



CHAIR:
The Honorable Sharon Keller
Presiding Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS:
Honorable Sharon Keller
Honorable Nathan Hecht
Honorable John Whitmire
Honorable Brandon Creighton
Honorable Nicole Collier
Honorable Reggie Smith
Honorable Sherry Radack
Honorable Vivian Torres

MEMBERS APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR:
Mr. Alex Bunin
Honorable Richard Evans
Mr. Gonzalo Rios
Honorable Missy Medary
Honorable Valerie Covey

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
Geoffrey Burkhart

Report from the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) for the April 9, 2021 Texas Judicial Council Meeting

Here is a brief report on TIDC's recent work. If you would like additional information, please contact **Executive Director Geoff Burkhart:** (512) 936-6999 or gburkhart@tidc.texas.gov.

TIDC Board and Committee Meetings

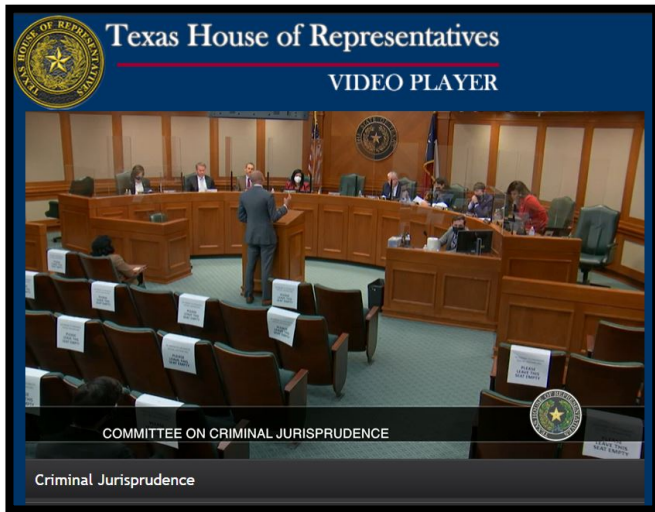
The TIDC Full Board met on Thursday, December 3, 2020, to discuss Indigent Defense Plan and Indigent Defense Expenditure Report (IDER)

submissions, grant programs, and reports from the Improvement and Policy teams. The TIDC Full Board met on [March 4, 2021](#) for updates from the TIDC Funding, Improvement, and Oversight teams. The next Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, June 17, 2021.



TIDC at the Texas Legislature

TIDC filed its Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR); TIDC Executive Director Geoff Burkhart testified at a joint budget hearing before the Governor's Office, Legislative Budget Board, Senate Finance, and House Appropriations staff; and TIDC submitted [written testimony regarding Interim Charge 3](#), which concerns public defense, to the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.



Presiding Judge Keller testified on TIDC's behalf at the [Senate Finance Committee hearing](#) (February 11), Wesley Shackelford testified virtually at the [House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee meeting](#) (March 1), Presiding Judge Keller testified at the [House Appropriations – Subcommittee on Art I, IV, & V](#) (March 3), Scott Ehlers testified at the [House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee meeting](#) (March 8), and Geoff Burkart testified

on HB 2864 (Chair Nicole Collier) and HB 2446 (Representative Canales) at the [House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee hearing](#) (March 29).

TIDC COVID-19 Update

TIDC staff are working from home. About 90% of our core operations are continuing remotely. Here's a summary of our activities:

- Grant funding
- Indigent defense plan review
- Public defender and managed assigned counsel planning studies
- Publications
- Future Indigent Defense Leaders (FIDL) planning
- Grant review
- Complaints
- Interim charge research
- Drafting fiscal and policy monitoring reports
- Technical assistance to counties

TIDC staff hosted the Texas Chief Public Defenders meeting on COVID-19 in September.

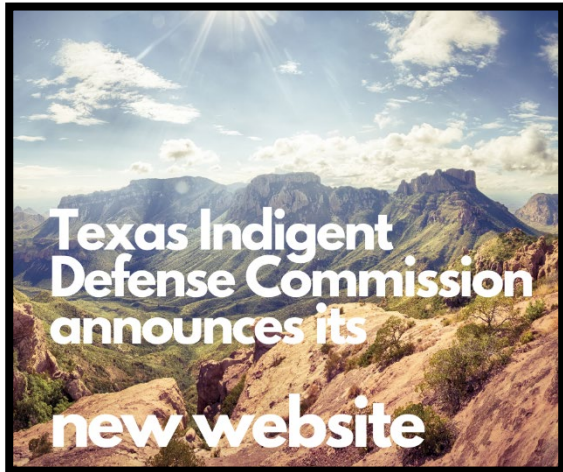
Joel Lieurance and Scott Ehlers presented on [Appointment of Counsel at Magistration in the time of COVID-19 Virtual Workshop](#).

TIDC staff attended a presentation on COVID-19 research with UT Professor Deitch in November.

Staff Update

In addition to its normal monitoring, grants administration, and data collection, TIDC staff has been involved in the following:

- TIDC released its [Public Defender Primer](#) in the fall. The Primer collects research on public defender programs, explores Texas public defender offices, and shows how counties can build a public defender office in their jurisdiction.
- TIDC released the [Starr County Regional Public Defender Grant Evaluation report](#). TIDC found that the TRLA Starr County Regional Public Defender Office improved indigent defense in Starr, Duval, and Jim Hogg Counties, while keeping costs low.
- TIDC launched its new website: <http://tidc.texas.gov>.



- **Kathleen Casey-Gamez** has led regular National Association for Public Defense's (NAPD) Indigent Defense Commissions Workgroup meetings with TIDC staff in attendance.

- **Kathleen** held regular Future Indigent Defense Leaders (FIDL) Roundtable meetings. Topics have included Brainstorming Legal Issues and Holistic Defense Practices.

- **Geoff Burkhart** has been elected to serve another year on the National Association for Public Defense's (NAPD) Steering Committee and has attended regular meetings.
- On September 16, **Geoff** presented on Transformative Justice at the [Addressing the Health and Social Needs of Justice-Involved Young Adults ResProg Webinar](#).
- TIDC Senior Policy Analyst **Kathleen Casey-Gamez** delivered a baby boy, Noah, on September 22, 2020.
- TIDC staff attended the [3rd Annual Judicial Summit on Mental Health Virtual Summit](#) in mid-November.
- On November 11, **Claire Buetow** presented recent developments in TIDC's monitoring program to the [Indigent Defense Research Association \(IDRA\) at its virtual annual meeting](#).
- **Claire** moderated a panel on counsel at first appearance at the [American Bar Association Public Defense Summit](#) in January.
- **Kathleen** and **Scott** attended the [Gideon's Promise Winter Institute 2021](#).
- TIDC's Funding and Improvement teams held an Improvement Grant application process webinar for the upcoming FY22 Improvement Grant cycle.

- Policy monitoring reports and responses are available on the TIDC website for Dawson, Gaines, and Jefferson Counties.
- TIDC staff has issued final fiscal monitoring reports for [Jefferson](#), Irion, and [Kleberg](#) Counties.

Indigent Defense in the Media

[County to use \\$2.5 million grant for 5-county entity](#) (September)

[New Galveston County public defenders office will help address mental health issues](#) (September)

[Indigent court needs on docket](#) (October)

[Indigent Defense Coordinator Program Renewed](#) (October)

[Commissioners could renew membership in death penalty defender program](#) (November)

[Meet a new chief public defender in Texas working to end criminal justice disparities](#) (December)

[Texas Chief Justice Hecht: If Texas doesn't reform its bail system, federal courts likely will](#) (January)

[Public Defenders Suffer From the 'Stress of Injustice': Study](#) (January)

[San Angelo attorney reappointed to Governing Board of the Texas Indigent Defense Commission by Governor Abbott](#) (February)

[New public defender office open for business](#) (March)

[Ask A Public Defender](#) (March)