea cases; never a problem getting a fair rate for a trial, but payment on a case that pleads out is insufficient. Pay is approximately 40% less than Midland County. Can't blame lawyers for working there and not in Ector.
•	Hold all judges to appoint from list. One or two attorneys in Ector county get most of the appointments because they don't do a lot of work and clients plea guilty to maximum sentences.
•	Pay increase, standard pay scale for appointed investigators.
•	PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE adopt client communications for those in jail via ZOOM.
•	Raise rates for defense attorneys. Kick bad ones off. Everyone knows who’s bad in the courthouse and who sells out their clients just to make their \$800 payment from a plea deal
•	They need an indigent defense plan, online hearings, better payment schedule, more attorneys.
•	We need to have more jury trials, especially in the 358th District Court.

- **TIDC provides programs to improve indigent defense. How could TIDC help improve indigent defense in the County?**

	Responses listed alphabetically:
	I am unaware of these programs
	Judges could use more training on indigent defense issues/accountability
	More funds for defense attorneys. Keep the judges honest on their dockets so the prosecutors aren't cherry picking their slam dunk cases and letting their bad cases sit until they miss a roll call for court because they're poor and got a new prepaid phone
•	No idea because I don't know about the programs but Ector County Desperately needs them
•	Not sure
•	Teach judges how to properly use the system. Appointments. Payments. It takes forever to get paid for anything. I went from July to October without payment. Then, I will get a \$3,000 check. My bills don't work like that. I don't know if the judges don't want to pay me or where the problem is.
•	Unable to answer
•	ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM with jailhouse clients.