



Hays 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 a report measuring key performance indicators related to attorney representation—caseloads, investigation, and client contact—to assess counties’ procedures for ensuring effective and ethical representation. For this supplemental report, TIDC relies on counties’ expenditure reports, indigent defense plans, 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 fulfill the attorney’s duty owed to clients in accordance with the adopted local procedures as reflected in the Indigent Defense Plan, the requirements of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and applicable rules of ethics.

Part I. Performance Indicators

Performance Review

TIDC reviewed the indigent defense plans for the Hays County District and County Courts² and interviewed local officials and staff to learn about attorney oversight procedures. 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, and require the lists to be reviewed annually, at a minimum. The plans also detail a temporary removal procedure that can be utilized by any judge trying criminal cases. An attorney may be permanently removed from the appointment list by a majority vote of the judges for serious violations of rules and standards defining

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 Court Plan: <https://tidc.tamu.edu/IDPlan/ViewPlan.aspx?PlanID=555> ; County Court Plan: <https://tidc.tamu.edu/IDPlan/ViewPlan.aspx?PlanID=558> ; Juvenile Board Plan: <https://tidc.tamu.edu/IDPlan/ViewPlan.aspx?PlanID=557> .

effective assistance of counsel and/or noncompliance with the qualifications and requirements applicable to the appointed counsel lists.³

On November 22, 2022, Hays County contracted with the Neighborhood Defender Service (NDS) to found the NDS–Texas Hays County Public Defender’s Office.⁴ Attorneys operating in a public defender’s office are supervised, which should ensure reasonable caseloads, prompt client contact, and regular training. Under the Indigent Defense Plan, NDS attorneys will be included on all lists, except for Juvenile, Appeal, and Capital Felony where the death penalty is sought. NDS is charged with ensuring all attorneys are qualified to handle the cases to which they are assigned. The plan anticipates that defendants in up to half of NDS’s cases will have a mental health condition. An initial method for identifying defendants with mental health needs is early identification of individuals for whom a magistrate has ordered a mental health evaluation pursuant to Article 16.22 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. The 16.22 form is included with the Notice of Assignment.

Caseloads

Attorneys need to spend enough time on each case to perform their basic duties.⁵ 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.⁶ 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.

Hays County’s indigent defense plan sets a caseload limit of 32 felony cases per month, and 1,434 misdemeanors per year appointed to the Public Defender’s Office, of which up to half may be defendants with a mental health condition. NDS’s Plan of Operation states the above-mentioned cases will be divided amongst six attorneys, with five staff attorneys receiving a full caseload and the two supervising attorneys receiving a half caseload.⁷ They will also follow TIDC’s caseload maximums of 128 felonies or 226 misdemeanors per attorney.

³ Under the plans, the judges may permanently remove an attorney from the list if the attorney intentionally or repeatedly does not fulfill the duties required by law, rules, local rules, or provisions for providing reasonable assistance of counsel or complying with the requirements for inclusion on the approved list for counsel for indigent accused persons.

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<https://tidc.tamu.edu/IDPlanDocuments/Hays/Hays%20District%20Court%20NDS%20Executed%20Contract.pdf>

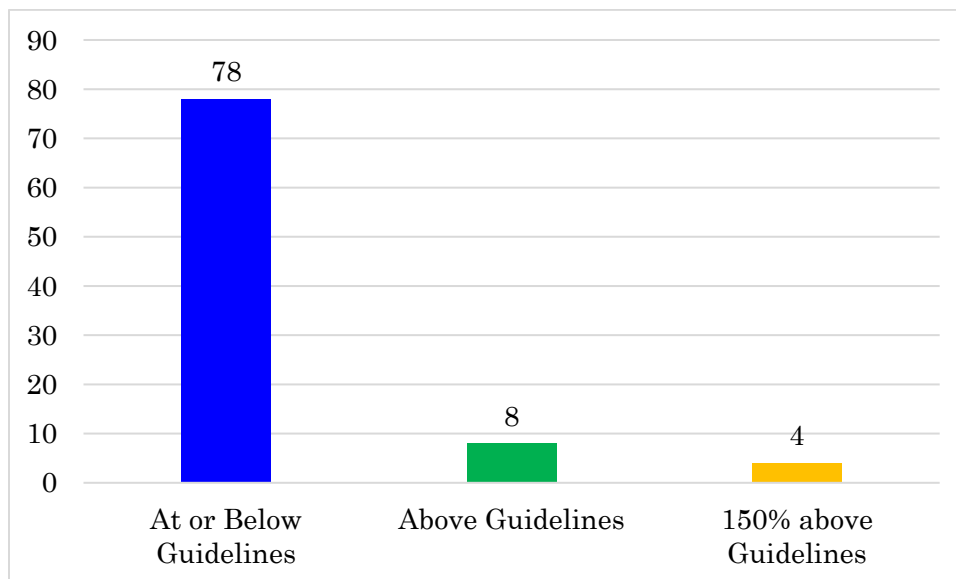
⁵ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF’L CONDUCT R. 1.01. (See commentary: “A lawyer’s workload should be controlled so that each matter can be handled with diligence and competence.”)

⁶ <http://tidc.texas.gov/caseloads>

⁷ See NDS – Texas, Hays County Public Defender’s Office Plan of Operation

TIDC examined FY22 appointed attorney caseloads as reported to our agency. In Hays County, 86 private assigned counsel disposed of felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, or appeals cases. Of these, 91% (77 of 86) had appointed caseloads below TIDC Guidelines, 9% (8 of 86) had appointed caseloads above TIDC’s guidelines, with 4 out of the 8 had appointed caseloads more than 150% above the Guidelines.⁸ When the attorneys’ non-appointed work is included, 83% (71 of 86) had caseloads below the Guidelines, 18% (15 of 86) had caseloads above the Guidelines, and 7 of the 15 had appointed caseloads more than 150% above the Guidelines.⁹ Attorneys with caseloads above TIDC’s Guidelines frequently practiced in multiple counties. Though most attorneys are below Guidelines, there are still several attorneys that are well above the guidelines. One attorney asked to “Please set standards for caseloads- felony and misdemeanors.”

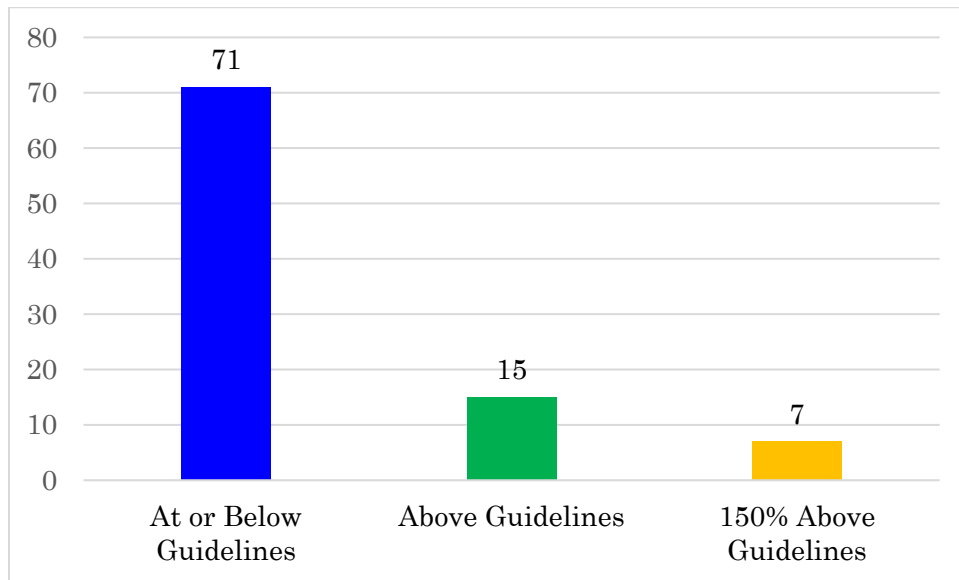
**Hays County Attorneys’ FY22 Statewide
Appointed Caseloads vs. Texas Guidelines
(n=86)**



⁸ 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.

⁹ This calculation combines county auditor data with data from attorneys on the percent of their practice time dedicated to indigent defense, also 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.

**Hays County Attorneys' FY22 Statewide Caseloads Based on Reported
Time Spent on Appointed Cases vs. Texas Guidelines
(n=86)**



Use of Investigators

Attorneys have a duty to investigate the facts of each case.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ Some investigation can be performed by attorneys; other matters require a separate individual to conduct an investigation. For example, an attorney cannot testify to facts that the attorney has investigated.¹² Also, an attorney may need additional investigation capacity or specialized skills.

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.¹³ One measurement of investigator utilization is the amount paid to investigators for indigent defense investigations.

¹⁰ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.01.

¹¹ STATE BAR OF TEXAS PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES FOR NON-CAPITAL CRIMINAL DEFENSE REPRESENTATION GUIDELINE 4.1(A).

¹² TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 3.08.

¹³ These recommendations are for cases that do not go to trial. More investigation time is recommended for cases that go to trial.

In FY2022 Hays County's investigator expenses were:¹⁴

- Slightly over 0% of misdemeanor costs (0%, \$3.75 of \$1,034,057)
- 6.0% of felony expenses (6.0%, \$128,068 of \$2,127,505)
- 0% of juvenile payments (0%, \$0 of \$54,051)

In contracting with NDS, the public defender's office employs staff investigators, which NDS staff attorneys are expected to utilize. Hays' Indigent Defense Plan provides for additional investigative funding, if needed by the public defender's office.

Client Contact

Attorneys have a duty to communicate with clients about their cases.¹⁵ Attorneys should be in regular contact, especially when clients are in custody.¹⁶ They should also attempt to contact out-of-custody clients and discuss their cases outside of court to ensure confidentiality¹⁷ and sufficient time to prepare.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

Hays County's plan requires attorneys make every reasonable effort to make initial contact with clients within one working day of receiving notice of the appointment and interview clients as soon as practicable thereafter. Attorneys are required to send the indigent defense coordinator a certificate of contact documenting the initial client meeting.²⁰ The indigent defense coordinator inputs the information into the case management system. This process is a valuable resource for ensuring appointed attorneys provide diligent representation.

Summary

Hays County's indigent defense plans provide for oversight of appointed counsel and review of initial contact and interview with detained clients. The plan provides caseload limits for the newly established Public Defender's Office and incorporates NDS's Plan of Operation, which sets the maximum caseload guidelines for their staff

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https://tidc.tamu.edu/ExpenditureReport2/FGExpenditureReport.asp?County_ID=105&FiscalYear=2022

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.05.

¹⁸ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.01.

¹⁹ These recommendations are for cases that do not go to trial. More communication time is recommended for cases that go to trial.

²⁰ See Indigent Defense Certificate of Contact, <https://hayscountytexas.com/www/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Indigent-Defense-CERTIFICATE-OF-CONTACT.pdf>

attorneys. While caseload guidelines recommend allocating between 5% and 7% of case work on investigation, the County currently spends, on average, slightly over 5.5% of its indigent defense budget on criminal defense investigation. The new public defender office will employ staff investigators, increasing access to investigations services in public defender office cases.

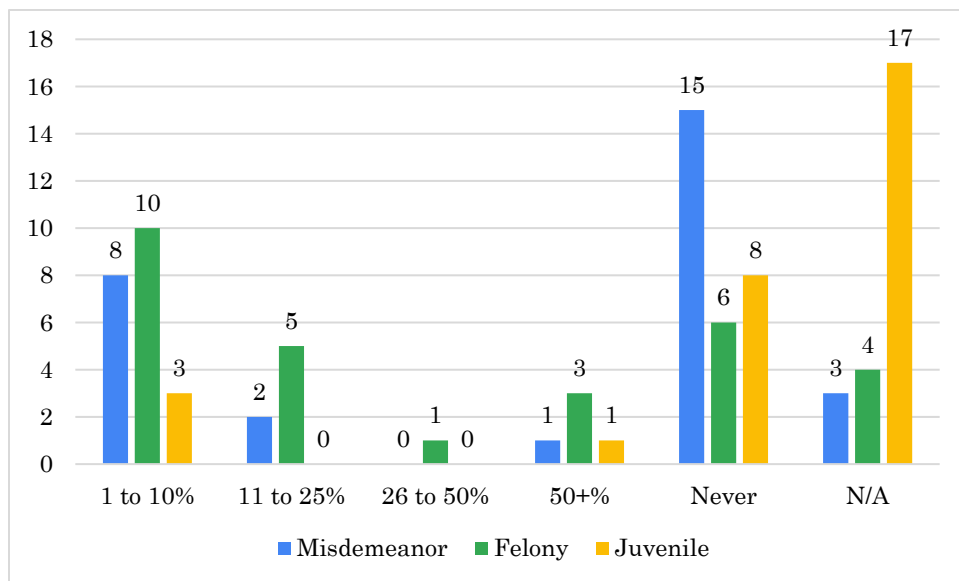
Part II. Indigent Defense Attorney Survey and Interview Results

In June 2023, TIDC distributed an online survey to Hays County indigent defense attorneys and received 29 responses. Several topics were addressed, including the use of investigators and online courts, client communication, and voucher processes. Almost 80% of respondents (n=23) identify as private practitioners with the rest (n=6) identifying as public defenders. The findings in this sample may not be generalizable, or representative of all indigent defense attorneys in the county, but the sample does help give an initial understanding of practices of indigent defense attorneys in Hays County.

The Use of Investigators

Several questions address the use of and funding for investigation in Hays County. A series of questions were asked regarding the frequency of investigator usage in the county in misdemeanor, felony, and juvenile cases (see graph below).

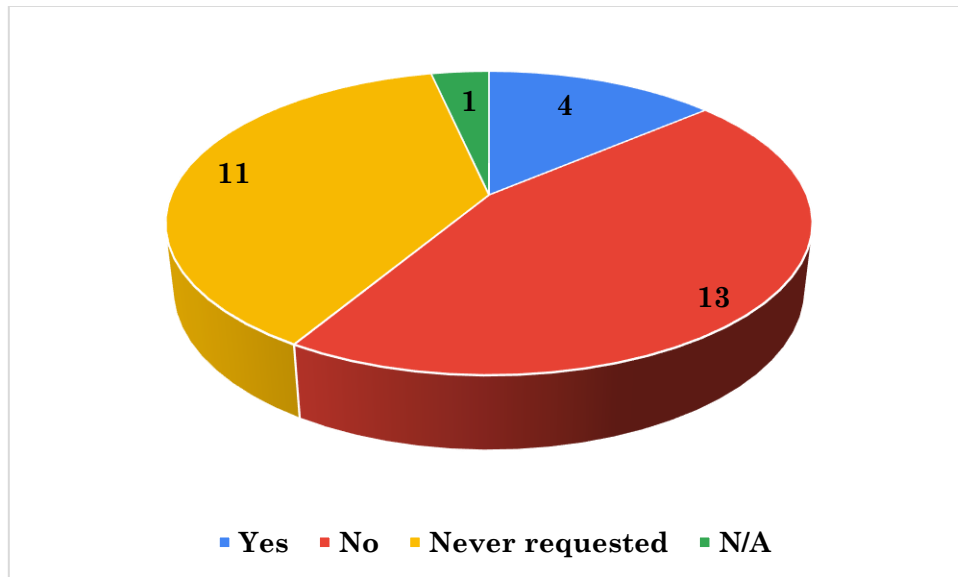
Percentage of Cases Where Attorneys Requested an Investigator, By Case Type (n=29)



In Hays County, attorneys reported they did not regularly use investigators. In **misdemeanor cases**, the majority of attorneys (n=15 of 29, or 52%) reported never requesting an investigator, while about 30% (n=8 of 29) reported using an investigator in a small percentage of cases. In **felony cases**, the largest group of attorneys (n=10 of

29, or 34%) reported requesting an investigator in 1 to 10% of their cases, while in **juvenile cases**, the majority reported either never using (n=8 of 29, or 27.5%) investigators or that it was not applicable (n=17 of 29, or 59%). Additionally, indigent defense attorneys were asked about difficulties in receiving adequate funding for investigation (see pie chart below). Four attorneys reported having difficulty receiving adequate funding for investigators.

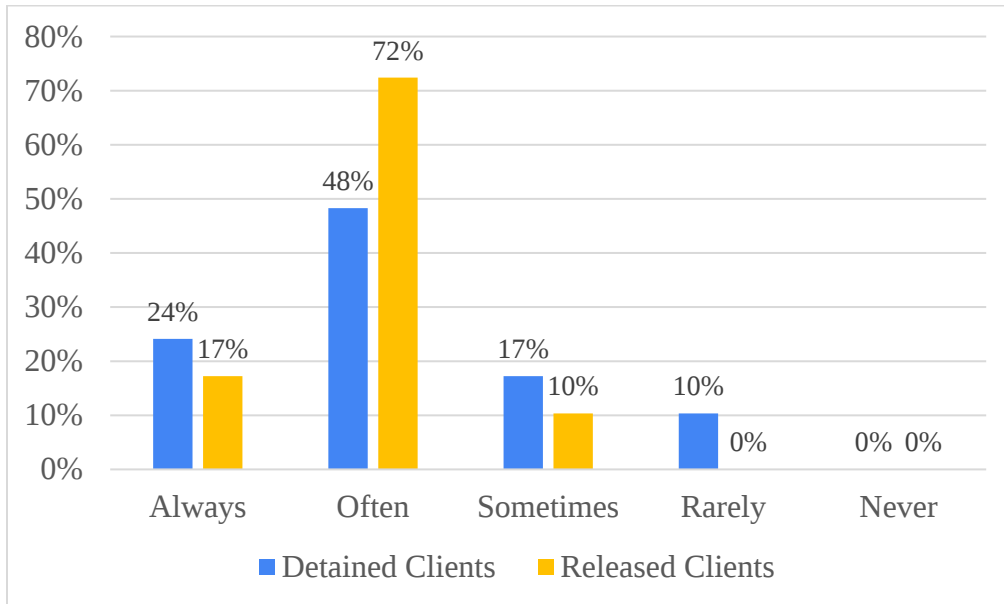
**Attorneys Who Report Having Difficulty
Receiving Funding for Investigators (n=29)**



Client Communication

Indigent defense attorneys in Hays County were also asked questions about the nature and location of their client communications, including the biggest barrier to meeting with clients. The following chart reflects attorneys practicing in Hays County reported they were “always” or “often” able to communicate effectively with clients.

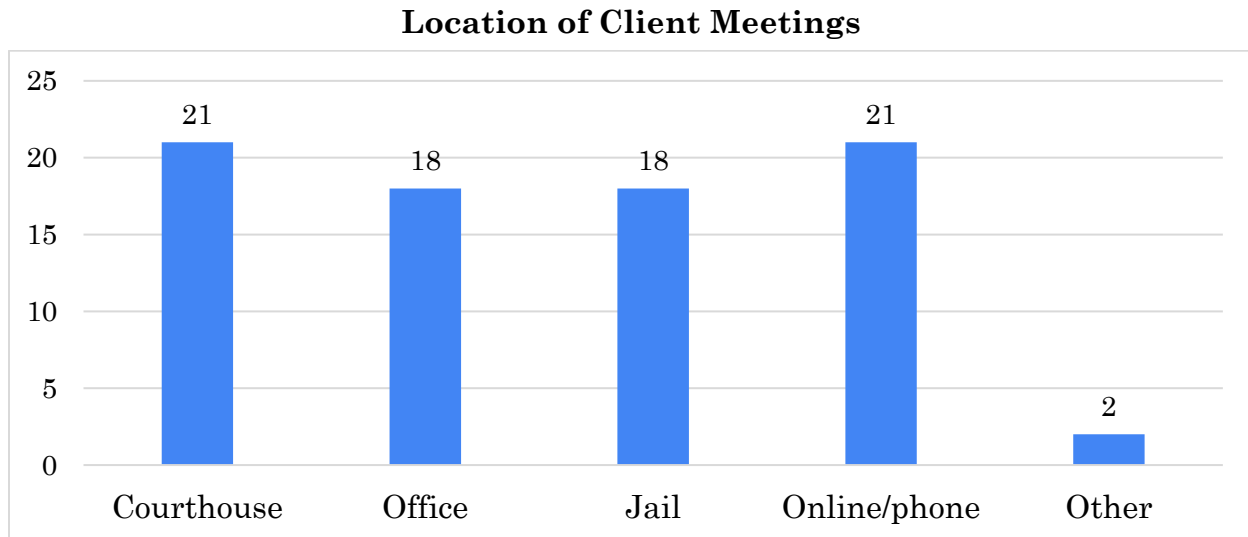
**Frequency of Effective Communication Between
Detained and Released Clients (n=29)**



Seventy-two percent (72%, or 21 of 29) of survey-responding attorneys reported they were “always” (n=7) or “often” (n=14) able to communicate with **detained clients** (see chart above). Similarly, almost 90% (26 of 29) said they were “always” (n=5) or “often” (n=21) able to communicate effectively with **released clients**. Respondents were also asked to share the biggest barriers to meeting with clients (both detained and released). Attorney responses identified difficulties including the time it takes to visit a client in jail (n=9), lack of privacy in jails to have confidential attorney-client conversations (n=6), long travel times to clients in the community (n=7), and overall difficulty contacting clients in the community (n=9).

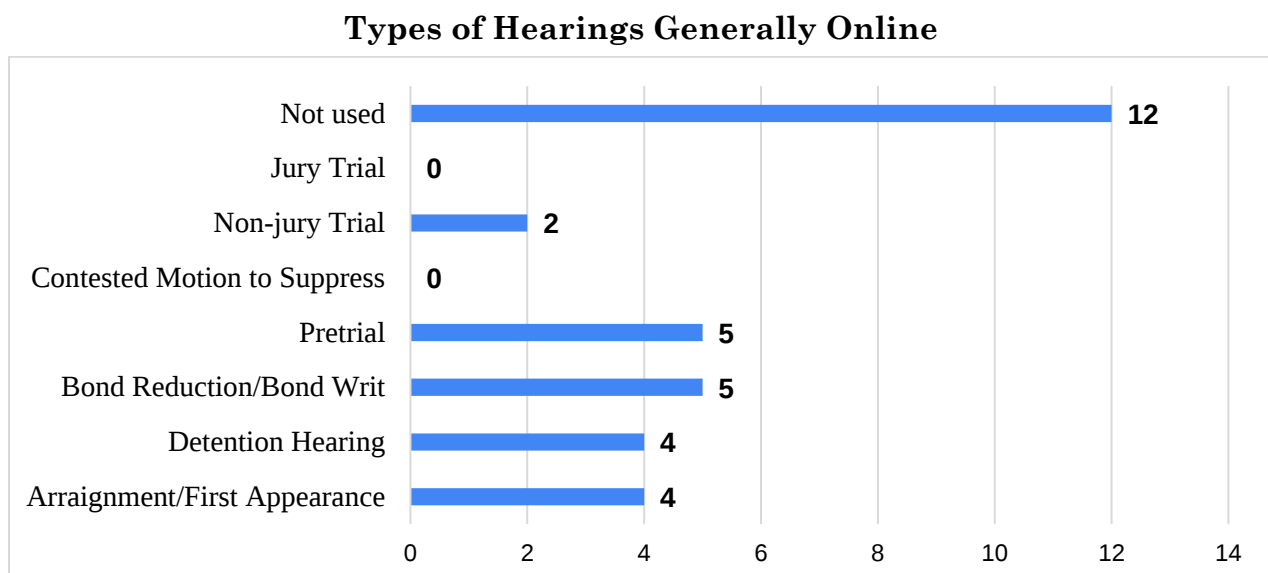
One response focused on the time required to visit detained clients, “I have waited over an hour and never had client presented before. I think the average wait time is about 30 minutes.” Concerns were also expressed with long travel time to see clients in other counties: “Hays County has a habit of sending clients to counties 3 hours away, making it hard for in person visits with clients.” Several respondents have also expressed concerns with not being able to bring in their electronic devices, which makes it difficult to review discovery with clients (See survey results below).

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



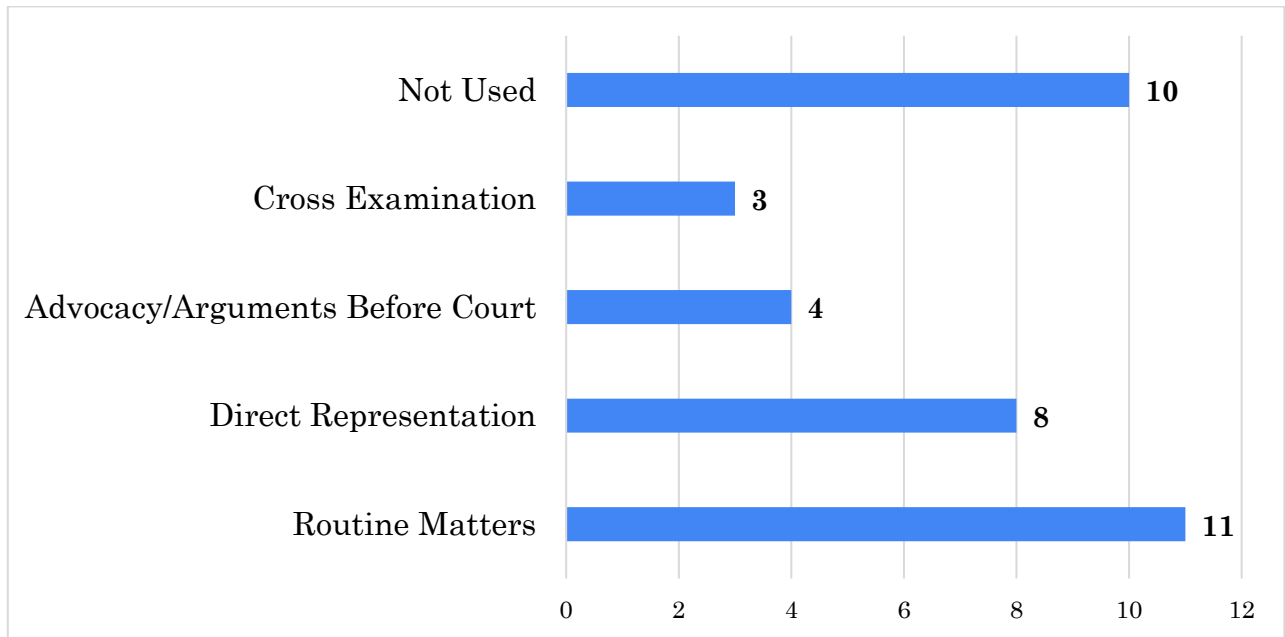
Online Courts

Hays County indigent defense attorneys were also asked about online hearings. The first inquiry focused on the types of hearings conducted online. Overall, more attorneys (n=12) stated that they had not participated in online hearings (see chart below). Attorneys who participated in virtual hearings responded they represented clients in online bond reductions or bond writs hearings (n=5), pretrial matters (n=5), detention hearings (n=4) and arraignment or first appearances (n=4).



The next question explored aspects of client representation occurring in online hearings. The chart below illustrates that, overall, the most frequent response was routine matters (n=11) followed by direct representation (n=8). Notably, a significant number of attorneys reported not participating in online hearings (n=10).

Types of Client Representation Occurring Online

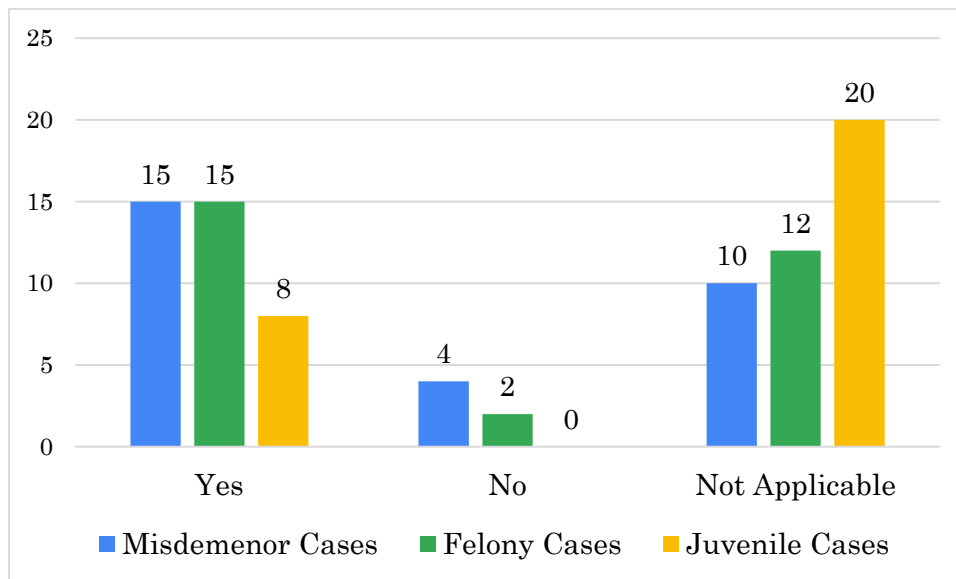


Finally, attorneys were asked to share their opinions about which hearings should or should not be held virtually. Generally, attorneys were open to more types of online hearings. One respondent stated, “Hays County could be more productive if arraignments and announcements were online.”

Vouchers

The survey also asked a series of questions about billing for out-of-court time on payment vouchers for misdemeanor, felony, and juvenile cases (see graph below). Overall, respondents said they included out-of-court time in their vouchers across all three case types. Respondents did express concern about long wait times to get paid. One noted, “It takes too long to get paid. I have waited as long as three months after submitting some vouchers. It is not clear how amounts are computed for felony vouchers. Payment seems inconsistent.”

Out-of-Court Time Included on Vouchers by Case Type (n=29)



Hays County's Indigent Defense System

Several questions were asked regarding how the current county Indigent Defense System is working. The questions were free response, and all responses are listed below. Several attorneys noted that the "Appointments are working well." Clients are getting attorneys quickly and "the IDC coordinator is good at notifying us of appointments."

With the opening of the Hays Public Defender Office, we are hopeful that it will increase oversight on attorney performance. Private attorneys still have concerns. One highlighted the need for "additional services for indigent clients needing mental health/substance use enough defense attorneys to represent the volume of indigent clients in our county. If the rates were significantly increased, I can assure you that many current defense attorneys would get back on the court-appointed lists and address the need." There was also concern from an attorney who stated, "if attorneys year in and year out dedicate a significant part of their practice to appointments, they should get at least some of the resources the DA and Public Defender gets such as serious online legal research services for free or close to free. We are the forgotten group by Lexis and Westlaw. They have no suitable plans."

The full text of narrative 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:*

Online Courts

- *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:*

Hays 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:
•	Yes. Judges do not like for investigators to exceed the amount approved.
•	3 responded “No” or “None”
•	3 responded “N/A” or “Not applicable”

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

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	I don't handle many court appointed cases any more and have not for 4 years. I do handle juvenile cases but haven't needed investigative assistance at this point.
•	In the past, I have just given the signed Order of Appointment of an Investigator (which includes the amount to be paid) to the investigator and that's all I do. I have no idea whether the investigator has trouble with actually receiving the funds, though.
•	Judges have always been good about approving investigators.
•	Private investigators need to first come to the defense attorney to get paperwork instead of billing for getting it themselves.
•	Relieved I'm at PD office and we have an investigator on staff.

Client Communication

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

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Being jailed in another county
•	Client keeping attorney apprised of meaningful contact information and not playing games.
•	Clients being transferred to other counties. Limitations on iPads and laptops being brought into the jail. Discovery is all electronic and limits flexibility. Also the limited number of attorney rooms at the courthouse.
•	Clients change contact info without telling me
•	Dedicated office space in Hays would be ideal for out of town attorneys
•	Hays County has a habit of sending clients to counties 3 hours away, making it hard for in person visits with clients.
•	Hays county sends clients everywhere. The jail is short staffed.
•	Homelessness and willingness on behalf of client
•	Inadequate meeting space at the county jail
•	Locating them (2 respondents)
•	No good contact information
•	My time
•	The Hays County Jail limits my time with my clients to 30 minutes if other attorneys are waiting.
•	The jail is making it extremely difficult to see clients.
•	The jail limits my time to 30 minutes if other attorneys are waiting. The jail does not allow us to bring in electronic devices, so we are not able to review videos during discovery meetings. Also, we have no attorney-client privilege because our conversations are heard outside the room and there are cameras present.
•	The released client don't come to my office to view discovery; the jails are sometimes difficult to see clients without waiting 1-2 hours.
•	They also make it hard to review discovery with clients when they are in jail,
•	They do not allow me to bring my computer during the meeting. This prevents me from showing my clients videos of their discovery.
•	Time for jail visits-i have waited over an hour and never had client presented; average wait time is about 30 min; jail does not allow electronics so hard to review discovery; HCSO does not timely respond to requests for phone or virtual visits,
•	Time is wasted waiting at jail
•	Transportation, job interference, jail does not facilitate confidential communications (they pretend to, but the SO cannot be trusted)

•	With detained clients, it is difficult when they are transferred because I am not notified. And when they are in the community, sometimes their contact info changes and they don't tell me.
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- **If you have other comments on client communication, please share them here:**

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	For Hays County it has never been easier for clients to keep themselves informed of court date, i.e., the County Website.. It is not made clear to Defendants at time of release from jail that it is their responsibility to keep up with court dates. Defendants do not maintain the voice mail status of their phones such that messages can be left. I have secured a non phone free texting method to get around this, but every modern method is vulnerable to game playing. E.g. Didn't get the text or didn't check for messages, address given to the jail to bond out is a family address, not theirs, too often.
•	Hard to read paperwork.
•	Hays county jail is the worst.
•	Sheriff's policies are biggest hindrance
•	Sometimes clients are homeless and do not have contact information which makes it hard to communicate with them.

Online Courts

- 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:
•	Any hearings without witnesses or evidence should be online
•	Bond reductions and writs could be held online.
•	Hays county could be more productive if arraignments and announcements were online
•	I believe more clients should be given the opportunity to appear virtually in standard reset day appearance
•	I think it should be utilized for arraignments and clients in jail.
•	Seems to be restricted to misdemeanor courts which is a small amount of my time.

Vouchers

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

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	I do not want to charge my clients with excessive fees.
•	I generally submitted a \$500 flat rate voucher because I do not want my clients incurring excessive costs. Since the Court no longer allows the flat rate fee, I have not submitted a voucher. I have not submitted any voucher in over a year.
•	2 respondents indicated no longer completing vouchers due to their employment in the Public Defender's Office
•	My misdemeanors usually are wrapped up with felonies. Flat fee for misdemeanors is usually sufficient. Felony gets the detail billing.
•	Too hard to justify - the courts are notoriously stingy

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

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	I work hard for my clients and the county usually just gives the flat fee, making it useless of me and my notes and all the hard work I have put into the case.
•	It takes too long to get paid. I have waited as long as three months after submitting some vouchers. It is not clear how amounts are computed for felony vouchers. Payment seems inconsistent.
•	See Above
•	When i did submit vouchers they took forever to pay and i have yet to be paid on all of them and i am tired of asking.

Hays County's Indigent Defense System

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

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Appointments are working well
•	Don't practice adult criminal defense in Hays
•	Everything
•	Good streamline process
•	I think the Hays County system works well for the clients.
•	Most things.
•	Not Much (2 Respondents)
•	Professionalism and dedication of the judges.
•	QUICK APPOINTMENTS AND QUICK CONTACT WITH CLIENT
•	Reasonable pay
•	The appointment aspect of it. Client needs an attorney, and the IDC coordinator is good at notifying us of appointments.
•	The appointment procedure.
•	The public defender's office was recently added to the felony and misdemeanor wheel
•	Very little
•	Willingness to actually pay for time spent on case.

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

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Access to clients
•	Bad lawyers keep getting cases
•	Access when not housed in the County (4 Respondents)
•	Clients not having an lawyer appointed until they've already been interrogated by a cop. Bad handwriting on the sheet that they fill out at the jail leads to having trouble reading their contact info. Are these written by the clients or the cops? I don't know but sometimes they are illegible.
•	Nothing in IDS; PREF cases are taking much too long to be filed, but that is not an IDS issue.
•	Not Applicable or Nothing comes to mind (2 Respondents)
•	Not enough compensated time for each case, not enough oversight of attorneys (many just tend to be "plea monkeys" - they get paid the same regardless of effectiveness), not enough support of defendants (they may be homeless and not have access to phones, they may be working two or three jobs and don't have

	access to transportation to court, they may be dealing with child care issues, addiction issues, etc. which are not being addressed by the county, but can cause them to be penalized unnecessarily)
•	Not enough meeting room at jail to effectively meet with clients
•	Over abundance of defendants get to "fire" court-appointed attorneys and get replacements
•	Over crowded jail. Case apportionment system that restricts efforts to consolidate cases. Too much appearing for one case at a time. As more courts have been added, the situation has gotten worse. But, forum shopping by some attorneys has caused the judges to impose their solution.
•	Too much to explain
•	Voucher payments

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

•	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Increase in pay to meet need for quality representation
•	Most things.
•	Not Applicable or I don't handle juvenile cases (4 Respondents)
•	POs are accessible to lawyers
•	QUICK APPOINTMENTS AND QUICK CONTACT WITH CLIENT

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

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Belief that money alone will retain good attorneys: scrambling to get attorneys to cover last minute detention hearings; treating juveniles like adult defendants; ultimately not understanding the purpose of the juvenile justice system; expecting attorneys to drop everything for court setting in Hays despite commitments in other counties and then complaining about the attorneys openly in court - it is disappointing that the attorneys aren't treated fairly (favorites abound) or with respect.
•	Not Applicable (3 Respondents)
•	Prosecutor is taking short cuts and direction from juvenile probation. No independence of thought. Court is rubber stamp for both.

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

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	Additional services for indigent clients needing mental health/substance use enough defense attorneys to represent the volume of indigent clients in our county. If the rates were significantly increased, I can assure you that many current defense attorneys would get back on the court-appointed lists and address the need.
•	Increase oversight of the delivery of all services as well as transparency. Currently it is almost impossible to fire a court appointed attorney who simply isn't doing their job. Why is that tolerated? Please also set some standards about caseloads. Those who carry hundreds of cases are NOT doing the public any favors. We all know they aren't doing a good job yet for some reason we tolerate that - why?
•	I've heard defendants over the years describe their experiences with public defenders. It does not seem to be the answer.
•	More funding for pdo
•	Need to increase funds and open dialogue between court and defense
•	No suggestions at this time or None (2 Respondents)
•	Pay more and increase the standard for who gets cases
•	Training for the persons that run it; more diversity in the hiring process for persons in charge - complaint is Hays County is stuck in its way and it negatively impacts the juveniles.

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

	Responses listed alphabetically:
•	funding
•	Have judge sign vouchers quicker. Not be so prosecution friendly.
•	If attorneys year in and year out dedicate a significant part of their practice to appointments, they should get at least some of the resources the DA and Public Defender gets such as serious online legal research services for free or close to free. We are the forgotten group by Lexis and Westlaw. They have no suitable plans.
•	I think the system works about as well as I can.
•	This may sound counterintuitive, but help guide the county in alternatives to incarceration, such as diversion programs and other support. This will help all practitioners in reducing case loads. Please set standards for caseloads - felony and misdemeanors and emphasize that to both the courts and the county commissioners. TIDC is the perfect entity to do this, but it must be enforced.
•	Trainings