

HARRIS COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTS AT LAW



April 2, 2026

Hon. Alex Salgado
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 1

Hon. Paula Goodhart
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 2

Hon. Leslie R. Johnson
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 3

Hon. Shannon Baldwin
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 4

Hon. David M. Fleischer
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 5

Hon. Kelley Andrews
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 6

Hon. Andrew A. Wright
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 7

Hon. Erika Ramirez
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 8

Hon. Toria J. Finch
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 9

Hon. Juanita A. Jackson
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 10

Hon. Sedrick T. Walker II
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 11

Hon. Ashley M. Guice
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 12

Hon. Raúl Rodríguez
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 13

Hon. Jessica N. Padilla
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 14

Hon. Tonya Jones
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 15

Hon. Linda Garcia
County Criminal Court
at Law Number 16

Joel Lieurance
Senior Policy Monitor
Texas Indigent Defense Commission
209 W. 14th Street, Room 202
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Lieurance,

The judges of the county courts at law received the Second Follow-up Fiscal and Policy Monitoring Review of Harris County's Indigent Defense Systems issued by the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) in January, 2026. In preparing a response, the judges appreciate your willingness to communicate with the Office of Court Management (OCM) and its staff. Pursuant to those communications, the county courts respond to the sole issue pertaining to them.

In its 2026 Summary of Findings and Recommendations, Finding and Recommendation 2, TIDC stated "[t]he County must implement practices that satisfy Article 1.051(c)(2)'s timeline." As applicable to Harris County, that statute requires appointment of counsel for an indigent defendant within one working day after the date on which the court or the courts' designee receives the defendant's request for such an appointment "if an indigent defendant is entitled to and requests appointed counsel and if adversarial judicial proceedings have been initiated against the defendant." TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 1.051(c).

The judges recognize that, in TIDC's judgment, the sample of attorney appointments in misdemeanor cases fell below TIDC's threshold for presuming timely appointment of counsel. Therefore, the Office of Court Management has begun creating a framework to ensure requests for appointment of counsel reach the appropriate judicial personnel expeditiously. On the business day following defendants' requests for appointment of counsel at article 15.17 hearings, a report based on a JWEB entry will soon be generated and provided to each court—whether the cases are docketed on that day or not (a crucial change the courts believe will address most delays). Where a court determines a defendant is indigent, it could then appoint counsel that day. This new process should meet or exceed TIDC's standard and address its concerns.

Ed Wells
Court Administrator