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TIDC Funds Public Defense Improvement

AUSTIN – The Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) today awarded over \$5 million in Improvement Grants to establish regional public defender offices serving nine counties, create specialized defender programs to help defendants with mental illness, and streamline attorney appointments.

“This regional collaboration grant is a game-changer for our five Hill Country counties,” said Medina County Judge Chis Schuchart. “TIDC’s investment will help us meet longstanding challenges by ensuring that qualified attorneys are on the job locally to protect the constitutional rights of the accused.”

TIDC awarded Improvement Grants to the following counties:

- **Kerr County:** \$2,503,264 to establish the Hill Country Public Defender Office, which will serve Kerr, Gillespie, Bandera, Medina, and Kendall Counties.
- **Atascosa County:** \$1,511,801 to establish a Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid regional defender office that will serve Atascosa, Wilson, Karnes, and Frio Counties.
- **Galveston County:** \$780,334 to establish a misdemeanor mental health public defender office.
- **McLennan County:** \$169,280 to establish the Mental Health Managed Attorney Program.
- **Nueces County:** \$135,121 to establish Indigent Defense Coordinator Services.

“The grants our Board approved today will improve access and quality of counsel for thousands of defendants across Texas,” said TIDC Executive Director Geoff Burkhart. “We’re proud of these investments.”

About TIDC

The Texas Indigent Defense Commission provides financial and technical support to counties to develop and maintain quality, cost-effective indigent defense systems that meet the needs of local communities and the requirements of the Constitution and state law. More information is available at www.tidc.texas.gov.