



TEXAS INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION

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Executive Director:
James D. Bethke

February 10, 2012

The Honorable Carolyn Bilski
Constitutional County Court
Austin County Courthouse
One East Main Street
Bellville, Texas 77418

Re: Austin County Fiscal Monitoring Visit

Dear Judge Bilski:

A monitoring visit of your county was conducted on July 13, 2011. The financial aspects of the county were monitored to adequately review fiscal records and documentation to ensure compliance with the Texas Indigent Defense Commission grant.

A copy of the final monitoring report including your county response is enclosed. The Texas Indigent Defense Commission would like to thank county officials and employees for their assistance and courtesy during the course of the monitoring visit. We greatly appreciated the time and cooperation of Austin County's staff.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at 512.936.7561.

Sincerely,


Carol Conner
Fiscal Monitor

cc: The Honorable Jeff R. Steinhauser, Local Administrative District Court
The Honorable Daniel Leedy, Local Administrative Statutory County Court
Ms. Betty Jez, County Auditor
Ms. Cindy Frady, Assistant Auditor
Mr. James D. Bethke, Executive Director, Texas Indigent Defense Commission
Mr. Wesley Shackelford, Deputy Director, Texas Indigent Defense Commission
Mr. Bryan Wilson, Grants Administrator, Texas Indigent Defense Commission

TEXAS INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION
(formerly Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense)

Fiscal Monitoring of Indigent Defense Expenses

Austin County, Texas

on

July 13, 2011

Final

February 10, 2012

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I. INTRODUCTION

Austin County on-site fiscal monitoring visit was conducted on July 13, 2011. The fiscal monitor reviewed financial records to determine whether grant funds were spent in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Commission grant.

Austin County is located in southeastern Texas. Bellville, the county seat and second largest town, is fifty miles northwest of Houston. The county has an estimated population of 28,417.

Austin County's court system is comprised of a county court, statutory county court, and district court. In 2010, the county received \$17,099 in formula grant funds. The county also collected \$12,037 for reimbursement of attorney fees from defendants.

Austin County Indigent Defense Expenditures			
Expenditures	2008	2009	2010
Population Estimate	27,182	27,182	28,417
Juvenile Contract Counsel	\$10,722	\$2,600	\$5,292
Adult Misdemeanor Contract Counsel	\$13,361	\$48,325	\$58,407
Adult Felony Contract Counsel	\$60,476	\$24,100	\$28,325
Adult Felony Contract Counsel Appeals	\$800	0	0
Adult Felony Assigned Counsel	0	\$10,000	0
Capital Murder	0	0	\$71,669
Licensed Investigation Expenses	0	0	\$47,357
Expert Witness Expenses	\$500	\$4,975	\$18,178
Other Direct Litigation Expenses	0	0	\$9,430
Total Court Expenditures	\$85,859	\$90,000	\$238,657
Formula Grant Disbursement	\$17,257	\$17,306	\$17,099
Reimbursement of Attorney Fees	\$8,883	0	\$12,037
Total Contract Counsel Cases	295	294	293
Total Assigned Counsel Cases	0	1	7

Source: Texas Indigent Defense Commission records

Commission Background

In January 2002, the 77th Texas Legislature established the Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense (Task Force). In May 2011, the 82nd Texas Legislature changed the name of the Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense to the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (Commission) effective September 1, 2011. The Commission remains a permanent standing committee of the Texas Judicial Council and administratively attached to the Office of Court Administration (OCA). The Texas Indigent Defense Commission provides financial and technical support to counties to develop and maintain quality, cost-effective indigent defense systems that meet the needs of local communities and the requirements of the Constitution and state law. The purpose of the Commission is to promote justice and fairness to all indigent persons accused of criminal conduct, including juvenile respondents, as provided by the laws and constitutions of the United States and Texas. As a result of the legislative requirement, the Commission promulgated Section 173.401(a), Texas Administrative Code, which provides, “the Commission or its designees will monitor the activities of grantees as necessary to ensure that grant funds are used for authorized purposes in compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of the grant.”

Objectives

The objectives of this review were to:

- determine whether grant funds were used for authorized purposes in compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of the grant.
- validate policies and procedures of fiscal departments relating to indigent defense services.
- provide recommendations regarding operational efficiency.
- assist with any questions or concerns on the indigent defense program requirements.

Scope

The county’s indigent defense expenditures were monitored to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the provisions of the grant during fiscal year 2010. The fiscal monitor reviewed records located in the Austin County Courthouse.

Methodology

To accomplish the objectives, the fiscal monitor met with county judge, county auditor, assistant auditor, and district judge assistant. The fiscal monitor reviewed:

- random samples of paid attorney fee vouchers, contract attorney fee vouchers, licensed investigations, expert witnesses, other direct litigation for verification of expenses;
- general ledger transactions, financial spreadsheets, and invoices;
- indigent defense expenditure report, attorney fee schedule, and indigent defense contract agreements;
- public appointment list, attorney applications, and attorney criminal continuing legal education training; and
- county’s indigent defense plan.

The expenditure period of October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010 (FY 2010) was reviewed during the fiscal monitoring visit.

Austin County's Criminal Courts			
Courts	Courts		Sampled
	Total	Reviewed	
County Court	1	1	100%
County Court-at-Law	1	1	100%
District Court	1	1	100%

Percent Sampled: courts reviewed / courts total

Summary of Findings

- The county did not report indigent defense expenditures and case information associated with those expenditures in the manner prescribed by Section 79.036, Government Code.
- The county did not have written accounting procedures for processing criminal indigent defense expenses.
- The continuing legal education hours were not documented for 7 of the 7 assigned court appointed attorneys on the public appointment list in accordance with Title 1, Chapter 174, Texas Administrative Code.
- The county did not follow guidelines for awarding contracts for indigent defense services as specified in Article 26.04(h), Code of Criminal Procedure and Title 1, Part 8, Chapter 174, Rule 174.12(a-c), Texas Administrative Code.
- The contracts for indigent defense services did not have all required elements for indigent defense services as specified in Title 1, Part 8, Chapter 174, Rule 174.15 – 174.25, Texas Administrative Code.

II. INDIGENT DEFENSE GRANT

A. Formula Grant

The county submitted the FY 2010 indigent defense online grant application to assist in the provisions of the Fair Defense Act. Austin County met the formula grant eligibility requirements.

Monitor Comment

As a result of reviewing the FY 2010 general ledger and financial transactions of indigent defense expenses, the county maintains fiscal accountability of the formula grant and indigent defense expenditures.

B. Indigent Defense Expenditure Reporting (IDER)

On October 20, 2010, the county submitted the indigent defense expenditure report in a timely manner. However, the indigent defense expenditures were not reported in the manner prescribed by Section 79.036, Government Code. As a result of reviewing expenses, it was discovered that County Court-at-Law and County Court's total number of cases and associated expenses were incorrectly combined and reported in the county court category of services on the indigent defense expenditure report. The county is required to accurately capture and report amount paid, cases disposed associated with the amount paid in each court in which the cases were disposed with case type. Case types include misdemeanor, felony, juvenile, appeal-felony, appeal-misdemeanor, appeal-juvenile, no charges filed-adult, and no charges filed-juvenile in accordance with Section 79.036, Government Code. Please refer to the Procedure Manual for the Indigent Defense Expenditure Report FY 2011, page 4 at:
<http://www.txcourts.gov/tidc/pdf/FY11IDERManual.pdf>.

Recommendation

The Commission recommends that the county develop procedures to accurately report amount paid, cases disposed associated with the amount paid for each court with criminal jurisdiction in the manner prescribed by Section 79.036, Government Code.

Austin County Action Plan

Austin County implemented in 2011 (for contract year 2012) the suggested **Notice of Opportunity and Application**. Austin County also revised its indigent defense contract and application procedures to correct the items noted in pages 12-13 of the draft report. We have enclosed the revised contract for indigent defense services. **Both the Notice of Opportunity and Application** and contract are attached. Also, effective March 1, 2012, Austin County has implement the attached **Instructions and Contract Attorney Fee Voucher**.

Contact person(s): Local Administrative Judge

Completion date: Current Practice

III. ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS

Accounting Procedures

The county did not have written accounting procedures to include staff responsibilities and oversight for processing of criminal indigent defense expenses. While there are no written procedures, the county does have a method for processing indigent defense expenses.

Recommendation

The Commission recommends that the county develop and maintain written accounting procedures for processing indigent defense expenses. Formal accounting policies and procedures provide an effective framework for internal controls and financial reporting requirements.

Austin County Action Plan

Austin County is developing written indigent defense accounting procedures which will be adopted by Commissioner’s Court in February or March 2012. We will provide a copy of the indigent defense accounting procedures once adopted and approved. The contract attorneys may request reasonable and necessary expenses as required in Article 26.05 in the Code of Criminal Procedure. All expenses are itemized with supporting documentation, invoices or vouchers. Once approved by the presiding trial court, the invoice is submitted to the auditor for payment.

Contact person(s): Local Administrative Judge

Completion date: February or March 2012

IV. INDIGENT DEFENSE PAID VOUCHERS

A. Review of Assigned and Contract Attorneys Fee Payments

1. Fee Schedules

The attorney fee vouchers reviewed were paid in accordance with the fee schedule adopted by the formal action of the judges hearing criminal cases.

2. Reviewed Attorney Fee Vouchers

Austin County Courts					
10 Different Paid Attorneys					
3 Contract Attorneys			7 Assigned Attorneys		
Courts	Total				
	Cases		Attorney Fee Vouchers		
	Assigned	Contract Counsel	Assigned	Contract	Total
County Court	0	203	0	\$63,669	\$63,669
155 th District Court	7	90	\$71,669	\$28,325	\$99,994
Total	7	293	\$71,669	\$92,024	\$163,693

County Court = juvenile contract counsel expenses + adult misdemeanor contract counsel expenses
 \$63,669 = \$5,292 + \$58,407
 District Courts = assigned counsel capital murder + adult felony contract counsel
 \$99,994 = \$71,669 + \$28,325

Note: On the FY 2010 Indigent Defense Expenditure Report, County Court and County Court-at-Law expenses were combined under County Court.

Monitor Comment

All attorney fee vouchers reviewed met the statutory requirements for payment, which states, “no payment shall be made until the form for itemizing the services performed is submitted to the judge presiding over the proceedings and approves the payment” in

accordance with Article 26.05(c), Code of Criminal Procedure. The attorney fee vouchers reviewed captured the specific data elements (defendant name, case/cause numbers, court number, offense, amount paid, attorney signature, and presiding judge signature).

Additionally, the contract attorney fee vouchers provided the minimum required information on each case disposed of during the payment period as required in Section 79.036, Government Code.

Austin County Response

Austin County has implemented effective March 1, 2012, the attached **Instructions and Contract Attorney Fee Voucher.**

3. Summary of Investigations, Experts, and Other Direct Litigation Expenses

Investigations, Experts, and Other Direct Litigation Expenditures				
Expenditures	Total Vouchers			
	Paid	FY 2010	Reviewed	Reviewed Value
Investigation	16	\$47,357	16	\$47,357
Expert Witness	8	\$18,178	8	\$18,178
Other Direct Litigation	8	\$9,429	7	\$9,429

Monitor Comment

The county paid and captured expert witnesses, licensed investigations, and other direct litigation expenses in the appropriate category of services pursuant to Article 26.05(h), Code of Criminal Procedure.

Austin County Response

Austin County is developing written indigent defense accounting procedures which will be adopted by Commissioner’s Court in February or March 2012. The contract attorneys may request reasonable and necessary expenses as required in Article 26.05 in the Code of Criminal Procedure. All expenses are itemized with supporting documentation, invoices or vouchers. Once approved by the presiding trial court, the invoice is submitted to the auditor for payment.

B. Public Appointment List

1. Approval of Qualified Attorneys by the Judges

A majority of the judges approved the attorneys on the public appointment list.

Monitor Comment

Austin County maintained support documents that indicated a majority of the judges approved the attorneys on the public appointment list pursuant to Article 26.04(d), Code of Criminal Procedure.

2. Applied for Public Appointment List

Courts	Number of Attorneys		Sampled
	public appointment list	applications reviewed	
County and District Courts <i>(Assigned Attorneys)</i>	7	7	100%
County and District Courts <i>(Contract Attorneys)</i>	3	3	100%

Percent Sampled: applications reviewed / number on public appointment list

Monitor Comment

Austin County criminal courts maintained attorney applications for placement on the public appointment list in accordance with Article 26.04(d)-(e), Code of Criminal Procedure.

3. Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Requirements

The continuing legal education hours were not documented for 7 of the 7 assigned court appointed attorneys on the public appointment list. Without the CLE documentation for court appointed attorneys on the public appointment list, the county auditor may not make proper payments consistent with Sections 174.1 and 174.2 of the Texas Administrative Code. Attorneys accepting appointments are required to obtain six (6) hours of criminal and/or juvenile law during each 12-month reporting period as indicated in Austin County’s local indigent defense plan, while the Commission rules require at least six (6) hours per Title 1, Chapter 174, Texas Administrative Code. The minimum CLE requirement is a grant funding condition.

Courts	Number of Attorneys		
	public appointment list	criminal/juvenile CLE documents	
		reviewed	met minimum hours
County and District Courts <i>(Assigned Attorneys)</i>	7	0	0
County and District Courts <i>(Contract Attorneys)</i>	3	3	3

Recommendation

The Commission recommends that the county develop a system to document the continuing legal education hours for all assigned attorneys on the public appointment list.

Note: Failure to maintain adequate documentation upon request may result in disallowed costs of the activity or action that is not in compliance and the Commission

may seek a return of the cost as specified in Rule 173.307, Chapter 173, Texas Administrative Code.

Austin County Action Plan

Austin County will continue to maintain the contract attorneys CLE for criminal and/or juvenile law during each 12-month reporting period according to the county's local indigent defense plan also require contract attorneys to submit proof of required continuing legal education hours. Letters sent to the contract attorneys on January 31, 2012 requesting CLE verification.

Contact person(s): Local Administrative Judge

Completion date: March 1, 2012

C. Review of Contract Defender Program

At its meeting on August 24, 2006, the Commission voted to adopt new rules to establish minimum requirements for the contract defender program. At the September 20, 2006 meeting, the Texas Judicial Council ratified the new rules. On January 1, 2007, the new rules became effective and all jurisdictions were required to follow them. Refer to Appendix H for contract defender program requirements.

The county has an assigned counsel and contracts for indigent defense services. In FY 2010, the county maintained \$92,700 in indigent defense services contracts (three contracts \$30,900). The contracts provide legal representation to indigent defendants and disposition prior to trial. The contract does not cover death penalty cases and appeals. Although begun prior to passage of the Commission rules, the contract defender program became subject to the rules after they went into effect on January 1, 2007 beginning when any contracts then in force expired or came up for renewal. The rules therefore apply to these three contracts and the review below assesses how the county's system complies with each rule.

No.	Contract Counsel			Fees
	Attorney	Invoices	Cases	
1	Calvin Garvie	12	77	\$30,900
2	Karli Illich	12	137	\$30,900
3	Stephen Longoria	12	79	\$30,900
Total		36	293	\$92,700

(1). The county does not appear to follow the guidelines for awarding contracts with indigent defense services as required by the Application Process 174.12(a-c), Contract Defender Program Requirements. The Application Process requires appointing authorities to solicit proposals through a widely disseminated notification of the opportunity to apply (NOA) and applicants to have the same opportunity to respond and be considered for public defender contracts.

Application Process 174.12(a-c)

§174.12. Application Process – (No). The county has no record that solicitation and selection for contractors were in accordance with the procedure governing alternative appointment programs contained in Article 26.04, Code of Criminal Procedure.

- (a) Notification – (No). The county has no record of notification of the opportunity to apply (NOA) to be a public defender contractor. The contract shall be distributed in a manner that reasonably covers all practicing members of the bar within the county or other region designated by the appointing authority. The notification shall inform attorneys of all requirements for submitting applications.*
- (b) Opportunity to Respond – (No). The county has no record that all potential contractors had the same opportunity to respond to the NOA and be considered for the award of a contract.*
- (c) Application – (No). The county has no record that applications were submitted in writing and maintained by the appointing authority or contracting authority in accordance with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission Retention Schedule for Local Records- Local Schedule GR.*

For further details and commentary on *application of standards and contracting procedures*, refer to contract defender program rules, Texas Administrative Code, Title 1, Part 8, Chapter 174, Rule 174.11 – 174.25, Texas Administrative Code, page 3, at: <http://www.courts.state.tx.us/tfid/docs/Contract%20Defender%20Rules%20w%20Commentary%20and%20Sample%20Fee%20Vouchers%20Final-Rev'd.doc>.

(2). The county did not have all required elements for each reviewed contract for indigent defense services pursuant to the Contract Defender Program Requirements.

Required Elements of a Contract for Indigent Defense Services 174.15 - 174.25

§174.15. Parties – (Yes). The contract identified the appointing authority, contracting authority, and contractor.

§174.16. Term of Contract – (Yes). The contract specified the term of the contract, including any provision for extensions, and a provision for terminating the contract by either party.

§174.17. Scope of Contract – (Yes). The county's contract specified the categories of cases in which the contractor is to provide services.

§174.18. Minimum Attorney Qualifications – (Yes). The contract specified minimum qualifications for attorneys covered by the contract and require such attorneys to maintain the qualifications during the term of the contract.

§174.19. Duration of Representation – (Yes). The contract specified that the contractor have the responsibility to complete all cases once representation is commenced during the term of the contract in accordance with Article 26.04(j)(2), Code of Criminal Procedure.

§174.20. *Substitution of Attorneys – (Yes). The contract did identify the attorneys who will perform legal representation in each category of case covered by the contract and prohibit the substitution of other attorneys without prior approval by a majority of the appointing authority.*

§174.21. *Caseload Limitations – (Yes). The contract sets the maximum number of cases or workload each attorney may be required to handle pursuant to the contract.*

§174.22. *Standards of Representation – (Yes). The contract specifies directly that the contractors are to provide zealous legal representation to all clients in a professional, skilled manner consistent with all applicable laws and the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct.*

§174.23. *Conflicts of Interest – (No). The contract did not state a policy to assure that the contractor and its attorneys do not provide representation to defendants when doing so would involve a conflict of interest.*

§174.24. *Investigators and Experts – (Yes). The contract did not specify how investigation services and experts that are necessary to provide competent representation will be made available in a manner consistent with Article 26.05(d), Code of Criminal Procedure.*

§174.25. *Compensation and Payment Processes – (No). The contract did not set the amount of compensation to be paid to the contractor and the designated method and timing of payment. The contract shall state that the contractor shall be required to submit an itemized fee voucher. The voucher must be approved by a member of the appointing authority prior to being forwarded to the county financial officer for approval and payment. The contract shall also specify how a contractor is to be compensated for cases assigned but not disposed within the term of the contract as provided in Section 174.19. assigned but not disposed within the term of the contract as provided in Section 174.19.*

For further details and commentary on *required elements of a contract for indigent defense services*, refer to contract defender program rules, Title 1, Part 8, Chapter 174, Rule 174.15 – 174.25, Texas Administrative Code, page 3, at:

<http://www.courts.state.tx.us/tfid/docs/Contract%20Defender%20Rules%20w%20Comme ntary%20and%20Sample%20Fee%20Vouchers%20Final-Rev'd.doc>.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends that the county:

- Follow the guidelines for awarding contracts for indigent defense services as specified in Article 26.04(h), Code of Criminal Procedure and Title 1, Part 8, Chapter 174, Rule 174.12(a-c), Texas Administrative Code.
- Revise contracts for indigent defense services to meet the contract defender program requirements in accordance with Title 1, Part 8, Chapter 174, Rule 174.15 – 174.25, Texas Administrative Code.

Note: During the fiscal monitoring visit, the county was provided with copies of the contract defender program rules and a sample attorney contract. Please see Appendix F for sample attorney contract.

Austin County Action Plan

Austin County implemented in 2011 (for contract year 2012) the suggested **Notice of Opportunity and Application**. Austin County also revised its indigent defense contract and application procedures to correct the items noted in pages 12-13 of the draft report.

Contact person(s): Local Administrative Judge

Completion date: Current Practice

V. SUMMARY

General Comments

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation to local county officials and employees of Austin County for the time and courtesy extended during the fiscal monitoring visit. In particular, my gratitude extends to Judge Carolyn Bilski, Constitutional County Court; Judge Jeff R. Steinhauser, Local Administrative District Court; Judge Dan Leedy, Local Administrative Statutory County Court; and Ms. Betty Jez, County Auditor, for accommodating the fiscal monitor activities. These activities included providing workspace, allocating employee time, and exercising flexibility in meeting the schedule of the fiscal monitor. Thank you for your time and cooperation during the monitoring visit.

Austin County Response

Austin County will continue to work hard in meeting the goals of providing ever-improving indigent defense service and meeting the Fair Defense Act. Thank you for your courteous and helpfulness to our staff. Ms. Conner's expertise during the fiscal monitoring process was greatly appreciated! Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jeff R. Steinhauser
Local Administrative Judge

Appendix A

Texas Government Code, Section 79.036. Indigent Defense Information

(a) In each county, not later than November 1 of each odd-numbered year and in the form and manner prescribed by the commission, the following information shall be prepared and provided to the commission:

- (1) a copy of all formal and informal rules and forms that describe the procedures used in the county to provide indigent defendants with counsel in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure, including the schedule of fees required under Article 26.05 of that code;
- (2) any revisions to rules or forms previously submitted under this section; or
- (3) verification that rules and forms previously submitted under this section still remain in effect.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c):

- (1) the local administrative district judge in each county, or the person designated by the judge, shall perform the action required by Subsection (a) with respect to all rules and forms adopted by the judges of the district courts trying felony cases in the county; and
- (2) the local administrative statutory county court judge in each county, or the person designated by the judge, shall perform the action required by Subsection (a) with respect to all rules and forms adopted by the judges of the county courts and statutory county courts trying misdemeanor cases in the county.

(c) If the judges of two or more levels of courts described by Subsection (b) adopt the same formal and informal rules and forms, the local administrative judge serving the courts having jurisdiction over offenses with the highest classification of punishment, or the person designated by the judge, shall perform the action required by Subsection (a).

(d) The chair of the juvenile board in each county, or the person designated by the chair, shall perform the action required by Subsection (a) with respect to all rules and forms adopted by the juvenile board.

(e) In each county, the county auditor, or the person designated by the commissioners court if the county does not have a county auditor, shall prepare and send to the commission in the form and manner prescribed by the commission and on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis, with respect to legal services provided in the county to indigent defendants during each fiscal year, information showing the total amount expended by the county to provide indigent defense services and an analysis of the amount expended by the county:

- (1) in each district, county, statutory county, and appellate court;
- (2) in cases for which a private attorney is appointed for an indigent defendant;
- (3) in cases for which a public defender is appointed for an indigent defendant;
- (4) in cases for which counsel is appointed for an indigent juvenile under Section 51.10(f), Family Code; and
- (5) for investigation expenses, expert witness expenses, or other litigation expenses.

(f) As a duty of office, each district and county clerk shall cooperate with the county auditor or the person designated by the commissioners court and the commissioners court in retrieving information required to be sent to the commission under this section.

This section replaced Sec. 71.0351 effective Sept. 1, 2011 (HB 1754, §20).

Appendix B

Texas Government Code, Section 79.037. Technical Support; Grants

- (a) The commission shall:
- (1) provide technical support to:
 - (A) assist counties in improving their indigent defense systems; and
 - (B) promote compliance by counties with the requirements of state law relating to indigent defense;
 - (2) to assist counties in providing indigent defense services in the county, distribute in the form of grants any funds appropriated for the purposes of this section; and
 - (3) monitor each county that receives a grant and enforce compliance by the county with the conditions of the grant, including enforcement by:
 - (A) withdrawing grant funds; or
 - (B) requiring reimbursement of grant funds by the county.
- (b) The commission shall distribute funds as required by Subsection (a)(2) based on a county's compliance with standards adopted by the board and the county's demonstrated commitment to compliance with the requirements of state law relating to indigent defense.
- (c) The board shall adopt policies to ensure that funds under Subsection (a)(2) are allocated and distributed to counties in a fair manner.
- (d) A county may not reduce the amount of funds provided for indigent defense services in the county because of funds provided by the commission under this section.

Addition of this Section effective Sept. 1, 2011 (HB 1754, §20).

Appendix C

Uniform Grant Management Standards (As adopted June 2004)

paragraph 20, page 68. Standards for Financial Management Systems [*This section does not apply to procurement contracts.*]

(b) The financial management systems of other grantees and subgrantees must meet the following standards:

- (1) Financial reporting. Accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial results of financially assisted activities must be made in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the grant or subgrant.
- (2) Accounting records. Grantees and subgrantees must maintain records which adequately identify the source and application of funds provided for financially-assisted activities. These records must contain information pertaining to grant or subgrant awards and authorizations, obligations, unobligated balances, assets, liabilities, outlays or expenditures, and income.
- (3) Internal control. Effective control and accountability must be maintained for all grant and subgrant cash, real and personal property, and other assets. Grantees and subgrantees must adequately safeguard all such property and must assure that it is used solely for authorized purposes.
- (4) Budget control. Actual expenditures or outlays must be compared with budgeted amounts for each grant or subgrant. Financial information must be related to performance or productivity data, including the development of unit cost information whenever appropriate or specifically required in the grant or subgrant agreement. If unit cost data are required, estimates based on available documentation will be accepted whenever possible.
- (5) Allowable cost. Applicable OMB cost principles, agency program regulations, and the terms of grant and subgrant agreements will be followed in determining the reasonableness, allowability, and allocability of costs.
- (6) Source documentation. Accounting records must be supported by such source documentation as canceled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, contract and subgrant award documents, etc.

Appendix D

Art. 26.04. [494] [558] [547] Procedures for Appointing Counsel

(a) The judges of the county courts, statutory county courts, and district courts trying criminal cases in each county, by local rule, shall adopt and publish written countywide procedures for timely and fairly appointing counsel for an indigent defendant in the county arrested for or charged with a misdemeanor punishable by confinement or a felony. The procedures must be consistent with this article and Articles 1.051, 15.17, 26.05, and 26.052. A court shall appoint an attorney from a public appointment list using a system of rotation, unless the court appoints an attorney under Subsection (f), (h), or (i). The court shall appoint attorneys from among the next five names on the appointment list in the order in which the attorneys' names appear on the list, unless the court makes a finding of good cause on the record for appointing an attorney out of order. An attorney who is not appointed in the order in which the attorney's name appears on the list shall remain next in order on the list.

(b) Procedures adopted under Subsection (a) shall:

- (1) authorize only the judges of the county courts, statutory county courts, and district courts trying criminal cases in the county, or the judges' designee, to appoint counsel for indigent defendants in the county;
- (2) apply to each appointment of counsel made by a judge or the judges' designee in the county;
- (3) ensure that each indigent defendant in the county who is charged with a misdemeanor punishable by confinement or with a felony and who appears in court without counsel has an opportunity to confer with appointed counsel before the commencement of judicial proceedings;
- (4) require appointments for defendants in capital cases in which the death penalty is sought to comply with any applicable requirements under Articles 11.071 and 26.052;
- (5) ensure that each attorney appointed from a public appointment list to represent an indigent defendant perform the attorney's duty owed to the defendant in accordance with the adopted procedures, the requirements of this code, and applicable rules of ethics; and
- (6) ensure that appointments are allocated among qualified attorneys in a manner that is fair, neutral, and nondiscriminatory.

(c) Whenever a court or the courts' designee authorized under Subsection (b) to appoint counsel for indigent defendants in the county determines that a defendant charged with a felony or a misdemeanor punishable by confinement is indigent or that the interests of justice require representation of a defendant in a criminal proceeding, the court or the courts' designee shall appoint one or more practicing attorneys to defend the defendant in accordance with this subsection and the procedures adopted under Subsection (a). If the court or the courts' designee determines that the defendant does not speak and understand the English language or that the defendant is deaf, the court or the courts' designee shall make an effort to appoint an attorney who is capable of communicating in a language understood by the defendant.

Art. 26.04. Procedures for Appointing Counsel (Continued)

(d) A public appointment list from which an attorney is appointed as required by Subsection (a) shall contain the names of qualified attorneys, each of whom:

- (1) applies to be included on the list;
- (2) meets the objective qualifications specified by the judges under Subsection (e);
- (3) meets any applicable qualifications specified by the Texas Indigent Defense Commission; and
- (4) is approved by a majority of the judges who established the appointment list under Subsection (e).

(e) In a county in which a court is required under Subsection (a) to appoint an attorney from a public appointment list:

(1) the judges of the county courts and statutory county courts trying misdemeanor cases in the county, by formal action:

(A) shall:

- (i) establish a public appointment list of attorneys qualified to provide representation in the county in misdemeanor cases punishable by confinement; and
- (ii) specify the objective qualifications necessary for an attorney to be included on the list; and

(B) may establish, if determined by the judges to be appropriate, more than one appointment list graduated according to the degree of seriousness of the offense and the attorneys' qualifications; and

(2) the judges of the district courts trying felony cases in the county, by formal action:

(A) shall:

- (i) establish a public appointment list of attorneys qualified to provide representation in felony cases in the county; and
- (ii) specify the objective qualifications necessary for an attorney to be included on the list; and

(B) may establish, if determined by the judges to be appropriate, more than one appointment list graduated according to the degree of seriousness of the offense and the attorneys' qualifications.

(f) In a county in which a public defender is appointed under Article 26.044, the court or the courts' designee may appoint the public defender to represent the defendant in accordance with guidelines established for the public defender.

(g) A countywide alternative program for appointing counsel for indigent defendants in criminal cases is established by a formal action in which two-thirds of the judges of the courts designated under this subsection vote to establish the alternative program. An alternative program for appointing counsel in misdemeanor and felony cases may be established in the manner provided by this subsection by the judges of the county courts, statutory county courts, and district courts trying criminal cases in the county. An alternative program for appointing counsel in misdemeanor cases may be established in the manner provided by this subsection by the judges of the county courts and statutory county courts trying criminal cases in the county. An

alternative program for appointing counsel in felony cases may be established in the manner provided by this subsection by the judges of the district courts trying criminal cases in the county. In a county in which an alternative program is established:

- (1) the alternative program may:
 - (A) use a single method for appointing counsel or a combination of methods; and
 - (B) use a multicounty appointment list using a system of rotation; and
- (2) the procedures adopted under Subsection (a) must ensure that:
 - (A) attorneys appointed using the alternative program to represent defendants in misdemeanor cases punishable by confinement:
 - (i) meet specified objective qualifications, which may be graduated according to the degree of seriousness of the offense, for providing representation in misdemeanor cases punishable by confinement; and
 - (ii) are approved by a majority of the judges of the county courts and statutory county courts trying misdemeanor cases in the county;
 - (B) attorneys appointed using the alternative program to represent defendants in felony cases:
 - (i) meet specified objective qualifications, which may be graduated according to the degree of seriousness of the offense, for providing representation in felony cases; and
 - (ii) are approved by a majority of the judges of the district courts trying felony cases in the county;
 - (C) appointments for defendants in capital cases in which the death penalty is sought comply with the requirements of Article 26.052; and
 - (D) appointments are reasonably and impartially allocated among qualified attorneys.

(h) In a county in which an alternative program for appointing counsel is established as provided by Subsection (g) and is approved by the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region, a court or the courts' designee may appoint an attorney to represent an indigent defendant by using the alternative program. In establishing an alternative program under Subsection (g), the judges of the courts establishing the program may not, without the approval of the commissioners court, obligate the county by contract or by the creation of new positions that cause an increase in expenditure of county funds.

(i) A court or the courts' designee required under Subsection (c) to appoint an attorney to represent a defendant accused of a felony may appoint an attorney from any county located in the court's administrative judicial region.

Appendix E

Art. 26.05. Compensation of Counsel Appointed to Defend

(a) A counsel, other than an attorney with a public defender's office or an attorney employed by the office of capital writs, appointed to represent a defendant in a criminal proceeding, including a habeas corpus hearing, shall be paid a reasonable attorney's fee for performing the following services, based on the time and labor required, the complexity of the case, and the experience and ability of the appointed counsel:

(1) time spent in court making an appearance on behalf of the defendant as evidenced by a docket entry, time spent in trial, and time spent in a proceeding in which sworn oral testimony is elicited;

(2) reasonable and necessary time spent out of court on the case, supported by any documentation that the court requires;

(3) preparation of an appellate brief and preparation and presentation of oral argument to a court of appeals or the Court of Criminal Appeals; and

(4) preparation of a motion for rehearing.

(b) All payments made under this article shall be paid in accordance with a schedule of fees adopted by formal action of the judges of the county courts, statutory county courts, and district courts trying criminal cases in each county. On adoption of a schedule of fees as provided by this subsection, a copy of the schedule shall be sent to the commissioners court of the county.

(c) Each fee schedule adopted shall state reasonable fixed rates or minimum and maximum hourly rates, taking into consideration reasonable and necessary overhead costs and the availability of qualified attorneys willing to accept the stated rates, and shall provide a form for the appointed counsel to itemize the types of services performed. No payment shall be made under this article until the form for itemizing the services performed is submitted to the judge presiding over the proceedings or, if the county operates a managed assigned counsel program under Article 26.047, to the director of the program, and until the judge or director, as applicable, approves the payment. If the judge or director disapproves the requested amount of payment, the judge or director shall make written findings stating the amount of payment that the judge or director approves and each reason for approving an amount different from the requested amount. An attorney whose request for payment is disapproved or is not otherwise acted on by the 60th day after the date the request for payment is submitted may appeal the disapproval or failure to act by filing a motion with the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region. On the filing of a motion, the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region shall review the disapproval of payment or failure to act and determine the appropriate amount of payment. In reviewing the disapproval or failure to act, the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region may conduct a hearing. Not later than the 45th day after the date an application for payment of a fee is submitted under this article, the commissioners court shall pay to the appointed counsel the amount that is approved by the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region and that is in accordance with the fee schedule for that county.

Art. 26.05. Compensation of Counsel Appointed to Defend (Continued)

(d) A counsel in a non-capital case, other than an attorney with a public defender's office, appointed to represent a defendant under this code shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses, including expenses for investigation and for mental health and other experts. Expenses incurred with prior court approval shall be reimbursed in the same manner provided for capital cases by Articles 26.052(f) and (g), and expenses incurred without prior court approval shall be reimbursed in the manner provided for capital cases by Article 26.052(h).

(e) A majority of the judges of the county courts and statutory county courts or the district courts, as appropriate, trying criminal cases in the county may remove an attorney from consideration for appointment if, after a hearing, it is shown that the attorney submitted a claim for legal services not performed by the attorney.

(f) All payments made under this article shall be paid from the general fund of the county in which the prosecution was instituted or habeas corpus hearing held and may be included as costs of court.

(g) If the court determines that a defendant has financial resources that enable him to offset in part or in whole the costs of the legal services provided, including any expenses and costs, the court shall order the defendant to pay during the pendency of the charges or, if convicted, as court costs the amount that it finds the defendant is able to pay.

(h) Reimbursement of expenses incurred for purposes of investigation or expert testimony may be paid directly to a private investigator licensed under Chapter 1702, Occupations Code, or to an expert witness in the manner designated by appointed counsel and approved by the court.

Amendment to (a), (c), and (d) effective Sept. 1, 2011 (HB 1754 §20).

Appendix F

CONTRACT FOR LEGAL SERVICES TO CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS

This Contract is made by and between Morris County, Texas ("County"), a political subdivision of the State of Texas, and _____, State Bar No. _____ ("Attorney") on the _____ day of _____, 20____. The purpose of this agreement is for the County to provide legal services to indigent defendants in the Criminal Courts of Morris County. Attorney has agreed to provide all services requested, except for those hereinafter described.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

1. Term. The term of this Contract shall be for eleven (11) months, beginning on November 1, 2007 and ending on September 30, 2008, unless sooner terminated as set forth herein.
2. Compensation. Attorney will receive the sum of \$_____ per month, for a total of \$_____ for the term of the contract (unless the Contract is terminated sooner).
3. Case Load. Attorney may handle up to a maximum of 485 cases per year (i.e., a maximum of 200 felonies, 250 misdemeanors, 25 juvenile cases, and 10 appeals). If the total volume of cases requires that Attorney be appointed to handle more than 485 cases a year, Attorney will be compensated for work on such extra cases at the rate of one and one-half times the normal rate for indigent defense cases in each respective county, or the reasonable fee that the presiding judge finds by order to be appropriate. In these cases, the Attorney must present a form listing the time spent on each case, together with the activities for which the time was incurred, to the presiding judge for approval.
4. Expense Reimbursement. Attorney may receive reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses, including expenses for investigation, and other experts, consistent with Texas Code of Criminal Procedure art. 26.05(d), and travel outside of Morris County, separate from the Attorney's compensation. Travel expenses (mileage, etc.), are eligible for reimbursement in accordance with Morris County's policy on travel reimbursement for employees. All expenses to be reimbursed must be itemized in writing, supported by invoices and /or vouchers, and submitted to the presiding judge for approval.
5. Independent Contractor. Attorney is not an employee of the County, and is, at most, an independent contractor, who shall complete the requirements of this Contract by Attorney's own means and methods of work, and in accordance with the Attorney's professional legal judgment, which shall be in the exclusive charge and control of the Attorney, and is not subject to control or supervision of the County or any judge, except as specified in this Contract. **THE DEFENDANT IS YOUR CLIENT – NOT THE COUNTY. YOU MUST PROVIDE COMPETENT, ZEALOUS LEGAL SERVICES TO EACH CLIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER**

THE TEXAS DISCIPLINARY RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND THE TEXAS CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE.

6. Standard of Performance.

- (a) Attorney will provide all services required by Senate Bill 7 as passed by the 77th Session of the Texas Legislature in 2001. (As it amends the Texas Code of Criminal Procedures).
- (b) Attorney shall provide competent, zealous legal services to each client in a professional, skilled manner consistent with the Attorney's responsibilities under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct and the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure.
- (c) Attorney shall ensure continuity of representation of the client unless relieved or replaced in accordance with art. 26.04(j)(2) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure.
- (d) Attorney shall not assign, subcontract or delegate any part of the services to be provided by the Attorney under this Contract.
- (e) Attorney must submit a monthly progress report to be approved by the Morris County Judge prior to any payment being made under this Contract, in accordance with art. 26.05 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. The report must include the number of cases disposed of in the previous month and the types of cases (adult felony, adult misdemeanor, and juvenile) as well as the number of cases currently open and assigned by the courts. The County Judge may require other information, which is necessary and relevant, and may confer with the presiding judge on any case.
- (f) Attorney must maintain the minimum qualifications to practice law in the state of Texas, and must immediately inform the County Judge of any change in the status of the Attorney's licensure. The Attorney must provide the County with proof of licensure in good standing upon request.
- (g) Attorney agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Morris County from any and all claims rising from the delivery of professional services under this contract.
- (h) Attorney must report to the County Judge the number of continuing legal education hours completed.
- (i) Attorney shall maintain an office in Morris County, Texas and shall maintain the ability to receive facsimile correspondence twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
- (j) Attorney must provide quality, effective legal assistance and representation to clients to whom Attorney is assigned.

- (k) Attorney shall complete all cases once representation is commenced during the term of the contract, unless the attorney is relieved or replaced in accordance with Article 26.04(j)(2), Code of Criminal Procedure. Attorney will be compensated for these uncompleted cases on a case-by-case basis according to the SB7 approved plan.
 - (l) Attorney is prohibited from accepting any payments from a client or third party for legal services provided in a case assigned under this contract
 - (m) Attorney is prohibited from releasing confidential attorney-client information or work product related to any case covered by this contract, except when authorized by the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct.
 - (n) Attorney agrees he will not run for county attorney, within two years of the termination of this contract.
7. Conflict. In the event of a conflict of interest between Attorney and any defendant, Attorney shall present evidence to the court in which the case is pending, and if ordered by the Judge presiding, be allowed to withdraw from representation in that case. Such withdrawal shall not affect the other terms of this agreement.
8. Termination. This Contract may be terminated by the County for good cause, with the approval of the majority of the County and District Judges serving Morris County. If a reason for termination is found to exist by any of the judges or the program director, written notice will be given to Attorney, and a private meeting will be held with the Attorney and judges present to discuss the relevant issues, and, thereafter, the judges will vote on the termination of Attorney's contract.
- (a) County may terminate this agreement if Attorney closes his active office for the practice of law in Morris County.
 - (b) County may terminate this agreement if Attorney fails to perform the duties required by this agreement. Such failure must be supported by judicial findings of that failure.
 - (c) Attorney may terminate this agreement if County fails to make timely payments hereunder.
 - (d) Attorney may terminate this agreement if, for reasons beyond the control of Attorney, Attorney is unable to perform the duties required hereunder.
 - (e) This agreement may be mutually terminated for any force majeure or any change in the law, which makes the agreement moot.
9. Administration. The District Judges and the Morris County Judge will provide oversight and monitoring to assure that Attorney performs as required under this Contract. Nothing

herein shall be interpreted as creating a right or remedy against the County, the Morris County Judge, or the District Judges on the part of any person.

10. Disputes. Venue of any proceeding arising under or with regard to this Contract shall be in a court of competent jurisdiction in Morris County.

11. Additional Terms and Conditions.

(a) The cases to be handled under this Agreement shall be non-capital murder cases in which the death penalty is sought. The appointments hereunder may include juvenile cases.

(b) Attorney will be responsible for three different categories of cases in County and District Court, which include appeals:

Level One. Felonies

Level Two. Misdemeanors

Level Three. Juveniles

(c) A determination that Attorney has given false information in the materials submitted to the County in response to the Request for Qualifications will be grounds for immediate cancellation of this Agreement under the procedures set forth above.

(d) Falsification of any report, invoice, billing documentation or other submission by the Attorney will be grounds for immediate cancellation of this Agreement under the procedures set forth above. In addition, such could subject the Attorney to both professional discipline and criminal prosecution. Therefore, it is very important that submissions be thorough and truthful.

ATTORNEY:

COUNTY:

Printed Name

COUNTY JUDGE

Address

Morris County
500 Broadnax
Daingerfield, TX 75638
903-645-3691 phone
903-645-5729 fax

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G

Texas Administrative Code

<u>Title 1</u>	Administration
<u>Part 8</u>	Texas Judicial Council
<u>Chapter 174</u>	Indigent Defense Policies And Standards
<u>Subchapter A</u>	Minimum Continuing Legal Education Requirements
<u>Rule §174.1</u>	Appointment In Criminal Cases

An Attorney who meets the requirements of this rule may be appointed to represent an indigent person arrested for or charged with a crime, if the attorney is otherwise eligible under the procedures developed under Article 26.04, Code of Criminal Procedure. Crime has the meaning assigned by §173.2(2). An attorney may be appointed under this rule only if an attorney:

- (1) Completes a minimum of six hours of continuing legal education pertaining to criminal law during each 12-month reporting period. The judges of criminal courts of the county shall set the 12-month reporting period applicable to the jurisdiction. Continuing legal education may include activities accredited under Section 4, Article XII, State Bar Rules, self-study, teaching at an accredited continuing legal education activity, attendance at a law school class or legal research-based writing. The judges may require attorneys to complete more than the minimum number of hours of continuing legal education in criminal law in the procedures developed under Article 26.04, Code of Criminal Procedure; or
- (2) Is currently certified in criminal law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization.

Appendix H

CHAPTER 174, RULE 174.10 – 174.25, TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, CONTRACT DEFENDER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

TITLE 1. ADMINISTRATION

Part 8. TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Chapter 174. INDIGENT DEFENSE POLICIES AND STANDARDS

The Texas Indigent Defense Commission (Task Force) is a permanent Standing Committee of the Texas Judicial Council. The Task Force adopts new §§174.10 - 174.25, concerning the establishment of contract defender program requirements. The new sections are adopted without changes to the adopted text as published in the June 16, 2006 of the *Texas Register* (31 TexReg 4819). The Texas Judicial Council pursuant to Section 71.060(b), Government Code, ratified the new sections on September 20, 2006.

The new sections are adopted to establish minimum requirements for the use of contract defender programs to provide indigent defense services. The rules provide for an open attorney application and selection process by the judges or juvenile board in whose court the attorney will serve. The rules also require that certain specific items be included in a contract for indigent defense services and the contract be approved by the county.

No comments were received regarding adoption of the rules.

Subchapter B. CONTRACT DEFENDER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1 TAC §§174.10 - 174.25

The new rules are adopted under the Texas Government Code §71.060(a)(7). The Task Force interprets §71.060(a)(7) as authorizing the Task Force to develop policies and standards for providing legal representation to indigent defendants under a contract defender program.

No other statutes, articles, or codes are affected by the adopted new rules.

Part I. DEFINITIONS

§174.10. Subchapter Definitions.

The following words and terms when used in this Subchapter shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

(a) Appointing Authority. The appointing authority is the:

- (1) Judge or judges who have authority to establish an indigent defense plan and approve attorneys to represent indigent defendants in criminal cases under Article 26.04, Code of Criminal Procedure; and/or
 - (2) Juvenile board that has authority to establish an indigent defense plan and approve attorneys to represent indigent respondents in juvenile cases under Section 51.102, Family Code.
- (b) Contract Defender Program. Contract defender program means a system under which private attorneys, acting as independent contractors and compensated with public funds, are engaged to provide legal representation and services to a group of unspecified indigent defendants who appear before a particular court or group of courts.
 - (c) Contracting Authority. The contracting authority is the county or counties that have the authority to conclude a contract and to obligate funds for the provision of indigent defense services.
 - (d) Contractor. The contractor is an attorney, law firm, professional association, lawyer's association, law school, bar association, non-profit organization or other entity that can be bound by contract.
 - (e) Itemized Fee Voucher. An itemized fee voucher is any instrument, such as an invoice, that details services provided by a contractor providing indigent defense services. The itemized fee voucher may be in paper or electronic form. It shall include at a minimum all the information necessary for the county auditor or other designated official to complete the expenditure report required to be submitted to the Office of Court Administration by Section 79.036, Government Code.

PART II: APPLICATION OF STANDARDS AND CONTRACTING PROCEDURES

§174.11. Application of Subchapter. This Subchapter applies to all contract defender programs. This Subchapter does not apply to public defender programs established and governed by Chapter 26, Code of Criminal Procedure.

§174.12. Application Process. The appointing authority shall solicit and select contractors in accordance with the procedure governing alternative appointment programs contained in Article 26.04, Code of Criminal Procedure.

- (d) Notification. The notification of the opportunity to apply (NOA) to be a contractor shall be distributed in a manner that reasonably covers all practicing members of the bar within the county or other region designated by the appointing authority. The notification shall inform attorneys of all requirements for submitting applications.
- (e) Opportunity to Respond. All potential contractors shall have the same opportunity to respond to the NOA and be considered for the award of a contract.

- (f) Application. All applications must be submitted in writing and shall be maintained by the appointing authority or contracting authority in accordance with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission Retention Schedule for Local Records- Local Schedule GR.

§174.13. Application Review Process. Following the review of all applications the appointing authority shall by a majority vote select contractor(s), specify the types of cases each contractor is qualified to handle, and authorize the contracting authority to enter into a contract. The attorneys associated with the selected contractor(s) must meet the attorney qualification requirements contained in the indigent defense procedures adopted pursuant to Article 26.04, Code of Criminal Procedure. If the contract does not exclude capital cases in which the death penalty is sought, the attorneys associated with the selected contractor(s) must also meet the attorney qualifications set by the regional selection committee and be approved by the regional selection committee to represent clients in capital cases. The appointing authority shall consider at least the following factors when evaluating applications:

- (a) Experience and qualifications of the applicant;
- (b) Applicant's past performance in representing defendants in criminal cases;
- (c) Applicant's disciplinary history with the state bar;
- (d) Applicant's ability to comply with the terms of the contract; and
- (e) Cost of the services under the contract.

§174.14. Awarding the Contract. In accordance with Article 26.04(h), Code of Criminal Procedure, the contracting authority may approve the recommended contractor(s) and enter into a contract for services. The contracting authority shall enter into a contract only if it complies with these standards and all applicable law governing professional services contracts entered into by counties. A contract shall not be awarded solely on the basis of cost.

PART III: REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF A CONTRACT FOR INDIGENT DEFENSE SERVICES

Each component below shall be included in a contract for indigent defense services and shall serve as the basis for the NOA.

§174.15. Parties. Identify the appointing authority, contracting authority, and contractor.

§174.16. Term of Contract. The contract shall specify the term of the contract, including any provision for extensions, and a provision for terminating the contract by either party.

§174.17. Scope of Contract. The contract shall specify the categories of cases in which the contractor is to provide services.

§174.18. Minimum Attorney Qualifications. The contract shall specify minimum qualifications for attorneys covered by the contract and require such attorneys to maintain the qualifications during the term of the contract. The qualifications shall equal or exceed the qualifications provided in the indigent defense procedures adopted pursuant to Article 26.04, Code of Criminal

Procedure. If the contract does not exclude capital cases in which the death penalty is sought, the qualifications shall equal or exceed the minimum attorney qualifications set by the regional selection committee and the attorneys covered by the contract shall be required to be on the list of attorneys approved by the regional selection committee to represent clients in capital cases. If a contract covers services provided by more than one attorney, qualifications may be graduated according to the seriousness of offense and each attorney shall be required to meet and maintain only those qualifications established for the offense level(s) for which the attorney is approved to provide defense services.

§174.19. Duration of Representation. The contract shall specify that the contractor has the responsibility to complete all cases once representation is commenced during the term of the contract, unless an attorney covered by the contract is relieved or replaced in accordance with Article 26.04(j)(2), Code of Criminal Procedure.

§174.20. Substitution of Attorneys. The contract shall identify the attorney(s) who will perform legal representation in each category of case covered by the contract and prohibit the substitution of other attorneys without prior approval by a majority of the appointing authority. Nothing in the contract shall prohibit an attorney covered by the contract from being relieved or replaced in accordance with Article 26.04(j)(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

§174.21. Caseload Limitations. The contract shall set the maximum number of cases or workload each attorney may be required to handle pursuant to the contract.

§174.22. Standards of Representation. The contract shall require that the contractor provide zealous legal representation to all clients in a professional, skilled manner consistent with all applicable laws and the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct.

§174.23. Conflicts of Interest. The contract shall state a policy to assure that the contractor and its attorneys do not provide representation to defendants when doing so would involve a conflict of interest.

§174.24. Investigators and Experts. The contract shall specify how investigation services and experts that are necessary to provide competent representation will be made available in a manner consistent with Article 26.05(d), Code of Criminal Procedure.

§174.25. Compensation and Payment Processes. The contract shall set the amount of compensation to be paid to the contractor and the designated method and timing of payment. The contract shall state that the contractor shall be required to submit an itemized fee voucher. The voucher must be approved by a member of the appointing authority prior to being forwarded to the county financial officer for approval and payment. The contract shall also specify how a contractor is to be compensated for cases assigned but not disposed within the term of the contract as provided in Section 174.19.

The Task Force hereby certifies that the proposal has been reviewed by legal counsel and found to be within the agency's legal authority to adopt.