

Checklist and Timeline to Set Up a Single County Public Defender Office After a Grant Award from TIDC

| Item | Requirement | Month | Notes/Statutory Requirements | Date Completed |
|------|---|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | Statement of Grant Award: Review, County Judge sign, and submit to TIDC. | Month 1 (Sept. usually) | All of the requirements for the grant, including many of the tasks below and reporting requirements, are spelled out in the Statement of Grant Award (SGA). | |
| 2 | Oversight Board: Develop makeup of board and bylaws of Oversight Board in conjunction with TIDC. | Month 1 | The Commissioners Court must establish per the SGA. | |
| 3 | Resolution: Establish public defender office, duties and types of cases handled; establish oversight board and who its members are. | Month 1-2 | The Commissioners Court must establish the office and oversight board; see CCP art. 26.044(b) and 26.045(a)-(c) for the requirements. | |
| 4 | Chief Public Defender Job Description: Develop with assistance of TIDC and post Chief Defender job opening. | Month 1-2 | This can be done before or after the first Oversight Board meeting. TIDC can help distribute job opening to its public defense networks. Submit the job description to TIDC prior to publicly posting per the SGA. | |
| 5 | Public Defender Oversight Board: Have first meeting; adopt bylaws; establish vetting and hiring process for Chief Public Defender. | Month 1-2 | TIDC can assist in developing bylaws. Send approved bylaws to TIDC. | |
| 6 | Indigent Defense Plan: Judges hearing criminal cases in the county need to modify their Indigent Defense Plan to reflect priority appointments to the public defender's office and other changes to indigent defense system. | Month 1-2 | Submit new Indigent Defense Plan to TIDC for approval. | |
| 7 | Hire Chief Public Defender: Oversight Board picks Chief Public Defender and submits to County to hire. | Month 2-3 | Chief's hiring should be effective October 1 or later, since that is beginning of TIDC grant period. | |
| 8 | Public Defender Office Plan: Chief and Oversight Board develop written plan for Public Defender Office, including caseload standards. | Month 2-3 | Required per CCP art. 26.044(b-1). The written plan must include all elements in CCP art. 26.044(c-1). Submit to TIDC prior to accepting appointments per SGA. | |
| 9 | Office Space Build-out, Equipment Purchasing: Chief works with Oversight Board, County, and TIDC to design and build office space, purchase office equipment. | Months 2-4 | County may want to begin this process before Chief is hired, but ideally Chief should have input into design of the office and office equipment. Expenses should not be incurred prior to Oct. 1. | |
| 10 | Staff Hiring: Develop job descriptions of staff; chief interviews; hires made. | Months 2-4 | Submit to TIDC prior to publicly posting per SGA. | |
| 11 | Case Representation Policies and Procedures Manual: Chief develops in conjunction with Oversight Board and TIDC. | Submit to TIDC w/ 2 nd Quarterly Report. | Submit to TIDC per SGA. | |
| 12 | Quarterly Progress Reports | Q1: Q2: Q3: Q4: | Submit to TIDC per SGA. Typical Improvement Grants run on the following timeline: Q1: Oct.-Dec.; Q2: Jan.-Mar.; Q3: Apr.-June; Q4: July-Sept. | |
| 13 | Quarterly Expenditure Reports | Q1: Q2: Q3: Q4: | Submit to TIDC per SGA. Typical Improvement Grants run on the following timeline: Q1: Oct.-Dec.; Q2: Jan.-Mar.; Q3: Apr.-June; Q4: July-Sept. | |
| 14 | BEGIN ACCEPTING CASES | Month 5-6 | The office can begin accepting cases earlier if adequate staff has been hired and the office is operational. | |