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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
Scott Ehlers

September 29, 2025

The Honorable Bryan E. Wilson
Burnet County Judge
Via E-mail: bwilson@burnetcountytexas.org

RE: FY2026 Statement of Grant Award - SG-26-003

Dear Judge Wilson:

I am pleased to inform you that the Texas Indigent Defense Commission has awarded Burnet County a **FY2026 Improvement Grant** in the amount of **\$1,523,609** for the **North Hill Country Regional Public Defender's Office**. This amount includes a Sustainability Grant of \$1,385,099 and a supplemental grant of \$138,510 as part of TIDC's Temporary or One-Time Assistance for Existing Indigent Defense Programs Serving Rural Texas program. This supplemental grant reduces the required county share by 20% for FY26.

Your Statement of Grant Award is attached. Please sign page two of the award statement and return the full executed document to Grants@tidc.texas.gov to accept the award and become eligible for payments.

Congratulations to Burnet County on taking the lead in Texas by developing and continuing this new indigent defense program. If you have any questions or need clarification of the information contained in this letter or the attached Statement of Grant Award, please contact me at (512)463-2508 or ecolfax@tidc.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Edwin Colfax
Director of Grant Funding

Copy: kglaeser@burnetcountytexas.org
pubdef@burnetcountytexas.org

TEXAS INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION
Statement of Grant Award
FY2026 Improvement Grant

Grant Number:	SG-26-003
Grantee Name:	Burnet County
Program Title:	North Hill Country Public Defender's Office
Grant Period:	10/1/2025-9/30/2026
Grant Award:	\$1,523,609

The Texas Indigent Defense Commission (herein, the Commission) has awarded the above-referenced grant to Burnet County (herein, the County) for indigent defense services. The authorized official named on the grant application must sign this Statement of Grant Award and return it to the Commission. The grantee will not receive any grant funds until this notice is executed and returned to the Commission. Funding is provided as listed in the categories in the table below:

Direct Costs:	
1) Personnel (Total Number of FTEs: 14)	\$1,483,147
2) Fringe Benefits	\$501,000
3) Travel and Training	\$42,000
4) Equipment	0
5) Supplies	\$16,500
6) Contract Services	\$35,000
7) Indirect Costs	\$0
Total Approved Budget	\$2,077,647
Less Participating County Contributions	\$554,038
TIDC Sustainability Grant	\$1,385,099
TIDC Temp. Assistance for Rural Programs Grant	\$138,510
Total Amount Funded by Commission	\$1,523,609

Standard Grant Conditions:

- The authorized official for the grantee accepts the grant award.
- The authorized official, financial officer, and program director, referred to below as grant officials, must comply with the terms of the grant as written in the Request for Applications issued in February 2025, including the rules and documents adopted by reference in the Commission's Grant Rules in Title 1, Part 8, Chapter 173, Texas Administrative Code.
- The grant officials understand that a violation of any term of the grant may result in the Commission placing a temporary hold on grant funds, permanently de-obligating all or part of the grant funds, requiring reimbursement for funds already spent, or barring the organization from receiving future grants.
- Disbursement of funds is always subject to the availability of funds.
- The grant officials agree to follow the grant terms contained in the "Grant Terms and Conditions" contained in Attachment A which includes the final grant application.
- Any indigent defense plan documents submitted to the Commission must continue to meet all grant eligibility requirements.
- The judges hearing criminal and juvenile matters must amend the Indigent Defense Plan for their respective courts to include the program funded under this award as necessary and submit it to the Commission by November 1, 2024.

The authorized official for this grant program has read the preceding and indicates agreement by signing the Statement of Grant Award included below.

Signature of Authorized Official

Name & Title (must print or type)

Date

Attachment A

Terms and Conditions

In addition to the program requirements stated in the Request for Applications (RFA), these specific program requirements apply to this program.

1. Burnet County will directly operate a Regional Public Defender's Office as defined in Article 26.044 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. Burnet County will operate the public defender program to provide indigent defense representation for qualified defendants in three participating counties in the region, including Burnet, Llano, and Blanco Counties. Participating counties will execute interlocal agreements with Burnet County reflecting each participating county's contribution to the cost of the program not covered by this grant.
2. This award covers one year of operation. The County must submit a brief continuing grant application and Commissioners Court Resolution as described in the Improvement Grant Request for Applications for each subsequent year of funding.
3. Burnet County must develop and maintain a Regional Public Defender Oversight Board in accordance with Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 26.045 to oversee the operation of this regional program. The County must submit a draft policy detailing how the members are selected and the duties and procedures of the board to TIDC for feedback prior to finalization. The Oversight Board must meet at least quarterly.
4. The program's Oversight Board is responsible for recommending to the Commissioners Court the selection of the Chief Public Defender. The Chief Public Defender will be responsible for the implementation of this program and will hire staff sufficient to operate the department. Staffing with attorneys and support personnel must be supported by sufficient caseloads.
5. The county must provide to TIDC the minimum job requirements and a full job description of the staff positions specified under this project before positions are publicly posted.
6. A Public Defender Office Case Representation Policies and Procedures Manual must be developed and provided to the Commission with the second quarterly progress report. The Public Defender Office should consider relevant professional standards of representation such as the Texas State Bar Performance Guidelines for Non-Capital Criminal Defense Representation when developing the manual. Any revised versions of the Policies and Procedures Manual must be submitted with regular quarterly progress reports.
7. The County must develop a written policy that includes caseload standards for the public defender office as required in Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Articles 26.044 and that is consistent with research-based weighted caseload guidelines published by TIDC. The caseload policy must require the Chief Public Defender to review caseloads at least quarterly. The Chief Public Defender must notify TIDC and the program's Oversight Board in writing if caseloads exceed the adopted standards.
8. This grant requires quarterly progress reports to provide information on the operation of the program. The TIDC grant manager will create an online progress report to document the work performed in this program. The County may request modifications to the report. See the Timeline for Reporting and Fund Distribution at the end of this document for dates.
9. The County must track public defender employee data necessary and submit the public defender salary section of the annual Indigent Defense Expenditure Report detailing hire dates, separation dates, vacancies, and actual salaries for each grant-funded position.

10. The County will submit quarterly grant program expenditure reports to obtain reimbursement of the scheduled percentage of expended funds based on actual expenditures. The reimbursements will be proportional to the county's required match. See the Timeline for Reporting and Fund Distribution at the end of this document for dates.
11. Equipment and other start-up costs included in the first-year start-up budget will not be carried forward into subsequent years of funding.
12. Requests to revise the scope, target, or focus of the project, or substantively alter project activities require advance written approval from TIDC. Budget adjustments consisting of reallocations of funds among or within budget categories in excess of \$10,000 or ten percent of the original approved budget, whichever is less, are considered budget adjustments and are allowable only with prior approval of the executive director of the Commission.
13. The Public Defender's Office must record attorney and support staff work time in a manner that allows for accurate completion of the Indigent Defense Expenditure Report and Public Defender Addendum. Records must contain sufficient detail to allocate time and salary across categories of offenses (capital, non-capital felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, felony appeals, misdemeanor appeals, and juvenile appeals) and to document the number of cases disposed by attorney for each court.
14. Contracts with third parties for core services under this grant must be provided to TIDC and approved prior to execution.
15. Grantees that use grant funds to contract for services must develop and include in the contract provisions to monitor each contract that is for more than \$10,000 per year. These provisions must include specific actions to be taken if the grantee discovers that the contractor's performance does not meet the operational or performance terms of the contract.
16. The Commissioners Court must adopt a public defender plan of operation or proposal that addresses the elements enumerated in Article 26.044 (c-1), Code of Criminal Procedure. The judges must submit a copy of the public defender plan of operation or proposal approved by the applicable commissioners court as part of each indigent defense plan applicable to cases in which the public defender's office will provide representation, as required by Section 79.036(a)(2), Government Code.

Original grant application, social worker expansion application, FY26 revised budget request, and supplemental funding application follow:

b. Introduction (Executive Summary)

The goal of this grant request is to establish the North Hill Country Public Defender Office for FY 2022 which would provide service to indigent clients in Blanco, Burnet, and Llano Counties who are charged with

criminal offenses. North Hill Country Public Defender would provide exceptional representation and accountability in misdemeanor, felony, and juvenile cases for those who qualify financially. A mental health caseworker will address the growing mental health needs of the region and provide for alternative resolutions to cases as well as decreased recidivism.

c. Problem Statement

Burnet County Public Defender Office (BCPDO) was created in FY2012 to cover Burnet County only. Llano County has operated with a contract public defender officer for many years, but will not for FY2022. Blanco County has operated with court appointments. The three-year average costs for indigent care for the four counties are approximately \$954,453 with Burnet averaging \$715,954, Blanco averaging \$80,421, and Llano averaging \$147,700.

The total region has a population of approximately 84,459 residents and a total square mileage of 2,700 square miles. According to the 2019 U.S. Census, Blanco has a poverty rate of 8.6%. Burnet has a poverty rate of 10.5%, and Llano has a poverty rate of 10.8%. This region has two district courts - the 33rd and the 424th District Courts - that hear all felony cases. Burnet has a County Court-at-law while Blanco and Llano have Constitutional County Courts.

The majority of cases in this region center around methamphetamine use and untreated mental illness. Criminal cases in this region cover the full gamut of the Texas penal code, including death penalty cases.

The 33rd/424th Judicial District Community Supervision and Corrections Department estimates put substance abuse issues for probationers at approximately 58% and mental health issues for probationers at 40.2%. These figures do not include those defendants who have gone on to prison or jail or have been exonerated.

Mental health providers differ between the counties as do the range of services. Burnet County has a jail diversion caseworker with Bluebonnet Trails MHMR; however, it is unknown if other jail diversion caseworkers actually go into the other jails. For clients needing MHMR services outside of the jail, the wait for counseling and medication is at least a month. While waiting for the MHMR appointment, the clients will often self-medicate which exacerbates the problems.

Homeless shelters are virtually non-existent in the region. There are shelters in the region for women who have been abused and a few beds for drug addiction. Those shelters work with the Burnet County Public Defender's Office closely and have provided shelter whenever possible. His Joshua House and Open Door Recovery also work closely with the Drug Court that covers this four-county area and help with beds when they can.

At present, the BCPDO is overwhelmed with maintaining caseloads without additional help on the juvenile cases and the increasing number of mental health cases. BCPDO attorneys currently split the juvenile cases among all of the attorneys. With the additional staffing, the NCHPDO could maintain the recommended caseload standards and provide exceptional representation for our clients. The BCPDO spends countless hours trying to find appropriate shelter, counseling, and medicine for our MHMR clients. Increased care for the mental health population will make Burnet County safer and help with rising recidivism rates from a population that has no shelter and cannot get access to medications.

See Other Supporting Document for additional information.

d. Objectives

Our objective is to provide exceptional representation to indigent clients who are accused of criminal offenses including misdemeanors, felonies, juvenile cases and appeals. Our desired outcome is to provide this service as well as accountability to each of the counties.

Proposed goals for the program include:

1. Hire 5 attorneys, 1 caseworker and 1 support staff within 90 days of funding.
2. Provide high-quality, cost-effective representation to indigent defendants in the region while maintaining caseloads of 138 felony cases per attorney per year or 239 misdemeanor cases per attorney per year.
3. Measure and track criminal cases handled by the North Hill Country Public Defender Office, to ensure transparency in the system and to provide accountability to the participating counties.
4. Provide training to the caseworker in Article 16.22 evaluations and coordinate with the jail and the local MHMR providers to ensure proper services are provided.
5. Provide training to the caseworker in Chapter 46B standard and procedures to allow for early detection and advocacy for potentially incompetent clients and to coordinate services with evaluators, treatment providers, the courts and other interested parties.
4. Provide continued in-house training to the attorneys and caseworker in the office to ensure continued high-quality representation.

e. Activities

The North Hill Country Public Defender Office would be using the base established by the Burnet County Public Defender Office but would be required to establish another office for the other counties in Llano.

In addition, the NHCPDO would:

1. Establish a new North Hill Country Public Defender Office (NHCPDO) Oversight Board to oversee and make recommendations as needed to the County Commissioners in Blanco County, Burnet County, and Llano County. The Oversight Board will meet as often as needed to oversee the NHCPDO.
2. Continue to employ the Chief Public Defender who will continue to ensure the NHCPDO is fully staffed with qualified attorneys, assistants, and investigators as needed, funded and approved.
3. The Chief Public Defender will be responsible for the management and operation of the NHCPDO and will maintain a 25% caseload.
4. The Chief Public Defender will ensure that all staff follow the NHCPDO policies and procedures manual developed and approved by the Oversight Board and submitted to TIDC and complete an annual review.
5. Attorney caseloads for the NHCPDO will follow the recommended guidelines for caseloads.
6. The NHCPDO will expand the Burnet County Public Defender Office caseload management system to meet the operational needs of the NHCPDO. Those numbers will be available for the participating Commissioners Courts at any time.
7. The NHCPDO will serve as a regional resource for quality representation in the communities it serves and will provide low cost or free Continuing Legal Education to the local criminal defense bar.
8. The caseworker will work with stakeholders to identify clients with mental health issues after their arrest.
9. The caseworker will work closely with the attorneys in the NHCPDO to assess clients with mental health issues and to provide referrals to appropriate service providers.
10. The caseworker will testify in court as needed.

f. Evaluation

In addition to the specific grant performance measures and the Indigent Defense Expenditure Report measures required by the TIDC, the NHCPDO will track monthly and report quarterly to the Oversight Board, the Commissioner's Courts and TIDC the following:

13. Documentation of the hiring of the additional attorneys, support staff and caseworker.
2. Quarterly data reports that document the number of criminal cases handled for the attorneys.
3. Caseworker intake forms and any referrals, if issued, will be kept for every client in the client's file.

g. Future Funding

The North Hill Country Public Defender Office is created on a sustainable basis for the counties involved. Blanco, Burnet, and Llano Counties are committed to providing quality representation to indigent defendants while utilizing public monies in a cost effective manner, With 80% funding for Blanco, and Llano Counties for the first year of the grant and a continued 66.6% funding to all of the counties, the counties will modify their interlocal agreements to reflect increased or decreased costs, after year 3.

h. Budget Narrative and Budget Form

Salaries are requested for the following positions:

Chief Public Defender (1) \$114,404

Establish, operate, and supervise all aspects of the North Hill Country Public Defender Office (NHCPDO).

The NHCPDO will represent indigent felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile defendants

Assistant Public Defenders

Felony (5) \$79,269 each

Juvenile (1) \$74,063

Misdemeanor (2) \$74,063 each

Provides a full range of legal services to indigent defendants in the assigned cases for NHCPDO.

Document processing, and/or record keeping, and preparation and presentation of legal cases in jury and bench trials are necessary to fulfill this position.

Legal Assistant (2) \$44,241 each

Performs complex administrative tasks at and to ensure efficient daily departmental operation. This position coordinates assignments and manages the daily operations of the department.

Courtroom presence is required as is the preparation of legal documents as supervised by an attorney.

Investigator (1) \$64,186

Performs investigations of felony, misdemeanor and juvenile charges filed against individuals being represented by the NHCPDO.

Caseworker (1) \$55,523

Responsible for creation of a case management plan that determines the best services available for clients on the mental health caseload, will get the client to those services and provide aftercare for a reasonable period to reduce the possibility of recidivism.

Longevity \$12,320

Total Salaries and Longevity (13 positions) \$955,107

Benefits Estimated 35.4% or \$337,806

Including FICA/Medicare (.0765), Insurance \$11,000, Retirement (11.73%), Workers

Compensation (various dependent on position), Unemployment .25% and Sudden

Death Benefits .31%

Office Supplies - \$6,500

\$500 per employee (13)

One Time Equipment: \$36,800

Office Setup – Includes 8 desks, chairs and lateral filing cabinets

Computers and accessories - \$30,800

Includes 8 Laptops, docking station, monitor and accessories

One time Copier - \$6,000

Llano office – purchase is more cost efficient than leasing

Travel and Training: \$26,788
 Travel: \$16,284
 Costs of travel by staff including mileage, lodging and meals where applicable.
 Training: \$10,504
 Continuing education

Contract Services: \$59,789
 Rent -31,700
 Utilities - \$14,000
 Telephone – 9,100
 for two locations Burnet and Llano.
 Leased Printer – Burnet \$4,989

Personnel Costs		\$1,292,913.00
FTE's	13.00	
Salary	\$955,107.00	
Fringe Benefits	\$337,806.00	
Travel and Training		\$26,788.00
Equipment		\$36,800.00
Supplies		\$6,500.00
Contract Services		\$59,789.00
Indirect		
Total		\$1,422,790.00
Required County Match		\$359,566.00
Total less County Match		\$1,063,224.00

APPLICATION SUPPLMEMENT BELOW

Burnet County has historically given the Burnet County Public Defender's Office (BCPDO) approximately 85% of the indigent cases in felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile. (Due to COVID in 2020 reference is being made to 2019 numbers which are more reflective of actual court numbers in a regular year.) In misdemeanor indigent cases in 2019, Burnet County had 493 indigent misdemeanor cases and Llano had 110 indigent misdemeanor cases. (Blanco County is not opting to utilize a future public defender's office for misdemeanors at present.) In felony indigent cases in 2019, Burnet County had 497 cases, Blanco had 115 cases and Llano had 209 bases. In juvenile indigent caseloads in 2019, Burnet Count had 36 cases, Blanco County had 1 and Llano County had 11. With a total projected indigent caseload in misdemeanors of 573 cases and a recommended caseload of 239 misdemeanor cases per attorney, the total number of misdemeanor attorneys needed would be 2.3. This need would be met by adding to the established 1 misdemeanor attorney in Burnet County with 1 additional full-time attorney and by supplementing with the juvenile attorney within the caseload boundaries. With a total projected caseload of 732 indigent felony cases and recommended caseloads of 138 per felony attorney, the total number of felony attorneys needed would be 5.1. At present, the Burnet County Chief

Public Defender carries a full felony caseload. This would be reduced to 25% in order to allow for the Chief to fulfill her administrative duties. Because the current Chief has extensive criminal defense experience, this number would allow for utilization of that experience. This percentage is maintainable because the district judges split the same jurisdiction which allows for an easier flow of the courts and the cases. With the reduction of the Chief's caseload, 2 additional felony attorney would be hired for the Burnet County Office allowing for 3 felony attorneys in Burnet and 2 additional felony attorneys in Llano and Blanco counts, totaling 5.25 felony attorneys. The addition of the juvenile attorney would cover all of the juvenile cases in Blanco, Burnet and Llano Counties, which would need approximately .2 of that attorney's time. This would allow the juvenile attorney to fill in on misdemeanor and felony cases as their caseload permits. Burnet and Llano Counties would utilize the North Hill Country Public Defender's Office for misdemeanor, juveniles, and felonies while Blanco would utilize the NHCPDO for juveniles and felonies at present. With these proposed changes, the NHCPDO would have a total of 9 attorneys, 1 investigator, 1 mental health caseworker and 2 support staff. The misdemeanor cases as well as the juvenile cases rarely go to trial so no additional investigator is deemed necessary and meets the recommended standards.

Budget Modification Request History follows

Original Grant Application, FY25 update and modification request follow:

**2024 Burnet County Improvement Grant Application Narrative
NHCPD Add'l Mental Health Case Worker
Multi-year**

a. Application Form

Counties Represented: **Blanco, Burnet, Llano**
Fiscal Year: **2024**
State Payee Identification Number: **74-6000454**
Division To Administer Grant: **Texas**
Program Title: **NHCPD Add'l Mental Health Case Worker**
Requested Grant Amount: **\$79,029.00**
Authorized Official: **James Oakley**
Financial Officer: **Karin Smith**
Program Director: **J. Allan Garrett**
Mailing Address: **220 S. Pierce St; Burnet, TX 78611**

b. Introduction (Executive Summary)

The North Hill Country Public Defender seeks grant funding for an additional Mental Health Social Worker. The needs of mental health clients within the 424th and 33rd Judicial District, are in-depth, systemic, and multi-faceted. The NHCPDO is in need of an additional Social Worker to transform from a reaction-basis provision of services to long-term diversion planning ("LTDP"). That is, to transform how we help clients from a triage basis to one of planning.

c. Problem Statement

A mental health social worker was added to the office in October 2021 as part of the North Hill Country Public Defender's Office (NHCPD) funded by TIDC. The office expanded into a tri-county office covering Burnet, Llano, and Blanco Counties. This coverage region is home to a population of 84,818 pursuant to the 2021 census. Population density is increasing; in 2020 a new development was slated to add 1250 homes (1), in 2021, a new development began to add 1,966 single-family residential homes, 924 multifamily units and 150 active adult units(2), and last month a new 3,500 housing development was approved by the Burnet County Commissioner's Court.(3)

Our mental health social worker was added to the office in October 2021 as part of the expansion advanced by TIDC. Her caseload built rapidly. 2022 metrics demonstrate involvement in 20% of felonies (166/805) and 19.5% of misdemeanors (78/399) for the region. She operates at an eight-to-one attorney to social worker ratio; when fully staffed, this will be nine-to-one. Her involvement is always in-depth and that is a function of the current lack of resources in the region.

The LMHA in Blanco and Llano Counties provides level one care only which constitutes one phone call a month. The Llano and Blanco LMHA subcontracts crisis services with a third-party vendor in another county. Response times are highly variable and limited. In 2022 there were two suicide attempts in the Llano County Jail, each requiring days to secure a hospital bed for each patient who remained in the jail in the interim. Llano County jail is non-compliant with the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. While Burnet County has a more responsive LMHA their jail diversion staff member has had his time divided as he is now required to cover two counties. (This is further complicated in that the Burnet jail houses inmates for other counties.)

The coverage region has one male and one female sober house, both are small and provide recovery care. Besides AA and NA meetings and post-SAFPF drug court there is no substance abuse treatment in these counties. While Blanco, Burnet, and Llano have CRCs and one is slated for development in Kingsland the region remains in the infancy for provision of social services to indigent mental health clients.

Your social worker's involvement is intensive. In most cases, she is confronted with a multi-front battle to secure resources and best outcomes for mentally ill clients. Typically, she will be communicating with the client, community

contacts such as a family member or friend, the attorney, will accompany client and attorney to court to help a mentally ill client navigate these waters, the LMHA, and novel contacts as the case necessitates. This can include full-bore crisis intervention with a client in complete meltdown.

The increasing focus of her involvement with LTDP are an emergent group of clients whose condition is caused by mental illness and self-medication they are disqualified for many resources because of "substance abuse." IDD is emerging as a serious issue in the tri-county area. While free, their families or friends (or frankly, users/abusers) do what they can but cannot provide sufficient care and in each instance are overwhelmed by the challenges of poverty, lack of community resources, self-interest, and the emotional burden. The current system addresses the needs of these clients by cycling them in and out of jail and at times deporting them for a brief stint in an out of county mental hospital. This population alone is sufficient work for one full-time social worker.

To address these issues for our clients, especially IDD clients, our social worker and attorneys have met with the County Court at Law Judge in Burnet, Judge Nelson, and regional County Judges to facilitate macro level conversations. These meetings have resulted in more engagement from stakeholders and we are beginning to see the emergence of a de facto working group. This macro level work requires your social worker to travel more and while she multi-tasks to the extent possible while on the road this work is intensive. This is necessary to forge the relationships and develop understanding to get buy in from all stakeholders.

Because of the non-responsive and inconsistent responses of the LMHAs she has to find other novel solutions such as finding doctors to conduct evaluations (such as CMEs) in a rural area. There is no OCR resource in our region, and so, she is also pioneering OCR procedures by using out-of-county resources. The time required to build these relationships is incredible and has required her to spend an immense amount of time on the phone and on the road. In the midst of all this she is working to transform the system from a triage basis to one of actual long-term

planning. To this end, in April she is conducting a regional mental health training among all stakeholders (roughly one hundred souls) as we strive to align our client's interests with the sparse resources of a rural region. Her action as a change agent has greatly increased the involvement of Burnet County Sheriff's Office Mental Health Deputies in actual jail diversion and they are also reaching out to other local departments to train them in these skills.

LTDP work is intensive and she does not have enough time for more routine tasks such as mental-health assessments, record requests and review, participation in mitigation work, and assisting attorneys in aiding competent but mentally ill clients. LTDP makes sense because, ultimately, we are 1) re-allocating taxpayer funds from a punitive penal context into a recuperative context; 2) ending needless suffering and depersonalization. Respectfully and humbly, we are asking you to help us be the fulcrum of change by funding another mental health social worker to allow your mental health social worker to focus on LTDP.

Resources:

1 Beginning in 2020 Gregg Ranch in Marble Falls began efforts to add 1250 homes to the region.

<https://www.kvue.com/article/money/economy/boomtown-2040/marble-falls-gregg-ranch-240-acres-boomtownnew-homes/269-ced2396c-b7c6-4dde-ac40-3cf0f525a47b>

2 In July of 2021 construction began on the Thunder Rock development in Marble Falls, ultimately slated to constitute 1,966 single-family residential homes, 924 multifamily units and 150 active adult units.

<https://www.kxan.com/news/more-than-2000-homes-slated-for-new-marble-falls-mixed-use-development/>

3 In early February 2023, Burnet County Commissioner's Court approved a new 3500 home development for Spicewood. <https://www.kxan.com/news/local/hill-country/burnet-county-commissioners-ok-part-of-thomas-ranchdevelopment-plan-that-falls-within-county-line/>.

d. Objectives

Our central objective in adding a caseworker is to expand jail diversion and, most significantly, establish LTDP for patients that are spending their lives in-and out of jail and mental hospitals and to establish OCR in the region. As we

move from a triage basis to one of planning and provision we will end the needless suffering in jail and sequential cascading trauma and humiliation of being arrested

and depersonalized over and over again.

To do this, your social work division would

1. Hire one more caseworker within 90 days of funding.
2. Meet with current IT personnel to address gaps in tracking data and how to use the current data system and expand its usage.
3. Expand the current system to track additional details.
4. Continue pursuit of LTDP for the most vulnerable of our clients.
5. Provide increased support to the Llano/Blanco offices with Social Work presence, knowledge, case management, and resource provision.

We will separate job duties in the following way:

Our new mental health social worker would:

Monitor Article 16.22 compliance—an ongoing problem with jail staff, magistrates, and local MHMR personnel. Work to ensure proper services are provided.

Receive training in the Chapter 46B standards and procedures, aiding in early identification and advocacy for potentially incompetent clients, and coordinating services with evaluators, treatment providers, the courts, and other interested parties. Accompanying clients to intake and screening appointments to aid in navigating service providers' requirements.

Assess clients for mental-health issues, using established tools with the objective of providing early intervention.

Data collection and collation.

Our current mental health case worker would:

Provide higher-level services to a focused group of high-needs clients.

Continue to develop relationships with and coordinate trainings with administration at the MHMR provider, with a goal towards greater longer-term systemic improvements.

Provide in-court testimony as necessary.

Advocate with the local stakeholders.

Assist in high-level mitigation evidence development (for sex-based offenses and murder cases).

e. Activities

The additional caseworker would split the tri-county social worker caseload and cooperate with our chief caseworker in our efforts to expand services to mental health clients. In addition, the new caseworker would meet with current IT

personnel to address gaps in tracking data and how to use the current data system and expand its usage. Expand the current system to track additional details:

List of services SW refer people to: homelessness, drug treatment, med managements, benefits apps, civil needs etc

Data showing the number of referrals

Data showing the type of referrals made: use it for funding discussions and to increase services in this area

Competency waitlist number - broken down to misdemeanor vs. felony

The length of stay on the waitlist

Diversion options

Number of people who were restored to competency without going to state hospital (those that got re-evaluated by HHSC)

The number of arrests each month

Number of arrests for criminal trespass (or other common charges that highly correlate with MH/IDD)

The number of 16.22 requests made each month

Number of 16.22 orders granted

Number of 16.22 assessments completed

Number of cases declined/dismissed due to MH/IDD

Number of individuals who do voluntary inpatient treatment

Number of individuals who do involuntary inpatient treatment

Number of individuals sent to outpatient treatment (probably as condition of bond)

Number of individuals that SW work with that fail to appear in court

f. Evaluation

In addition to the specific grant performance measures and the Indigent Defense Expenditure Report measures provided to TIDC, the NHCPDO will track monthly and report quarterly to the Oversight Board, the Commissioner's Courts, and TIDC the following:

1. Documentation of the hiring of the additional social worker.
2. Quarterly reports that document the number of clients the social worker is involved with and a breakdown of service involvement including:
 - a. OCR clients
 - b. LTD clients
 - c. Clients screened for competency

d. Clients screened for IDD

3. Intake and referral forms will be kept in client's digital file.

g. Future Funding

The NHCPDO is currently in its second year of its grant and is funded 33.3% by Burnet, Llano, and Blanco Counties. Following year three, the counties will modify their interlocal agreements to reflect changes in costs.

h. Budget Narrative and Budget Form

Hourly rate would be \$31.14 for an annual salary of \$64,771.

Medicare, insurance, retirement, workers compensation, unemployment and SBD would approximate at \$25,015 creating a total personnel cost of \$89,786.

Travel is estimated at \$2,500 with gas prices in recent years seeing severe fluctuation and supply chain issues, as well as the fact the NHCPD covers a tri-county area.

Training and Conference would have a budget of \$2,000.

Office supplies would have a budget of \$500.

One-time set-up costs such as computer and accessories are calculated at \$4,000. The total project budget would be \$98,786. Requested grant amount is \$79,029 or 80%. Any additional years would be 66.67% Matching funds for the first year would be \$19,757 or 20% and would be spread across the tri-county area. Any additional years would be 33.33%.

Considering the NHCPD is currently receiving an improvement grant, if requested this project could be absorbed into the other project for a unified project in FY25.

Personnel Costs		\$89,786.00
FTE's	1.00	
Salary	\$64,771.00	
Fringe Benefits	\$25,015.00	
Travel and Training		\$4,500.00
Equipment		\$4,000.00
Supplies		\$500.00
Contract Services		
Indirect		
Total		\$98,786.00
Required County Match		
Total less County Match		\$98,786.00

**2026 Burnet County Improvement Grant Application Narrative
North Hill Country Public Defender's Office
Continued Multi-Year Improvement Grants**

a. Application Form

Counties Represented: **Blanco, Burnet, Llano**
Fiscal Year: **2026**
State Payee Identification Number: **74-6000454**
Division To Administer Grant: **Texas**
Program Title: **North Hill Country Public Defender's Office**
Requested Grant Amount: **\$1,505,065.00**
Authorized Official: **Bryan E. Wilson**
Financial Officer: **Kelley Glaeser**
Program Director: **Michelle Moore**
Mailing Address: **220 S. Pierce St; Burnet, TX 78611**

b. Budget Narrative and Budget Form

FY2026 represents a continuation of a sustainability grant for the North Hill Country Public Defenders Office at 2/3 funding from TIDC.

Salaries are requested for the following 14 positions:

Chief Public Defender (1) \$148,775

Operates, and supervises all aspects of the North Hill Country Public Defender Office (NHCPDO) including handling of cases. The NHCPDO will represent indigent felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile defendants

Assistant Public Defenders - Salaries vary based on the type of attorney, grade, and steps. Grades were reclassified to allow attorneys' salaries to be competitive with the salaries in the County and District Attorneys' offices.

First Assistant Public Defender \$118,520

Felony (3) at 113,659

Juvenile (1) \$98,586

Misdemeanor (3) \$98,586 and (1) \$90,025

SB22 Equivalents for the attorneys to be more in step with the attorneys from the County and District Attorney Offices - \$117,657

Provides a full range of legal services to indigent defendants in the assigned cases for NHCPDO. Document processing, and/or record keeping, and preparation and presentation of legal cases in jury and bench trials are necessary to fulfill this position.

Executive Director \$81,171 - Director of the public defender's office including office and courtroom services, training and supervision of the Llano office, assisting with training the mental health case workers and new attorneys.

Travels to all offices

Legal Assistant \$57,789

Performs complex administrative tasks and ensures efficient daily departmental operation. This position coordinates assignments and manages the daily operations of the department.

Courtroom presence is required as is the preparation of legal documents as supervised by an attorney.

Investigator (1) \$85,449

Performs investigations of felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile charges filed against individuals being represented by the NHCPDO.

Caseworkers (1)\$81,171 (1) \$57,789

Responsible for revising case management plan, if needed, that determines the best services available for clients on the mental health caseload, will get the client to those services, and provide aftercare for a reasonable period to reduce the possibility of recidivism.

Longevity \$15,160 - additional employees have qualified for longevity.

SB22 Equivalents for the attorneys to be more in step with the attorneys from the County and District Attorney Offices - \$117,657

Total Salaries and Longevity (14 positions) \$1,600,683

Benefits Estimated at \$546,615 - 34.15%

Including FICA/Medicare (.0765), Insurance \$14,092, Retirement (12%), Workers Compensation (various dependent on position), Unemployment .16% and Sudden Death Benefits .3%

Office Supplies - \$750 per employee (14) - \$10,500

Fuel and Maint \$5,000 for vehicles purchased with ARPA funds.

Travel/Training Including Dues: \$45,000

Training: The cost of training classes needed by staff \$22,000

Travel: mileage (if personal vehicle used), lodging, and meals, where applicable, when attending training or if driving a personal vehicle for the project. \$19,000

Professional Dues: \$4,000

Equipment - Computers/Monitors to replace outdated computers - \$\$16,800

Contract Services: \$35,000

Utilities - \$21,000 - includes telephone and utilities for three offices

Cell phones - \$3,000

Leased Copier/Printers - Three offices \$11,000

Personnel Costs	\$2,147,298.00
FTE's	14.00
Salary	\$1,600,683.00
Fringe Benefits	\$546,615.00
Travel and Training	\$42,000.00

Equipment	\$16,800.00
Supplies	\$16,500.00
Contract Services	\$35,000.00
Indirect	
Total	\$2,257,598.00
Required County Match	\$752,533.00
Total less County Match	\$1,505,065.00

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Revised FY26 Burnet North Hill Country RPDO Personnel Budget

FY26

G/L ACCT	Position	Employee Number	Employee	Position #	Hire Date	Date In Position	Pay Group	Step	Rate		
100-4800-1020	Chief Public Defender	2537	Moore,M	480-001	01/06/25	01/06/25	78	7	\$68.12	168,000.00	
100-4800-1200	First Assistant Public Defender	3351	LePendou, I	480-002	11/01/21	07/29/23	75	7	\$54.27	112,876.19	
100-4800-1200	Assistant Public Defender-Misdemeanor		Cutbirth	480-003	05/19/25	05/19/25	72	3	\$45.14	93,891.20	
100-4800-1200	Assistant Public Defender-Felony	3721	Rogers, S	480-006	11/29/21	05/23/22	74	7	\$52.04	108,246.53	
100-4800-1200	Assistant Public Defender-Misdemeanor	4240	Williams, J	480-007	05/19/25	05/19/25	72	7	\$45.14	93,891.20	
100-4800-1200	Assistant Public Defender-Felony	3996	Kaigler, I	480-008	05/22/23	06/02/25	74	7	\$52.04	108,243.20	
100-4800-1200	Assistant Public Defender-Felony	2789	Kight,N	480-009	7/31/2017	4/8/2025	74	7	\$52.04	108,246.53	
100-4800-1200	Assistant Public Defender-Misdemeanor	4152	Brawley, C	480-010	9/3/2024	9/3/2024	72	2	\$41.22	85,737.60	
100-4800-1200	Assistant Public Defender/Juvenile	4227	Hoskins,C	480-011	04/14/25	04/14/25	72	7	\$45.14	93,891.20	
100-4800-1200	Assistant Public Defender-Misdemeanor	2390	Kanak, R (Part-Time, Temp)	480-014	08/02/22	08/02/22	72	7	\$45.14	30,000.00	
100-4800-1980	SB22	3351	LePendou, I	480-002					\$650.00	PER PAY PERIOD	15,391.96
100-4800-1980	SB22		Cutbirth	480-003					\$505.00	PER PAY PERIOD	11,958.37
100-4800-1980	SB22	3721	Rogers, S	480-006					\$610.00	PER PAY PERIOD	14,444.76
100-4800-1980	SB22	4240	Williams, J	480-007					\$505.00	PER PAY PERIOD	11,958.37
100-4800-1980	SB22	3996	Kaigler, I	480-008					\$610.00	PER PAY PERIOD	14,444.76
100-4800-1980	SB22	2789	Kight,N	480-009					\$610.00	PER PAY PERIOD	14,444.76
100-4800-1980	SB22	4152	Brawley, C	480-010					\$505.00	PER PAY PERIOD	11,958.37
100-4800-1980	SB22	4227	Hoskins,C	480-011					\$505.00	PER PAY PERIOD	11,958.37
100-4800-1980	Longevity	3351	LePendou, I	480-002					\$1,140.00	\$240.00	\$1,380.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity		Cutbirth	480-003							\$0.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	3721	Rogers, S	480-006					\$680.00	\$240.00	\$920.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	4240	Williams, J	480-007					\$0.00		\$0.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	3996	Kaigler, I	480-008					\$0.00	\$480.00	\$580.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	2789	Kight,N	480-009					\$2,100.00	\$240.00	\$2,340.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	4152	Brawley, C	480-010					\$0.00		\$0.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	4227	Hoskins,C	480-011					\$0.00		\$0.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	4227	Kanak, R (Part-Time, Temp)	480-011					\$1,760.00	\$120.00	\$1,880.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	1468	Green, S	480-004					\$3,600.00	\$0.00	\$3,600.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	1998	Greer, A	480-005					\$3,600.00	\$0.00	\$3,600.00
100-4800-1980	Longevity	3712	Sanders, C.	480-012					\$720.00	\$240.00	\$960.00
100-4800-1056	Investigator	1468	Green, S.	480-004	12/19/11	12/19/11	116	7	\$39.12		81,379.58
100-4800-1040	Executive Director	1998	Greer, A.	480-005	01/02/04	12/12/11	66	7	\$34.20	REQUEST 38.27	74,734.40
100-4800-1040	Mental Health Caseworker - Lead	3712	Sanders, C	480-012	10/18/21	10/18/21	66	7	\$34.20	38.27	74,734.40
100-4800-1040	Administrative Assistant - Llano Office	2357	Gambrell,E	480-013	06/09/25	06/09/25	60	7	\$26.46		57,813.60
299-4800-1040	Mental Health Caseworker	4125	Perkins, Kaiia	480-015	05/20/24	05/20/24	66	3	\$31.89		69,721.60
709050.2428										1,483,146.93	
Fringe											
100-4800-2010	FICA/MED										92,800.00
100-4800-2020	GROUP INSURANCE										210,000.00
100-4800-2030	RETIREMENT										190,000.00
100-4800-2040	WORKERS COMP										3,300.00
100-4800-2050	UNEMPLOYMENT										900.00
100-4800-2070	SUDDEN DEATH BENEFITS										4,000.00
										501,000.00	

2026 Burnet County Improvement Grant Application Narrative
NHCPD - Temporary Subsidy of County Contribution
Multi-year

a. Application Form

Counties Represented: **Blanco, Burnet, Llano**

Fiscal Year: **2026**

State Payee Identification Number: **74-6000454**

Division To Administer Grant: **Texas**

Program Title: **NHCPD - Temporary Subsidy of County Contribution**

Requested Grant Amount: **\$771,354.00**

Authorized Official: **Bryan E. Wilson**

Financial Officer: **Kelley Glaeser**

Program Director: **Michelle Moore**

Mailing Address: **220 S. Pierce St; Burnet, TX 78611**

b. Introduction (Executive Summary)

The North Hill Country Public Defender's Office (NHCPDO) is requesting a temporary increase in funding from TIDC to alleviate the financial burden on participating counties. The counties recognize that this grant would be time-limited and apply only to the two-year duration of this special funding opportunity.

c. Problem Statement

The three counties served by the North Hill Country Public Defender's Office (NHCPDO)-Burnet, Llano, and Blanco-are struggling to meet the financial demands of providing indigent defense. Burnet County operates with a poverty rate of 7.99%, Llano County at 11.7%, and Blanco County at 8.5%. These financial strains have been exacerbated by the spring 2025 wildfires and the recent devastating flooding that impacted all three counties. Local governments continue to divert significant resources to emergency needs such as search and recovery operations, road and bridge reconstruction, and basic assistance to affected residents.

Mental health remains a persistent and growing challenge across these counties. Blanco, Burnet, and Llano continue to devote substantial time and funding to address the increasing mental health needs in their communities. The NHCPDO collaborates with these counties to provide support for this population, including efforts to establish long-term strategies. However, the absence of sustainable planning has led to escalating costs, particularly for managing day-to-day mental health crises. Over the thirteen years of NHCPDO's operation, the counties have experienced a sharp rise in neuro-cognitive cases and civil commitments-both of which have placed an increasingly heavy burden on local resources.

d. Objectives

This grant will subsidize 50% of the county contributions to the North Hill Country Public Defender's Office (NHCPDO) for each of the two years, in alignment with the legislative directives outlined in the FY26-FY27 General Appropriations Act. During this period, the NHCPDO will maintain its current level of service across the participating counties, continuing to accept all qualifying cases except those involving conflicts. The office will also remain in compliance with the American Bar Association (ABA) standards for representation and the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) caseload guidelines.

e. Activities

The NHCPDO will continue to serve the indigent population in criminal matters across Burnet, Llano, and Blanco counties. Planned activities for the upcoming year include ongoing training for newly licensed attorneys to expand their understanding and effectiveness within the criminal court system. In addition, the office has scheduled continued mental health training for both staff and community members, reinforcing its commitment to the early identification of individuals with mental illness and the importance of timely and sustained intervention. These efforts reflect NHCPDO's ongoing focus on strengthening legal representation and addressing the complex needs of vulnerable populations.

f. Evaluation

The NHCPDO will continue to comply with all TIDC data reporting requirements and will maintain close collaboration with its Oversight Board to support ongoing evaluation and improvement of program activities.

g. Future Funding

This request is only for FY26 and FY27. The counties understand that this grant would be temporary, limited only to the two years of this special fund.

h. Budget Narrative and Budget Form

The application for FY26 is for a total of \$2,257,598. The grant reimbursement amount of 66.67% is \$1,505,065. The total match of 33.33% is \$752,532. 50% of the total match is \$376,266.

For FY27 with a 5% COLA added to the salaries and the rest of the budget also increasing 5%, the estimated total application would be \$2,370,478. The grant reimbursement amount of 66.67% is \$1,580,303. The 33.33% is \$790,175. 50% of the total match is \$395,088.

Total Match

FY26	\$	752,533
FY27		790,175
Total Match	\$	<u>1,542,708</u>

Total grant request for this application:

FY26	\$376,266.50
FY27	395,087.50
Total	<u>\$771,354.00</u>

Personnel Costs	\$0.00
FTE's	
Salary	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel and Training	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contract Services	
Indirect	\$1,542,708.00
Total	\$1,542,708.00
Required County Match	\$771,354.00
Total less County Match	\$771,354.00

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Timeline for Reporting and Fund Distribution

Reports will be submitted on-line at tidc.tamu.edu.

Reporting Period	Type Report Due	Date Report Due	Fund Distribution Date
October 2025 through December 2025	Grant Expenditure Report Progress Report	January 15, 2026	February 2026
January 2026 through March 2026	Grant Expenditure Report Progress Report	April 15, 2026	May 2026
April 2026 through June 2026	Grant Expenditure Report Progress Report	July 15, 2026	August 2026
July 2026 through September 2026	Grant Expenditure Report Progress Report	October 15, 2026	December 2026