

# Texas Indigent Defense Commission

## Technical Support Request Policy and Procedure

### **Introduction**

In January 2002, the 77<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature established the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (originally called the Task Force on Indigent Defense.) The mission of the Commission is to improve the delivery of indigent defense services through fiscal assistance and professional support to State, local judicial, county, and municipal officials. The Commission promotes 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. The Commission is given a directive under Tex. Gov't Code § 79.037 to direct the comptroller to distribute funds, including grants, to counties to provide indigent defense services in the county in accordance with the Fair Defense Act (FDA).

### **Policy**

The Texas Indigent Defense Commission (Commission) is required by statute to provide technical support to counties. Technical support is developed in coordination with counties to provide improvement of indigent defense services under the director of the Commission. Many types of projects may be initiated through the technical support program. All of these projects must raise the knowledge base about indigent defense and establish processes that can be generalized to similar situations in other counties. The Commission will budget an amount for technical support each year. The director of the Commission may approve funding of up to \$5,000 per technical support request and report any such approval at the next Commission meeting. The Commission must approve funding of more than \$5,000 per technical support request.

### **Deliverable**

All technical support projects must result in a project paper that describes the project as it was implemented, the benefit the county received, a brief commentary from participants, and a brief discussion on implications or suggestions for other similar projects. The project paper is due no later than three months after the agreement period. The length of the paper will depend on the scope of the project but in no event be less than two full pages.

### **Procedure**

Counties may apply for technical support by submitting a request to the director of the Commission. Once application is submitted, the director and grants administrator shall review the proposed project and negotiate the details of the project with the county until an agreement is reached. At any time after the general nature and scope of the project is reached the director may present the project to the Commission to adopt.

The director may approve requests for technical support funding if the amount is \$5,000 or less. If the request for technical support funding is more than \$5,000, the request will

be presented to the Grants & Reporting Committee in order to make a recommendation to the Commission. At the next meeting, the Commission will make a decision regarding technical support requests of over \$5,000. Upon approval, the grants administrator will issue a letter of approval outlining the scope of the project, deliverables and timeframe. Upon receipt of the deliverables, the grants administrator will review the deliverables to ensure they meet the requirements stated in the letter of approval and will then notify the budget analyst to issue payment to the county.