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IN THE COUNTY COURT AT LAW

OF

ATASCOSA COUNTY, TEXAS

ORDER ADOPTING LOCAL RULES FOR APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL IN
CRIMINAL CASES AND SCHEDULE OF FEES FOR PAYMENT OF
COMPENSATION TO APPOINTED COUNSEL

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on the ____ day of _____, ~~2025-2026~~ the District Judges of the ~~81st & 218th Judicial District Courts~~ Atascosa County Court at Law adopted by formal action local rules for appointment of counsel in criminal cases and a schedule of fees for payment of compensation to appointed counsel, effective immediately, as follows:

1. The Court shall appoint counsel for an indigent defendant within three business days of receiving the request pursuant to Senate Bill 7.
2. A defendant who claims indigence and appointment of counsel shall complete a questionnaire concerning his financial resources and, if necessary, respond to examination by the Court. The questionnaire shall be in the form adopted by the District Judges.
3. The following schedule does not apply to the Atascosa Area Advocates Public Defender's Office. Counsel appointed to represent a defendant in criminal proceedings, including a habeas corpus hearing, shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred with prior court approval for purposes of investigation and expert testimony and shall be paid reasonable attorney's fees for performing services as provided by Art.26.05, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure., based on the time and labor reasonably required, the complexity of the case, and the experience and ability of the appointed counsel, as follows:

FLAT FEE

Initial Jail Visit	_____	-\$75.00 <u>50.00</u>
Extradition	-	\$250.00
MTR MTA	-	-\$450.00 <u>350.00</u>
Class A & B Misdemeanors		<u>\$400.00</u>

State Jail Felonies	_____	\$500.00
3rd Degree Felonies	_____	\$600.00
2nd Degree Felonies	_____	\$750.00
1st Degree Felonies	_____	\$950.00

- a. *Additional ~~Felony-Misdemeanor~~ cases* : If the defendant has been ~~indicted-charged~~ by information on additional ~~felony-misdemeanor~~ offenses or counsel has been appointed pre-indictment ~~information-filing~~, an additional ~~\$200.00~~ \$100.00 may be added to the flat fee.
 - b. *Bilingual Counsel-*: If the attorney speaks to the defendant in a language other than English, an additional \$100.00 may be added to the flat fee.
 - c. *Other Services-*: In a case with extensive contested trial services, counsel may elect to be compensated on an hourly basis.
 1. In-Court time and work ~~work~~ work ~~\$75-50~~ to ~~\$150-125~~ per hour
 2. Out-of-Court and work ~~work~~ work ~~\$75-50~~ to ~~\$100-75~~ per hour
 - d. *Appeal to Court of Appeals* \$60- \$120 per hour with a Maximum of ~~\$4,500.00~~ \$3,500.00
 - e. *Petition for Discretionary Review to the Court of Criminal Appeals* with approval of the trial court is the same rate as 3 (d) above.
 - f. *Reasonable expenses* : The Court will review all expenses associated with the case and make a case by case determination.
4. Counsel requesting compensation for representing an indigent criminal defendant must submit a completed application for payment detailing by itemized statements specifying services performed and time spent in 1/10 (1) hour intervals. No payment shall be made until the statement is submitted to and approved by the Court and is in accordance with the fee schedule. If the case is disposed of by a plea of guilty, the application must be submitted to the Court at the time of the plea; otherwise, the application must be submitted within thirty days of the disposition of the case. Failure to timely submit the application shall constitute a waiver of compensation.
 5. If the court determines that a defendant has financial resources that enable him to offset in part or in whole the cost of the legal services provided, including any expenses or cost, the Court shall order the defendant to pay the amount that it finds the defendant is able to pay. If at the time of appointment of counsel the Court finds that the defendant is employed or is about to be employed, the Court may order the defendant to periodically deposit into a "prepayment of attorney's fees and cost" account administered by the Adult Probation Department an estimated amount of such fees and costs in advance of disposition of his case; any payment in excess of the amount actually ordered by the court for such fees and cost shall be refunded to the defendant.
 6. Counsel must submit a timely written motion requesting an expert; setting out the factual basis for the request, describing the necessity of specific services to be rendered and providing an estimate cost.
 7. The application for payment of fees and expenses must be documented. Hourly billing must be accompanied by the complete out-of-court billing sheet. Time spent performing the services must be reported in tenth hours, using percentages (i.e.; .1, .5 and .8). Billing for investigation must be broken down by specific cost and serviced rendered. Expert

testimony must be itemized billing in a reasonable amount for services rendered. If the statement exceeds a reasonable and necessary amount, neither the County nor the Court shall be liable.

8. Counsel appointed to represent indigent defendants shall represent the defendant until the charges are disposed of, whether by conviction, acquittal or dismissal, or until the right of appeal is exhausted or the attorney is relieved of his duties by the Court or replaced by other Counsel. Counsel must make initial contact with the defendant in custody by the end of the next business day of appointment. Failure to comply with this provision may result in removal of the attorney from the list of court appointed attorneys.
9. If for any reason counsel is required to discontinue representation, a Motion to Withdraw in compliance with the applicable rules shall be filed and heard. Only the Court is authorized to select substitute counsel.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that a copy of said rules and schedule be posted in a public area in offices of ~~each~~ the Court.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of the Order be included with the Standing Rules for Appointment of Counsel for Indigent Accused Persons in ~~all counties within the judicial districts~~ Atascosa County

-SIGNED the _____ day of _____ 2025-2026

JUDGE BOB BRENDEN
ATASCOSA COUNTY COURT AT LAW