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TIDC Funds Public Defense Improvements in Texas

AUSTIN – On Wednesday, the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) awarded over \$4.1 million in grant funding to support indigent defense in the state. Over \$3.4 million was awarded to Potter County to operate a new seven-county regional public defender office.

The new Panhandle Area Regional Public Defender Office (PAPDO) will be administered by Potter County (Amarillo) and will also include Armstrong, Carson, Deaf Smith, Donley, Moore, and Oldham Counties. The program will handle most of the indigent defense cases in the participating counties and provides a solution to the diminishing number of lawyers taking appointed cases in the region.

“TIDC is proud to partner with Potter County and its six neighboring counties to create a long-term, regional solution to provide effective representation in the Panhandle. We anticipate that other counties will ask to join the office after it proves to be a success,” said TIDC Interim Executive Director Scott Ehlers.

The Board also approved a contract with the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University for an assessment of public defender services and resources in rural Texas. The legislatively mandated study will help identify attorney shortages and other challenges faced by rural counties. The report will include recommendations to the Legislature to help guide future funding and policy decisions.

If your county needs indigent defense support, please contact TIDC: 512-936-6994.

About TIDC

The Texas Indigent Defense Commission funds, oversees, and improves indigent defense in each of the State’s 254 counties. TIDC is led by 13 commission members and 16 staff. To learn more, visit www.tidc.texas.gov.

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