



Supplement to Tarrant County Monitoring Report (2020): Additional Observations on Attorney Qualifications

Part I. Performance Indicators

TIDC has historically monitored how counties admit attorneys to lists, but not how counties review their performance.¹ TIDC is piloting key performance indicators related to attorney representation—caseloads, investigation, and client contact—to assess counties’ procedures for ensuring ethical attorney performance. It is collecting data from counties’ regular reports to TIDC, interviews and surveys, and additional sources as available.

For this pilot period, TIDC is collecting information. The following observations about attorney qualifications are not findings and do not affect TIDC funding. No response is required, though TIDC welcomes feedback.

Since its inception, the Fair Defense Act has required local jurisdictions to review qualifications for attorneys on the appointment list. Under Article 26.04(b) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, counties must adopt procedures that

ensure that each attorney appointed from a public appointment list to represent an indigent defendant perform the attorney’s duty owed to the defendant in accordance with the adopted procedures, the requirements of this code, and applicable rules of ethics.

Performance Review

TIDC reviewed Tarrant County’s indigent defense plans and interviewed local officials, staff, and defense attorneys to learn about procedures for performance review. The District and County Court Indigent Defense Plans state: “The judges ... recognize the obligation to closely monitor those attorneys approved to be on the wheel and to carefully consider the removal of attorneys from the wheel who provide substandard representation to their clients.”

Attorneys reapply for appointment lists annually, and judges meet monthly to review applications. The judges must suspend or remove attorneys if they have been sanctioned by the State Bar, failed to file required reports, or for other reasons; judges may suspend or remove attorneys if, for example, they have not contacted clients or reviewed discovery. Attorneys can later reapply. Interviews with local staff and

¹ Attorney qualifications for appointment lists are one of six core Fair Defense Act requirements that TIDC monitors. 1 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 174.28(c)(3).

defense attorneys indicated that, within the past few years, the judges removed a slate of chronically underperforming attorneys; removals now occur infrequently.

Caseloads

Attorneys need to spend enough time on each case to perform their basic duties to defendants.² TIDC, in partnership with the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University, studied the maximum number of cases an attorney could carry in a year while providing ethical representation.³ The study found that, in Texas, an attorney should carry no more than 226 misdemeanors, 128 felonies, 31 appeals, or a weighted combination of these cases.

According to indigent defense plans and interviews with local officials, Tarrant County has neither caseload limits nor procedures to systematically review caseloads. Attorneys are required to file practice time reports to remain on lists.⁴ According to data reported by the County and local attorneys, in Tarrant County, in FY2019:

- 103 of 292 attorneys (35%) who were paid for felony, misdemeanor, or appellate cases in Tarrant County had statewide indigent defense caseloads above the Texas caseload guidelines.⁵ 98 attorneys had Tarrant County caseloads above the guidelines.
- Some attorneys had very excessive statewide indigent defense caseloads. One attorney, at 242% of the guidelines, had 234 felonies, 84 misdemeanors, and 7 appeals, plus 3 capital murders.⁶ Another attorney, at 203% of the guidelines, had 152 felonies, 88 misdemeanors, and 14 appeals, plus 5 capital murders; this was reportedly only 75% of the attorney's overall practice time.
- The median caseload was 69% of the guidelines. The mean was 77%.

² TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.01. (see commentary: "A lawyer's workload should be controlled so that each matter can be handled with diligence and competence.")

³ <http://tidc.texas.gov/caseloads>

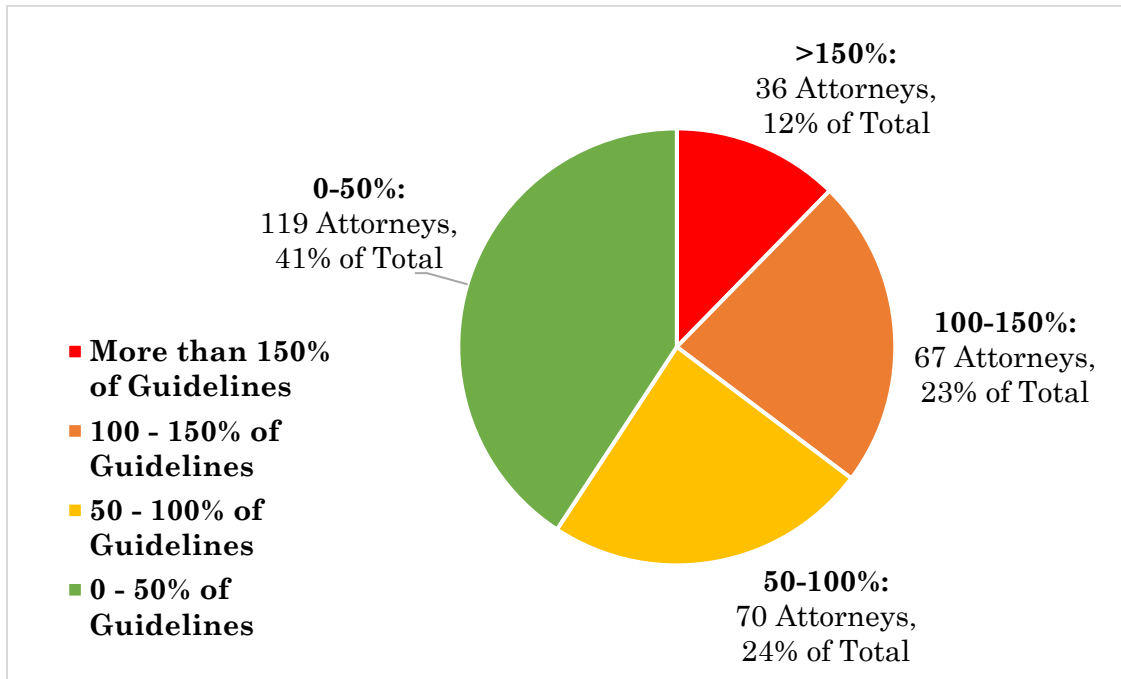
⁴ They are also required by statute, regardless of whether they are on appointments lists. TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 26.04(j)(4).

⁵ This estimate is from county auditor data, available at <http://tidc.tamu.edu/public.net/>. This estimate does not include capital or juvenile indigent defense cases, civil appointments, or retained cases.

⁶ See previous note. Capital murder cases are not counted in caseload percentage estimates.

- Including non-indigent-defense cases, 79 attorneys had total caseloads more than twice the guidelines.⁷
- 57 attorneys who were paid for Tarrant County appointments did not file practice time reports for Tarrant County.⁸

Figure: Tarrant County Appointed Caseloads vs. Texas Total Caseload Guidelines



Use of Investigators

Attorneys have a duty to defendants to investigate the facts of their case.⁹ Some investigation can be performed by attorneys. Other investigation requires an investigator, because, for instance, attorneys cannot testify to facts that the attorney has investigated, or because of the need for added capacity or specialization.¹⁰ TIDC’s caseload guidelines recommend that, on average, for misdemeanors, 13.8% of case

⁷ This estimate combines county auditor data with data from attorneys on the percent of their practice time dedicated to indigent defense, also available at <http://tidc.tamu.edu/public.net/>. For this estimate, TIDC divides attorneys’ statewide indigent defense caseload (excluding juvenile and capital cases) by their reported percent of practice time devoted to appointed criminal cases.

⁸ Attorneys may not have filed reports if they finished work in FY18 and were paid in FY19.

⁹ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF’L CONDUCT R. 1.01.

¹⁰ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF’L CONDUCT R. 3.08.

time (60 minutes) is spent on attorney investigation and 5.3% of case time (28.5 minutes) is spent on investigator investigation; for felonies, the guidelines are 12.3% (122.8 minutes) of case time on attorney investigation and 7.7% (85.3 minutes) on investigator investigation.¹¹

Tarrant County judges review individual fee vouchers, but do not appear to systematically review attorneys' use of investigators. TIDC surveyed and interviewed local defense attorneys, who stated that judges regularly discourage attorneys from using investigators, especially for misdemeanor cases, by refusing to approve expenses or pay bills in full. According to data reported by the County, in Tarrant County, in FY2019:¹²

- 0.38% of misdemeanor expenditures were for investigators (\$15,878 of \$4,202,275)
- 3.17% of felony expenditures were for investigators (\$409,666 of \$12,916,552)

Client Contact

Attorneys have a duty to communicate with defendants about their case.¹³ Especially when clients are in custody, attorneys should be in regular contact.¹⁴ They should also attempt to contact out-of-custody clients and discuss their cases out-of-court to ensure confidentiality¹⁵ and time to prepare.¹⁶ TIDC's caseload guidelines recommend that, on average, 13.9% (75 minutes) of misdemeanor case time and 16.1% (168.8 minutes) of felony case time is spent on client communication.¹⁷

Tarrant County judges review individual fee vouchers, but do not appear to systematically review attorneys' communication with clients. TIDC's survey and interviews of defense attorneys indicated attorneys meet with clients out-of-court and at the jail, though meeting space at the jail and the courthouse are very limited and

¹¹ These recommendations are for cases that do not go to trial. More investigation time is recommended for cases that go to trial.

¹² <http://tidc.tamu.edu/public.net/Reports/CountyFinancialReport.aspx?cid=220&fy=2019>

¹³ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.03. *See also* TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 26.04(j)(4)(1), requiring appointed attorneys to contact and interview clients as soon as practicable.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.05.

¹⁶ TEX. DISCIPLINARY RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 1.01.

¹⁷ These recommendations are for cases that do not go to trial. More communication time is recommended for cases that go to trial.

not sufficiently confidential. Many attorneys reported difficulties meeting with clients due to clients' lack of transportation, reliable contact information, or interest. Tarrant County uses a TechShare database to track attorney appointments and payments. TIDC matched vouchers in TechShare to its FY2019 case sample and found that:¹⁸

- 72 of 116 (62%) misdemeanor vouchers billed for out-of-court client visits
- 67 of 87 (77%) of felony vouchers billed for out-of-court client visits

These data indicate that Tarrant County has a method for tracking whether attorneys contact their clients, but local procedures do not ensure this duty is always met.

Summary

The criminal judges of Tarrant County have created a system that allows for oversight of the defense function. This is done, first, through the hourly billing system. Judges review the actions of appointed counsel with hourly vouchers submitted via TechShare. Second, attorneys must annually reapply to the appointment list. If an attorney failed to meet expectations of the courts, the attorney could be dropped from an appointment list. While the judges have created a system of oversight, the caseloads of several attorneys were above maximum levels found under the Texas caseload guidelines. The resources devoted to investigation appear to fall below levels expected under these caseload guidelines.

¹⁸ TIDC could not match payment vouchers for all sample appointments.

Part II. Criminal Defense Attorney Survey Results

In December 2019, TIDC, with assistance from the Tarrant County Courts' Office of Attorney Appointments, distributed an online survey to around 240 attorneys on Tarrant County appointment lists and received 77 responses.

Attorneys were asked open-ended questions about Tarrant County indigent defense practices, especially related to performance review, caseloads, investigators, and client contact. Most attorneys reported no difficulties in these areas. Of those who made comments, the most common were:

- The trial experience required for felony appointments is not reasonable.
- Attorneys are not aware of how their performance is reviewed by judges.
- Judges do not approve enough pay for investigators and experts, especially in misdemeanors.
- Attorneys have difficulty meeting with in-custody clients, due to long wait times and lack of confidential space at the jail.
- Attorneys have difficulty meeting with out-of-custody clients, due to attorneys' lack of contact information and clients' lack of transportation, time, and interest. Meeting space at the courthouse is limited.
- Appointments through TechShare and the Office of Attorney Appointments are timely and working well.
- People who are not indigent are getting court-appointed attorneys.
- TIDC could provide more training to attorneys and judges.

TIDC also interviewed about ten attorneys. Some reiterated comments from the survey, while others refuted them. Most attorneys interviewed agreed, for example, that judges will cut bills for attorneys that request experts, but most disagreed that the felony trial experience requirement is unreasonable; they said that there are second-chair and other opportunities to meet the requirement, and that the requirement is justified.

The survey responses are quoted below. TIDC sorted and aggregated responses where feasible. Repeated responses are bolded and listed with the number of responses. Some repeated responses varied slightly in wording (e.g., "No" vs. "None" vs. "No, I have not.").



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Performance Review

**1. Have you had any difficulties being approved for appointment lists?
Please explain.**

1. **No** [56]
2. **Yes** [2]
3. noyes
4. Only Capital wheel. This is only year it has happened. I do not know what the hold up is. I have texted coordinator for Administrative judge several times
5. Not really, my only issue has been trying to remember what trials have been in recently because I'm generally second chair (meaning it's not my case).
6. Yes, my misdemeanor application took several months to process
7. yes--even though I was board certified in criminal law and had other significant experiences working, it took 3 months to get approved in their process. 20 years ago when I passed the bar, I was given appointments commiserate with my experience within a week.
8. I was approved for appointments on Misdemeanors, state jail, and the 2/3 degree wheel in October 2009. I was approved every year after. In 2017, I was not approved for 2/3 degree wheel. No explanation was given for my removal. My qualifications had not changed. I was approved for 2/3 degree wheel again in 2018, after waiting a year to reapply. I have heard other attorneys have been "kicked off" the wheel without any explanation, and approved the next year they applied.
9. Yes. I wasn't approved for the first degree wheel.
10. Yes as it is difficult to obtain enough jury trials. Most cases settle, as many district attorneys offer our clients good plea deals just before trial.
11. Yes. The attys need to have felony trial experience to be appointed on the wheel, but many times the client pleads out or if the case is a truly tryable case, the state offers a good deal at the last minute and we never get to trial. Makes it very difficult to try a felony without jeopardizing the best interest of the client
12. Not really. I volunteered to sit second chair for free a few times, both to get on the lists and to maintain my space on the lists, but this wasn't anything more than anyone else has had to do.
13. I was a prosecutor for 3 years, but I was kicked off the felony wheels since I found a way to plead my felony cases instead of try them in the allotted time period. My difficulty has been trying to get the opportunity to take a felony case to trial to get back on the felony wheel.

14. On 4 occasions, I was appointed before any charges were filed but when the complaint was filed another attorney was appointed. There was no explanation.
15. Originally, yes.
16. 10 jury trials within the past 10 years were required to be approved for felony appointments, and I qualified 7 years ago. Two years ago the requirement was changed to 5 jury trials within the past 5 years to qualify (I only had 2), so I did not qualify for further felony appointments although I have had 40 jury trials and have attended two week-long trial colleges CLEs and handled several hundred felony appointments . Changing the qualification for felony appointments after being approved was unfair in my opinion. Now I am restricted to misdemeanor appointments only.
17. I was down graded to SJF and misdemeanors
18. No-Except that even though I have been practicing criminal law for over 35 years, unless I have 5 jury trials in last 5 years (?), cannot be in felony wheel.
19. Only on the felony wheel

2. Do you have any comments on how Tarrant County reviews attorney performance or maintains appointment lists?

1. **No** [48]
2. **Yes** [2]
3. I have no idea how they review performance
4. They do fine.
5. They keep making it harder for new attorneys to get on--these lawyers have passed the bar-- but they then have to wait years more with crazy CLE and ""token"" trial experience (sit 2d or 3d chair and ask the 911 operator if that's her voice on the tape type token experience) to finally represent pot heads and homeless trespassers, or felony revocations of people who absconded after basically breaking all of their conditions. There ought to be tiers, even in felony cases, for new lawyers to break in. By doing so, seasoned appointed lawyers can interact better with them and the courts and others can see whose serious about defense work and at what level. Next, promote to another tier--such as DWI's (that are low level but triable cases). Etc...
6. The current system puts an incredible burden of CLE and trial time on attorneys who end up having to spend too much time on CLE or volunteering on trials to get appointed. Its a joke."
7. I think it needs to be more stringent for recertification.
8. It appears to be decided by judges without any input from the attorneys
9. Clear as per the published requirements.

10. It seems to me, after talking to numerous attorneys on the wheels, the judges want to ensure the attorneys meet the basic requirements, but don't really check into how those requirements were met. For example, attorneys are required to have substantial and active participation in a certain number of trials, based on which wheel you are applying for. One attorney may have handled ten trials on his/her own without a second chair. Another attorney may have questioned one "easy" witness at ten trials. These two attorneys have satisfied the requirement, even though it should be obvious the second attorney hasn't shown the same level of ability to effectively represent a client at a trial.
11. It seems to be done in secret. I know of many attorneys who have been removed from the felony court appointment lists and have no idea why they were removed, as no one provides a reason or feedback.
12. I started trying 1st Degree Criminal cases 30 years ago. Now, after over 100 jury trials I am not qualified for 1st Degree Appointments because I have not tried enough felonies in the last 5 years. Further, the Judges are refusing to place qualified attorneys on the Felony wheel, except for State Jails when they reach 70.several of them are over 70 and are trying Felony cases .
13. yes.....see above [see Question 1, Response 10: "Yes. The attys need to have felony trial experience ..."]
14. My only concern is really that defendants out on bond seem to ALWAYS qualify for a court appointed attorney. I do not believe that they are being vetted. Why are the courts not at least asking for tax returns? There is no reason this many defendants should be getting free representations. In fact, my opinion is the Tarrant County judges make it too easy to get a court appointed attorney.
15. I don't have enough information to comment.
16. I am not aware of how the Judges review attorney performance.
17. No, I think it is appropriate.
18. In my opinion, it's one of the best.
19. I think the felony trial requirement is a bit too much as it is not easy to get many felony trials.
20. I believe years of experience and prior experience should be considered more strongly rather than just recent trials completed in determining eligibility
21. If reviews are conducted they are not disclosed to the defense bar.
22. Perhaps a consideration for the types of trials vs the total number of trials. Some trials are more difficult and require more work than others.
23. Have no first hand knowledge of how they do it.

Caseloads

3. In what areas, other than criminal defense, do you practice law (e.g., consumer law, family law)?

1. **None** [40]
2. **Family** [5]
3. **Personal Injury** [3]
4. **Juvenile** [2]
5. **Criminal Appellate** [2]
6. Oil and Gas
7. business torts and family law
8. Wills, probate, business, civil litigation
9. Personal injury and family law
10. Probate
11. Family and Juvenile
12. Wills
13. Family, immigration, consumer
14. Probate, Family
15. family and personal injury
16. Personal injury, family, immigration.
17. Some family, some personal injury
18. Parole Board appointed civil parole revocation proceedings.
19. juvenile, family
20. I still do wills
21. Volunteer attorney at South Texas Detention Center (immigrant hearing prep)
22. juvenile, cps
23. juvenile and immigration

4. In what counties, other than Tarrant County, do you practice indigent defense?

1. **None** [56]
2. Dallas [3]
3. Parker [4]
4. Cooke, Grayson
5. parker occasionally (by specific request)
6. Fannin, Collin
7. Occasionally a capital murder case, Parker County, Wichita County
8. Wichita County
9. Denton and Dallas
10. Dallas, Johnson
11. federal CJA panel but no other counties

12. Johnson, Parker, Dallas, Hill and Ellis
13. I practice in Parker and Johnson sometimes, but in the last ten years those have been hired cases.
14. Surrounding
15. federal
16. Denton
17. None (except for Parole Board appointments)
18. Johnson , Denton, Wise, Parker
19. Wise, Hill
20. Dallas, Collin, Johnson, Parker, Denton and various other jurisdictions

5. About how many indigent defense clients do you have at a time?

Responses sorted:

1. 2
2. 4
3. 5-10
4. Around 6
5. 8-10
6. **10** [5]
7. Maybe 10
8. 10-15
9. 10-20
10. 11
11. 15
12. 15-20 [3]
13. **20** [4]
14. 20 average
15. about 20
16. Varies (around 20 or so)
17. Over 20
18. 20-30
19. Approximately 20-30
20. probably 20-30 at any one time in both misdemeanor and felony.
21. **25** [5]
22. Approximately 25
23. 25 - 30
24. roughly 25-30
25. I have about 25-45 at a time.
26. **30** [3]
27. Approx 30
28. **35** [2]

29. Currently about 35
30. about 35, most are misdemeanors
31. 35-50
32. **40** [4]
33. 40+
34. Over 45
35. 40-50
36. **50** [2]
37. Roughly 50
38. **50-60** [2]
39. 60
40. 60-70
41. approximately 60-80
42. 70
43. **75** [2]
44. Approximately 80.
45. 90
46. **100** [2]
47. 150
48. About 35% of my practice
49. 50%
50. Approx. 50% of practice.
51. I am unsure
52. it varies largely

6. Have you had any difficulty receiving appointments? Please explain.

1. **No** [60]
2. No. I have plenty of appointments.
3. Yes
4. see above [see Question 1, Response 7: “yes--even though I was board certified ...”]
5. Occasionally I will not receive an appointment notice due to issues with TechShare.
6. taken from felony wheel
7. In the beginning, I received a few “jail runs” where I might receive between 5-12 clients at one time. I received one about every six months, on average. I haven’t received one in about 5 years. I’ve never understood the “jail run” system.
8. see question #1 [see Question 1, Response 11: “Yes. The attys need to have felony trial experience ...”]
9. Huge difficulties in Denton county. I discovered that 38% of appellate appointments go to 2 attorneys.

10. See response to the first question [see Question 1, Response 16: “10 jury trials within the past 10 years were required ...”]
11. I was appointed a client that was at one level that I was on, but then the state enhanced and I had to get off the case-seems like I should have gotten a replacement case as a reward for my honesty.

Investigators

7. About how many times in the last year did you request an investigator for a misdemeanor case?

Responses sorted:

1. **Not Applicable, I didn't take misdemeanor appointments** [7]
2. **0 times** [41 responses]
3. **1 time** [7]
4. **Maybe 1 time** [3]
5. once--I only accept misdemeanor appointments and an investigator is rarely needed.
6. **1 to 2 times** [5]
7. **2 times** [3]
8. **3 times** [1]
9. not many
10. No more than 3-4 times
11. 5 -- and 4 were denied, the other was capped low
12. 5-10

8. About how many times in the last year did you request an investigator for a felony case?

Responses sorted:

1. **Not Applicable, I didn't take felony appointments** [7]
2. **0 times** [14 responses]
3. **1 time** [4]
4. **2 times** [4]
5. **3 times** [5]
6. 3-5
7. 3-5 times?
8. several
9. Several always granted.
10. Four or five
11. **5 times** [4]
12. apx 5

13. 5-6
14. 5-10
15. 6 times
16. 6-7
17. **7 times** [2]
18. 8 times
19. probably 8-10
20. 10 times
21. 10 or so
22. Approximately 10 times
23. **10-15 times** [3]
24. **10-20 times** [2]
25. At least a dozen.
26. **15 times** [2]
27. **20 times** [3]
28. 20-25
29. Over 20
30. about 25
31. 25-30 times.
32. 30
33. 35 times approximately
34. 5% of appointed cases.
35. often
36. almost every time, and they are capped low too

9. Have you had any difficulty getting approval for investigation expenses? Please explain.

1. **Not Applicable** [5]
2. **No** [45]
3. Only that judges gripe about it and threaten to refuse in the future
4. yes. Courts tend to cap their fees at \$300-500, and only approve \$30-50 per hour. Most quality investigators are \$75-150 per hour and take a \$1500 retainer. Process servers make more money than court appointed investigators--AND DON'T GET ME STARTED ON EXPERTS OR EX PARTE EXPERT REQUESTS. --Save and except there are some judges that refuse to pay an expert more than a court appointed attorney's hourly "to be fair." It's not fair, it's dangerous. A good court appointed attorney really can't function at \$75-100 per hour (oddly, in 1998 it was \$100 per hour...21 years later it's \$75-100, but everyone else's salary and expenses went up). So if you have a below average attorney who will take a case at \$75 per hour--what surgeon, etc. is coming in for 10 hours at \$750??? NONE. By comparison, State gets whomever they want, and

the best ones at it. We end up asking friends for favors and a ton of push back from judges. And OH HOLY CRAP if your client's family paid a bail and a retrainer and they're capped and you need an AKE motion for help. It's a bad comedy, "we will get you the stupidest and cheapest guy we can afford."

5. Investigators - No. Experts - YES!!! Judges do not want to pay for experts to help thoroughly investigate defensive issues. We often have to scrounge for bottom barrel experts rather than the ones we need. Would be nice to have funding on par with the DA's office. The DA gets funding approval from the county for anything they want while we have to go through the judges. That's backwards.
6. Not yet
7. Yes. In fact on the misdemeanor case I ended up paying out of pocket for the investigator.
8. Not recently
9. A lot of "complaining" from judges but always approved.
10. Not for approval, but for adequate funds, yes.
11. I believe most of the felony judges will allow for this if it is reasonable and necessary.
12. No, thank goodness.
13. never a problem.
14. There has never been any problem getting an investigator and some money initially. Occasionally, depending on the Judge, I will have to fight to get additional money. If my investigator has gone slight over budget, sometimes I have trouble getting the additional money paid.
15. Yes. Misdemeanor judges are loathe to appoint an investigator. One felony judge is also very difficult to convince to appoint an investigator.
16. Not yet, but the family violence court has a large budget and the judge does not push back on trials or related expenses for appointed clients.
17. No. But do not request every time. Do request when help is needed
18. Yes, for misdemeanors. I have been told there is not enough money for investigators for misdemeanor cases. For felonies, I only had difficulty in one court, CDC2.
19. Yes - it is sometimes difficult to get adequate pay initially
20. yes, some judges think it is unnecessary
21. No, when I was handling felony appointments
22. Yes, denied at misdemeanor level.
23. Yes. All the time for certain courts and the amounts we do get are paltry. Insufficient to provide a competent defense. Particularly when it comes to experts.

Client Contact

10. About how often do you meet with clients in jail?

1. Twice a month
2. Once every 10 days
3. Within 1-2 days after appointment then depends on client some every month. Some it's several months bc nothing is going on with case
4. 3 X A MONTH
5. I try to go see everyone in jail, unless it's a last second jail run and I don't have time.
6. Depends
7. All the time. I visit an individual client 1-2 times on average, and much more if the case is tried.
8. Almost every time if the case is going to go past the earliest settings.
9. 3x per week
10. 5x per month
11. At least 1 time per month depending upon the type of case and what is going on.
12. Several times a week
13. Often
14. I am in the jail about weekly
15. Varies as necessary
16. Once at the beginning of the appeal
17. Depends on the circumstances of each case. Case by case basis
18. Twice a week or more
19. As needs dictate. Usually monthly
20. Depends - always at initial Interview and before every court setting. More often if set for trial.
21. 1-3 times per client.
22. at least 2 per month
23. once
24. Any time not on bond. Sometimes more than once.
25. As need arises
26. Weekly
27. Week
28. Every time I'm appointed on a case with a client in jail. Number of times depends on how long client is in jail while the case is pending.
29. 65%
30. At least once a month.
31. frequently - in general, I do jail visits at least 1-2 times a week. Depending on the length a case goes on, I can visit a client anywhere

- from 1 to 10 times. I aim for at least once every 3 weeks or so to visit a client just to update and check in with them in the very least.
32. Depends on the case and the client's desire whether to plead or try their case.
 33. twice per week
 34. as needed, but at least 1x per week
 35. at least once per client on felony cases.
 36. routinely
 37. Depends on the case. If a case is disposed of in less than a month, then I will only meet with them once or twice. If the case is longer than that, then I might meet with them once a month or once every couple of months.
 38. It depends on the degree of felony. Obviously, I will see a client charged with a first degree felony more often than a state jail felony.
 39. at initial appointment, every court setting, and for trial prep, as necessary
 40. Do you mean how often do I meet clients in jail in general? I'm at the jail about 2-3 times a month meeting clients. Or do you mean how often do you meet each client in jail? Depends on the case. At least once, but can be up to 10 if going to trial.
 41. Upon appointment and when necessary
 42. 100%
 43. Most of my clients are out on pr bond. If there is an ice hold I try to go only when there is new info to share with the client so as not to "run up" the bill. Some of my appointed clients phone me from jail. If they don't then I go to see them every month, or two weeks if needed.
 44. 2-3 times a week
 45. As often as is necessary depending upon the type of case.
 46. Varies
 47. 1-3 times per week
 48. once per setting
 49. 1 - 3+
 50. Depends on the case.
 51. very often. I'm there visiting multiple clients weekly
 52. Ballpark 2-4 times a month; more hassle to get to Green Bay
 53. At a minimum once a month.
 54. Weekly
 55. Once or twice
 56. 2 times per month
 57. on occasion as needed
 58. frequently
 59. In the first three days of representation and then before very court date.

60. Initially within one week and about once a month until the case is resolved
61. Once every other week
62. As much as necessary. Once a week
63. weekly
64. 1-3
65. when i can
66. as often as necessary
67. 1-3 per week
68. Hard to say, not often since most are out on personal bond or surety bonds. If in jail, as much as required.
69. As often as possible, soon after appointment
70. 1 to 2 times, unless we are preparing for some sort of contested hearing.
71. twice a week at least
72. I am making jail visits constantly throughout the week. With our case management system and firm policy, we add a jail visit to the schedule when we are appointed to make sure we are meeting with them right away.
73. depends on case. Sometimes once during pendency of case. Other times once per month.
74. Maybe once or twice until we are set for trial and then at least 3 or 4 more times.

11. Have you had any difficulties meeting with clients in jail? Please explain.

1. No [42]
2. Just the normal slowness of them getting my clients to the booth
3. Yes in Grayson County
4. Yes. Green Bay--theoretically +/- 5 miles from downtown takes about 20-30 minutes to get to and get back from due to how and where the county placed it, and once you're there--even on lawyer day--it takes 30 minutes to an hour to bring your client. I have had to leave several times. I've had similar delays in the two downtown jails. The newer one is even stupider--they bought the technology to facetime and refuse to use it for security reasons. So parking there is close to imposible, registering is longer, and then you go through long tunnels sometimes unlit to get to the room, and twice I've been locked in!!!
AND WHAT IS THE FRICKING PROBLEM WITH NEXT TO NO DESK TO WRITE ON OR SPREAD OUT STUFF. THE JAILS HAVE TINY METAL AIRPLANE STYLE FLIP DOWN SOLID METAL MINI TABLES WITH SPRINGS--THAT FLIP BACK???????

5. Yes, especially when needing to review evidence. Space too small, have to deal with holding a phone while talking to client at the downtown jail, not enough attorney booths downtown, have to yell through glass so everyone around can hear at Greenbay.
6. Yes. I have tried to obtain contact visits with my capital murder defendants. Contact visits are refused. I appealed to the Sheriff but was told it was not going to happen. The Court allowed me to bring my client over to the courthouse and meet them there. But those meetings are attended by Sheriff staff and court security so it is not confidential. I have no problem in getting contact visits with clients in other counties.
7. Sometimes, it takes a long time before clients are brought down.
8. Only for trustees
9. Sometimes long waits
10. Yes. The jail does not have enough attorney booths and do not always bring our clients timely. I have waited an hour for a client.
11. Reviewing audio and video is difficult
12. Have “access” but would like to have room to show video or listen to audio evidence. It is difficult from “visitation booth.
13. Yes, Long wait times to get clients to visitation
14. Jail staff is terribly slow sometimes, but never denied visits.
15. No, other than the typical wait times.
16. Not really. Some of the doors to the attorney booths used to be difficult to open, but they fixed that.
17. The telephone cords are too short, making it difficult to sit and talk for long periods of time.
18. Just the waiting. I've been to Greenbay when there was actually not one single employee in the front working.
19. Just the wait time
20. Only when the client is a trustee and not working in his jail facility
21. just the time it takes waiting for jail staff to get client to the booth. can take FAR too long
22. Sometimes, but usually TCSO staff is very cooperative. Issues usually beyond their control (eg. client at hospital)
23. Sometimes the jailers don't check their monitors and my client doesn't get placed in the attorney booth timely. Other times the inmate is eating so I have to wait. Outside of these two things, the jails have been very responsive.
24. Sometimes it takes longer than it should, particularly at the downtown jail
25. Getting to Green Bay is horrible due to traffic.
26. no, other than attorney booth being occupied or the jail taking forever to bring a client

27. yes, long waits at jail
28. don't arrive timely
29. no, but lengthy delays
30. Yes. The jail staff can sometimes take up to an hour to bring your client by.
31. Jail visits can sometimes be difficult and inefficient - ex. having to wait for client to be brought out and the jail attorneys rooms are not ideal for jail visits (1. Phone is difficult to use and it would be much better to have face to face communication like at Green Bay or Lon Evans for note taking etc., 2. there is not a great set up to review DME at the main jail, and 3. some rooms at the main jail don't have a good place to even take notes).
32. Yes. The jail is very slow to bring up clients and I have waited well over 1/2 hour to see someone.

12. Where do you first meet with out-of-custody clients (e.g., your office, courtroom)?

1. **Office** [17]
2. **Courtroom** [4]
3. **Office and/or Courtroom** [12]
4. Office or courtroom depending on what client wants
5. Office if I can reach them; Often the clients are non responsive
6. Jail, office, or court room. I speak to everyone on the phone prior to every court date assuming they have a working phone.
7. Office mostly
8. Phone then office if necessary
9. Varies
10. Office or at their convenience. Sometimes I meet at their home because a lot of times they don't have transportation
11. They have the option on when and where to meet. Most choose the courtroom.
12. Try for office meeting but some have limited transportation funds so meet at courthouse on day of setting.
13. jail if in custody office if out of custody
14. Both. Depends on the client and the charge.
15. office / telephone
16. My office if they will keep there appointments.
17. Office if I can reach them. Court if I can't.
18. Depends on the ability of the client to meet. If they have a car, I can meet them at my office, unless that's too far for them to drive. If so, I arrange a mutual place. Loser to their home.

19. I prefer to meet at my office. However, some clients do not show up and I first see them at the courthouse. I attempt to contact the client by phone within 24 hours of receiving a court appointment.
20. office mostly
21. Preferrably my office.
22. 20% office, 80 %, Court room
23. my office ideally
24. Most of the time, at court, as they rarely make appointments and rarely respond to our call or letter.
25. It depends. If they want to come and meet in my office, then we do. If they want to wait and meet in the courtroom, then we do that.
26. My office, if I can contact them and set up an appointment. I would say that approximately three fourths of my out of custody clients do not show up for their appointments. I would estimate that three fourths of my out of custody clients do not bother to contact me. I generally have to contact them.
27. depends on the client's wishes
28. Usually I meet them in the courtroom and set an appointment for them to come to my office after we have the first offer from the state to discuss their options.
29. When the client is able to come to my office or meet at court as soon after appointment as possible
30. Office or telephone. Sometimes courtroom.
31. For whatever reason, most do not respond to my letters or cards to call for an appointment; therefore, I meet them in court.
32. Courtroom about 80%
33. Office or courtroom, depending on their level of responsiveness
34. My preference is at office; sometimes at courtroom.
35. I prefer to meet with my client at my office. Only if they have transportation problems or I have not been able to get in touch with them at phone number or address provided, is a courtroom meeting considered.
36. Attorneys lounge
37. depends on the client, we prefer the office first
38. Usually the courtroom.
39. Office, except for clients who will not cooperate and come to my office, whom I meet at the courthouse
40. office , sometimes court room
41. Most at court, some at the office.
42. Courtroom during court settings. Vast majority of defendants out on bond make no effort to contact court appointed counsel.

43. Courtroom or office. Depends if they want to meet prior to the first court date or are able to.
44. Depends on the client. Office or Courthouse.
45. Most often it is in court - many do not respond to letters or calls to set up an appointment in the office
46. courtroom mostly

13. Have you had any difficulties meeting with out-of-custody clients? Please explain.

1. No [23]
2. Yes [3]
3. Not as long as we have good contact information
4. Sometimes
5. Yes, they frequently do not answer the phone or miss appointments
6. Of course. by demographic indigent client like to call at odd even super late hours and on weekends and/or randomly show up without appointments, or don't keep them at all. They as a demographic (across all races) have more mental health and chemical dependency problems. As a result--and partly why they are indigent--they are disheveled at best and gross and homeless and smelly at worst. This is a serious problem, as landlords and law firm colleagues expect a professional environment to work in that is safe--my firm put tremendous pressure on me to not bring my indigent clients to our offices and building. Our courthouse has several (about 6) empty court rooms since they built a gazillion dollar mausoleum for the civil judges. it has meeting rooms gallour. the Family Law Center wisely has 3-5 conference rooms PER COURT. In the Tim Curry justice center, The jurors have a jury services room and courts have the jury rooms too for them. The DA's have 3-4 floors of offices and conference rooms--and a special victim corner with offices, meeting rooms, couches and TV's etc. The DA's partnered with the County to have more rooms and space at a new repurposed building across the street too. but not the defense. We have a 30 or 40 year old "lawyer's lounge" that smells like old men and sneezes. There is no place for us to meet with clients there! Why not????
7. Yes, they won't make an appointment
8. No, unless they choose not to show up at appointments
9. Yes, when the contact info on the appointment form is incorrect.
10. More no shows than there should be
11. No. Almost all my clients are in-custody
12. Yes. The out of custody tend to not show up for appointments or trying to reach them is difficult. Many out of custody clients do not have a good phone number or address and do not have a bondsman.

13. Indigent clients seems to skip scheduled office visits quite often.
14. They tend to have difficulty making and keeping appointments.
15. yes. they do not return calls or come to the office
16. Sometimes it is difficult to have a working phone number for them.
17. yes most do not wish to travel to my office
18. Sometimes they won't show up
19. Yes. Bad contact numbers, not functioning phones.
20. Only the clients that absconded
21. Yes, sometimes the contact information provided with the court appointment is not correct. Sometimes the clients fail to attend the office visit.
22. yes, often the number is incorrect and the bondsman doesn't have updated info either
23. Many will not schedule an office appointment.
24. yes when they can't find the time to come in.
25. many out of custody clients have bad contact info and do not contact my office. Often no show / no call if they do make appointments.
26. All the time. They either call the morning of the court date or the day before and without enough time to schedule them. They will call and complain about how I'm not available, even though I tell them I never discuss cases on the telephone...hired or appointed.
27. just sometimes getting them to come in
28. Sometimes. Some of them change phone numbers often or disappear.
29. Other than my comments above, no.
30. Out of custody clienta frequently have transportation and communication issues that make it more feasible for them to come to court for an initial visit
31. Yes. We often do not have correct phone and address info. Having email addresses might help out a lot.
32. no just very little communication from clients
33. Yes. See above. [See Question 11, Response 31: "For whatever reason, most do not respond to my letters ..."]
34. Yes. They usually don't contact me or don't show up for office appointments.
35. lack of interest on their part
36. Sometimes appointed clients fail to appear for appointments. Retained clients on the whole are more likely to appear for appointments because they know they have skin in the game. For some appointed clients, it takes time for them to realize this.
37. Yes. Some have transportation issues/unpredictable transportation. Some have cell phones they don't always work so I cannot reach them. If they are homeless, are struggling financially, or have an unstable home

- environment, it can be challenging for them to keep an appointment or get to my office.
38. Yes, often my clients have no transportation and they cannot come to my office.
 39. yes, they dont make contact and/or their contact information is invalid and they have a PR bond, so no way to reach them.
 40. Yes. They usually do not contact me after I sent them a letter and I usually do not have the phone number.
 41. Yes. Some clients refuse to cooperate in their defense and do not respond to requests to meet at my office to discuss their cases. Also, clients often give wrong or incomplete addresses to attorney appointments personnel, making it difficult to contact the client.
 42. Some only want to meet in court. Some require a lot of phone calls while others do not. I DO NOT like the court second guessing my bill for phone calls. When I receive a client call, I must stop what I am doing, get up to speed, then talk to the client and then take notes of the conversation. I've had a court that cut my bill for a phone call.
 43. some times they have no transportation to come to my office
 44. a few of clients do not seem concerned
 45. Only because they do not make an effort to meet. On the other hand, on retained clients there never is a problem.
 46. Yes. They tend to be elusive.
 47. Yes. Many of them have transportation difficulties or work schedules that don't allow us to meet during my normal business hours. I try to do as much as possible with teleconferences.
 48. sometimes because I can't reach them due to bad phone or address, so I have to wait until a court setting
 49. It is sometimes challenging to meet with an out of custody court appointed client - they change phone numbers, are difficult to get in touch with, don't have great transportation, etc.
 50. Many do not seem to care about their cases and don't make any effort to come to office to review case.

General Comments

14. What is working well in Tarrant County's indigent defense system?

1. Quality of attorneys
2. I think just about everything
3. Seems to be working just fine.
4. It seems fine to me

5. I very much appreciate Tarrant County. The discovery sharing through Techshare is great. The method of receiving appointments, submitting vouchers, and getting paid is great.
6. Nothing. Except Barbara--she works her butt off and is super nice.
7. Quick dockets
8. Not much. We do get quick notification of appointments. Unfortunately the contact info is wrong 70% of the time.
9. The TechShare system works well.
10. It works well, should be duplicated in Dallas
11. None
12. We receive the appointment almost immediately upon appointment
13. Fairly well run
14. Timeliness of appointments after trial.
15. The discovery portal is nice and easy to navigate (tech share)
16. We have extremely qualified lawyers representing clients.
17. Prompt appointments of in custody individuals
18. Pay scale is superior to most counties so no complaints there. More consideration of "reasonable" bonds on indigent defendants would be good.
19. list control for attorney
20. everything works well
21. appointments
22. Staff
23. Appointments
24. appointments are spaced out; courts pay requested amounts
25. They have a system in place.
26. Everything
27. Clients are timely appointed an attorney.
28. the quickness of the appointment process
29. Expeditious appointments of clients with attorneys.
30. the wheel and unbiased distribution of appointments
31. na
32. They're getting a lot of great representation from amazing lawyers for zero fees.
33. The ladies in the Attorney Appointment office can fix any problem that the powers that be throw at us.
34. Indigent defendants are being appointed attorneys quickly.
35. Getting appointments is not the problem. Often, I feel I get too many to be effective and will pause my appointments for a month or so. Not all other attorneys do that and there are some who have so many in this county, other counties, and federal court, that they cannot be effective.
36. Ability to scale back when I need to

37. In my opinion, the TC system is working well.
38. most indigent clients receive a high level of service and representation. I think problems arise in the area of recognizing and providing adequate defense and representation to misdemeanor and felony clients with severe mental health problems.
39. The Office of Tarrant County Court Appointments.
40. Notification of appointments, notification of when case is assigned/filed
41. it is working well
42. I have no real complaints except Tech Share.
43. It is working well.
44. i feel it works very well
45. One of the best parts is TechShare for both discovery and payments.
46. Steady appointments, most Judges pay billing invoice fully, more clients are given bonds than before, felony cases usually get an investigator approved, some courts approve experts;
47. Appointments are timely and pay is generally timely as well.
48. Discovery and fee vouchers
49. the ability to bill online
50. n/a
51. Evreything.
52. Setting notices are well-provided. In most courts, adequate time is allowed to resolve cases by plea agreement.
53. Discovery and downloads are much improved. Lack of education on a few of the Judge's part with respect to the time it takes to download DME needs improvement.
54. Timely appointments
55. lack of cronyism
56. access to discovery
57. Being informed of new court appointments.
58. Our magistrates letting more and more in custody defendants out on personal bonds.
59. fair distribution of appointments; also like the Felony Differentiation Case Management
60. Haven't really thought about it from that perspective but I think most of it is working well.
61. I think Tarrant system is great compared to others I've heard about
62. Caese being assigned.

15. What is not working well in Tarrant County's indigent defense system?

1. Too many people appointed lawyers that are not indigent
2. Judges delay in pay vouchers

3. Nothing that I am aware of.
4. Just some glitches in the system when I go to bill. Like it won't show the case is filed or has the wrong judge. These things don't happen that often.
5. I truly have no complaints.
6. read above. [see Question 1, Response 7: “yes--even though I was board certified in criminal law...”] In short, we can't see our clients, reach our clients, have a decent place to meet our clients, we are paid the same or less than we made 20 years ago--even though judges salaries and staffs have doubled, and DA's salaries and staffs have risen 50%. We can't get assistance we need. When we submit bills and requests we are pushed back on or the bill is shaved again--meaning on some cases I earn \$50 per hour????
Meanwhile the last 2 HEARINGS (not trials) I conducted had me alone vs. 3 DA's, 2 investigators, and a Victim Assistance Coordinator, and an expert for the State on one of their collaborative teams.
7. N/A
8. Overbearing and expensive bond conditions for indigent clients. Using these conditions as an impetus to plead the case. Incorrect contact information for appointed clients. Difficulty getting funding for experts. Judges treating appointed clients differently than retained clients.
9. My only criticism is the inability to get contact visits. I also think the court-appointed fee structure to handle DNA writs pays a fixed fee which is too low.
10. Nothing at this time.
11. PR bonds
12. Costly bond conditions
13. Tech Share pay voucher preset/default rates requiring affirmative decision by Judge to pay anything other than the low end of the hourly approved range regardless of complexity or attorney experience/ skill level.
14. I am not aware of anything.
15. NA
16. The lack of approval for experts and investigators. The wide disparity of what the DA's office has at its disposal to what we are given.
17. If there is a delay in the case being filed, there is often a delay in getting the case assigned to the attorney in TechShare so that we have access to the file once the case is filed.
18. Some Judges in felony courts tend to try to “micro manage” experts. I understand the responsibility they have to the taxpayers but they should trust the defense bar is being diligent in finding and retaining “reasonable” experts that have the best interest of our client and the limited resources of the county in mind.

19. vetting of indigency, tech share billing
20. Forcing lawyers to trial whose clients may not need a trial but the lawyer needs a trial or risk being kicked off the wheel.
21. Personal bonds without court dates
22. bonds
23. The judges seem to approve or remove attorneys arbitrarily. There are many attorneys I know that aren't qualified to sit first chair on a class C misdemeanor that are approved to handle first degree felonies. No explanation is ever given for removal or if an attorney is not approved. There is no appeal. An attorney must wait a full year to reapply once they are removed.
24. Nothing
25. It is difficult getting enough cases that go to trial. Attorneys who are removed from the court appointment lists are not told why they were removed.
26. I believe many people who are not really indigent are getting attorney's just by asking.
27. wide variance of compensation paid by judges
28. requirement of having felony trial within the past 5 years
29. Almost the entire system. It is far too easy for defendants to receive a free attorney. I have had way too many clients that are clearly not indigent. I've had clients appointed who work for Tarrant County, make really good money, and are told by people within the system that they shouldn't hire an attorney because it's too easy to get a good-free one. Something has got to change to give those people who are truly indigent an attorney and alleviate the entitlement that is now in full bloom here. The system needs an overhaul. I cannot comprehend how an affidavit is sufficient to create indigence. At least require they bring their tax returns and bills. Also, if they have cash bonds, it shouldn't matter who paid it. It could be used to hire an attorney.
30. Techshare and getting the D.A. to open the files
31. Clients with incomplete information on the initial appointment sheet.
32. There is still a problem with certain attorneys receiving a disproportionately high number of appointments off of the wheel.
33. The monitoring of performance. The approval of experts. This is where the real fight is with some judges. The State can afford multiple experts in cases and when we try to get our own experts to address the State's experts, judges can be very resistant to appointing experts.
34. Many things....no place to meet with clients in custody to review evidence except an attorney booth with glass partition. Out of custody clients need privacy to review plea documents and speaking to attorneys but have to do it in crowded hallways.

35. I am not aware of any problems in the TC system.
36. Occasionally judges make efforts to expedite criminal cases of appointed clients ahead of retained clientele in an effort to coerce pleas and thereby reduce court appointed attorney fee expenses. These are generally the same judges who have an impatience with properly addressing appointed client mental health issues.
37. No complaints - it's one of the best in the nation. No BS - I mean it.
38. People with 40+ trials in 10 years should be exempt from the 2 felony in 5 year rule. If you're an ex prosecutor, you get a lot more trial experience, but can't take on a state jail theft?
39. na
40. Tech Share
41. It is working well.
42. i feel it works very well
43. 20 different criminal judges with various backgrounds and views on defense-related issues. This is the nature of the beast. It would be helpful if the defense bar and judges could meet periodically to discuss issues.
44. It is harder to get bonds modified now, some Judge's won't approve experts (CDC2, 372nd), pay on egregious felony cases very low (this has resulted in many experienced attorneys getting off the 1st degree appointment wheel); 2nd chairs are not being appointed to Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child cases or complex Sexual Assault of a Child cases or complex Injury to a Child cases.
45. Difficult to get money for other experts on high-level cases and we are sometimes criticized for doing too much work on a case.
46. Too many defendants are being provided court-appointed attorneys without a proper showing of indigency. Additionally, too many PR bonds.
47. The nit picking on submitted vouchers to pay, the reduction in payment amount that is actually paid
48. the qualifications requirements and the inconsistency in how judges treat pay and expenses
49. The misdemeanor judges do not pay enough. 25 years ago the Tarrant County Bar Association did a study that showed that the average Tarrant County lawyer spent \$ 50 an hour on overhead expenses. Most misdemeanor judges pay \$ 75 dollars an hour for out of court work. One judge pays \$ 50 an hour. That is not worth the time.
50. The appointed defense attorney usually is not notified (or not timely notified) when cases are dismissed, when cases are transferred to specialized courts which have dedicated defense lawyers, or when a client hires substitute counsel.

51. It would be nice if techshare.defense had a case management component to it. For example, a calendar function with all of our settings would be fantastic. The information is already in the system, it just needs to populate the calendar. Or how about whenever we get a setting notice, that there is a link or outlook compatible link that would automatically populate outlook?
52. PR bonds. Once out, many go on the run
53. the amount of pay
54. lack of coordination between the county courts
55. Being paid fairly for representing these defendants. Pay scale is basically unchanged for at least 20 years and makes no allowance for the experience and training of the attorney. My plumber makes more per hour than I on a misdemeanor case, not much different than a felony case.
56. Tech Share system has too many wrinkles. Hopefully, Tarrant County does what Dallas county did and withdraws from this.
57. Experienced attorneys are eliminated because of “window” for trial experience
58. I think that with the changes to the bond system (lower bonds, more PR bods), a lot of folks are getting court appointed lawyers that can afford to hire an attorney. I also have had several court appointments where I do not get a phone number or a good address for someone who has bonded out, so we have to try and track folks down through their bondsman. I also think it would benefit us to get email addresses where applicable because we send email notices for court through our case management system, etc. which greatly benefits our clients.
59. Still a few judges that don't review bills in a timely manner. Also, the current voucher system is difficult to use.
60. Many people are not indigent and no follow up is done to check their statements. People making a \$150,000 bond but indigent, paying \$7,500 cash bond but indigent. The pay is horrible in most courts. Particularly in CCC1. Fifty dollars n hour is ridiculous. I've been on the lsit since it first started in 2002 and the has never been increased.

16. TIDC provides training and funding for programs to improve indigent defense. How could TIDC help improve indigent defense in Tarrant County?

1. **I don't know** [8]
2. **Not Applicable** [5]
3. **No opinion** [2]
4. Better screening for actual indigency
5. Have more practical seminars

6. I think better educating people to what programs are out there for our clients to help get their cases dismissed or at least mitigate the damages. I see/hear attorneys all the time that don't know how the various programs work or don't know about them at all. Programs like DPP, FODP, Veteran's etc... I see a lot of older attorneys especially neglect this tool that could really be the best option for their client.
7. Offering free CLE to indigent defenders would be great.
8. use your power or prestige to pressure or shame the county to fund it properly. Hopeless as the judges have limited control of other budgets so act as budget hawks on the only entity they can--indigent defense. For this reason most seasoned defense attorneys do less and less indigent defense or less and less of it. It's not worth the headache
9. Training judges
10. Emphasis placed, at time of appointment, on the client to contact and meet with attorney if let out on bond
11. I'm not sure - the TCCDLA is currently working on being self-corrective
12. Periodic review of pay schedule to keep up with rising overhead costs.
13. More funding to mentally ill and veterans would be great.
14. Teach the judges that it is required to provide qualified experts and investigators at a qualified expert and investigator price. Also to not punish clients for having court appointed attorneys such as extra bond conditions that cost money. Also do not discourage trials for the court appointed clients on a misdemeanor level.
15. training and cle is always a good thing
16. make classes closer to Fort Worth
17. free seminars.
18. A lot. Backlog is enormous.
19. Make sure Tarrant is using a standardized system and the attorneys should be qualified before approved.
20. More PR bonds
21. Ensure that all Judges pay attorneys the same for misdemeanors. Ensure that all Judges pay attorneys the same for felonies. Ensure that the client contact information is correct on the forms provided to the attorneys.
22. Why would defense for an indigent be any different than defense for a retained client? Don't they both require a proper and ethical defense? The only training needed is the same that the attorney should be acquiring through their own CLE and their own ethical obligation. Tax dollars should not be spent for this type of "training."
23. Free CLE
24. Provide training for the newer lawyers who are taking appointments.

25. Our defense association has created an Indigent Defense Committee. We could use training for our members.
26. More accessible attorney training on recognition of mental health impairments with appointed clientele and followup of availability of resources, diversion programs and defense oriented options for this clientele.
27. Free CLE is always welcomed, especially trial-oriented evidentiary seminars re specific predicates and objections to problematic evidence admitted at trial. Notify us by email of future seminars; do not just post notices on the walls of the courthouse.
28. more training
29. Fix Tech Share
30. It couldn't help.
31. not much
32. TIDC could offer to facilitate a half day meeting once or twice a year with the members of TCCDLA and the criminal judges, and have a rep appear to discuss issues TIDC sees on a state level. Attach CLE credit (including Ethics). The Tarrant system is not perfect, but it is better than many others. But the local lawyers and judges only see their world. TIDC could actually do this at other urban jurisdictions as well: one or two TIDC staff, a panel of criminal judges and defense attorneys, and questions and discussion from the audience. This would also help TIDC see what is working in the various jurisdictions, and what is not. Start by doing this in one county, then expand to others.
33. Training on how to better help client's with mental issues, resources to help clients find stability and when their criminal record is a huge obstacle, and training on probation revocations, especially sex offender case revocations;
34. Training for judges and staff on what the attorneys that come before them go through on court-appointed cases.
35. offer ethics courses
36. more training for younger lawyers
37. Training: search & seizure law, motions to suppress, jury instructions.
38. Tips and tricks for Techshare.defense would be helpful. Also perhaps a session with the Judges both felony and misdemeanor on "dos and don'ts" or judicial pet peeves.
39. Perhaps immigration law's intersection with criminal law
40. Tarrant County has a wealth of programs to offer
41. I think one thing that would benefit everyone is to have a CLE about how to interact better with a court appointed client. There are inherit trust issues, etc. that comes with having a court appointed attorney and

learning tools to improve those relationships is not something that is generally discussed in CLE format.

42. improved billing system
43. Not have so many court appointed cases