



TEXAS INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION

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Honorable Missy Medary
Corpus Christi, Presiding Judge,
5th Administrative
Judicial Region of Texas

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Honorable Joseph "Joe" Moody
Honorable David J. Schenck
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Honorable James R. "J.R."
Woolley, Jr.

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.

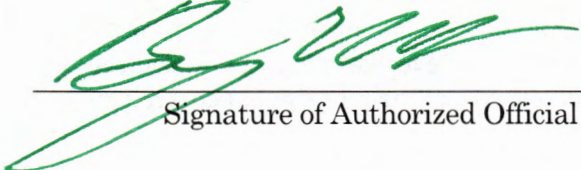
Sincerely,

Edwin Colfax
Director of Grant Funding

Copy: kglaeser@burnetcountytexas.org

pubdef@burnetcountytexas.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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
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FTE's	14.00
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Salary	\$1,600,683.00
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Fringe Benefits	\$546,615.00
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Travel and Training	\$42,000.00
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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	LePendu, 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	LePendu, 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	LePendu, 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	REQUEST	81,379.58
100-4800-1040	Executive Director	1998	Greer, A.	480-005	01/02/04	12/12/11	66	7	\$34.20	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

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

[Home](#)