



Texas Indigent Defense Workshop

October 23 & 24, 2025

Texas Association of Counties Event Center
1210 San Antonio Street, Austin TX. 78701- 4th Floor

AGENDA

Day 1-Thurs., Oct. 23rd

- 8:15 – 9:00 a.m. ***Registration & Breakfast***
- 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. ***Welcome***
Judge Missy Medary, Presiding Judge, 5th Administrative Judicial Region of Texas
Scott Ehlers, Executive Director, TIDC
- 9:15 – 9:45 a.m. ***Recap of the 89th Texas Legislature & TIDC Budget Update (0.5 Hour CLE)*** Scott Ehlers, Executive Director, TIDC
- 9:45 – 10:30 a.m. ***TIDC Funding Opportunities, Planning Studies, & Statewide Resources (0.75 Hour CLE)***
Edwin Colfax, Director of Grant Funding, TIDC
Bill Cox, Director of Public Defense Improvement, TIDC
Stacie Lieberman, Director of Post-Conviction Programs, CAPDS
Yvette Changuin, myPadilla Attorney, CAPDS
- 10:30 – 10:45 a.m. ***Break***
- 10:45 – 12:00 p.m. ***Title IV-E: Increased Funding, Eligibility, Claims, and Potential Uses for Title IV-E Funds (1.25 Hours CLE)***
Crystal Leff-Pinon, Director of Family Protection Representation, TIDC
Ardell Ray, CPS Regional Contract Program Director, DFPS Region VII
- Family Protection Representation: Options for Representation***
Crystal Leff-Pinon, Director of Family Protection Representation, TIDC
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. ***Lunch & Lunch Speaker: Angelica Cogliano***, Criminal Defense Attorney, Cogliano & Miro Criminal Defense Law, Austin, Texas ***(0.5 Hour CLE, Ethics)***
- 1:00 – 1:30 p.m. ***Keynote Conversation: Harris Co. Commissioner Rodney Ellis & Jim Bethke***
A Look Back & a Look Forward: 25 Years After the Fair Defense Act ***(0.5 Hour CLE)***
- 1:30 – 2:45 p.m. ***Addressing Defendants with Mental Illness and Intellectual Disabilities (1.25 Hour CLE)***
Kama Harris, Director of Policy & Education, Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Christina Sanders, MSW, MCJ, Social Worker, North Hill Country Public Defender
Office Nikita Srivastava, Trial & Resource Attorney, Bexar County MAC Office
Lori Gallo, MSW, Social Worker, Bexar County MAC Office
Moderator: William “Bill” Cox, Director of Public Defense Improvement, TIDC
- 2:45 – 3:00 p.m. ***Break***

- 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. ***The Evolving Requirements for Unfiled Cases: Bail Reform and Early Appointment of Counsel (1.0 Hour CLE)***
Rebecca Spencer Tavitias, First Assistant, El Paso Public Defender's Office
Geoff Burkhart, Travis County Executive, Community Legal Services
Bronson Tucker, General Counsel, Texas Justice Courts Training Center
Melissa Astrowski, Bail and Pretrial Program Manager, Office of Court Administration
Moderator: Wesley Shackelford, Deputy Director, TIDC; William "Bill" Cox, Director of Public Defense Improvement, TIDC
- 4:00 – 4:50 p.m. ***Break-out Session***

*****Breakout Session Topics*****
Exploring *Padilla* Requirements
Growing Your Appointment Lists
Using Mitigation in Non-Capital Cases
Mental Health and IDD Concerns
Controlling Caseloads
Handling Attorney Performance Complaints
Family Protection Representation
Establishing or Expanding a Public Defender's Office
- 4:50 – 5:00 p.m. ***Feedback Session***

Day 2-Fri., Oct. 24

- 8:15 – 9:00 a.m. ***Registration & Breakfast***
- 9:00 – 9:50 a.m. ***TIDC Website Walkthrough: New Functions, Uses, and Future Updates & Data Matters: Improving Indigent Defense with TIDC Data (1.0 Hour CLE)***
Dr. Sarah Gammell, Research Director, TIDC
- 9:50 – 10:00 a.m. ***Break***
- 10:00 – 11:00 pm ***Everything You Wanted to Know About Starting and Running a Rural Regional Public Defender Office but Were Afraid to Ask (1.0 Hour CLE)***
Nathan Craddock, County Auditor, Tom Green County
James McDermott, Chief Defender, Far West Texas Regional Public Defender Office
Karli Kennell, Chief Defender, Hill Country Regional Public Defender Office
Judge Ben Zeller, County Judge, Victoria County
Moderator: Scott Ehlers, Executive Director, TIDC
- 11:00 – 12:00 p.m. ***Addressing the Attorney Shortage Crisis (1.0 Hour, CLE)***
Jason Howell, Chief Defender, Panhandle Area Public Defender Office
Natalie Ware, Misdemeanor Chief & Training Director, Harris County MAC Office
Amrutha Jindal, Executive Director, Lone Star Defenders Office
Panelist and Moderator: Kristin Meeks, Senior Policy Analyst, TIDC
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. ***Lunch & Lunch Speaker: Judge Melanie Lira, County Court 7, Bexar County (.75 Hour CLE)***
- 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Open Forum on All Things Indigent Defense



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