

HOW PRETRIAL SERVICES IS IMPROVING THE INDIGENT DEFENSE SYSTEM

2024 Texas Association of Pretrial Services Conference
April 19, 2024

Jennifer Armendariz
Bell County
Pretrial Services

Stacy Brown
Travis County
Pretrial Services

Bradley Hargis
Capital Area
Private Defender Service

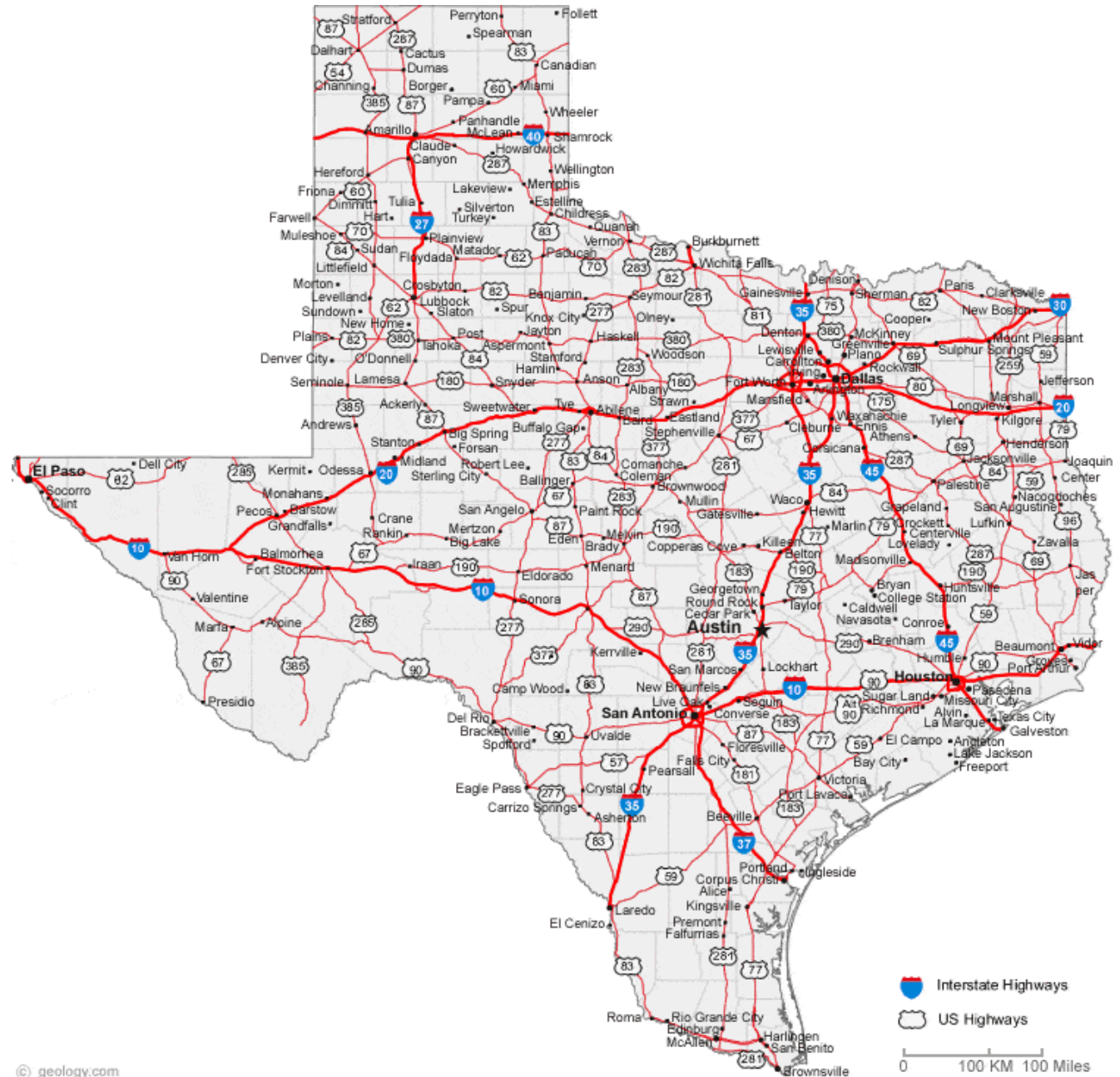
Jim Bethke
Bexar County
Managed Assigned Counsel

Scott Ehlers
Texas Indigent
Defense Commission

Antonio Salazar-Rosas
Bexar County
Pretrial Services

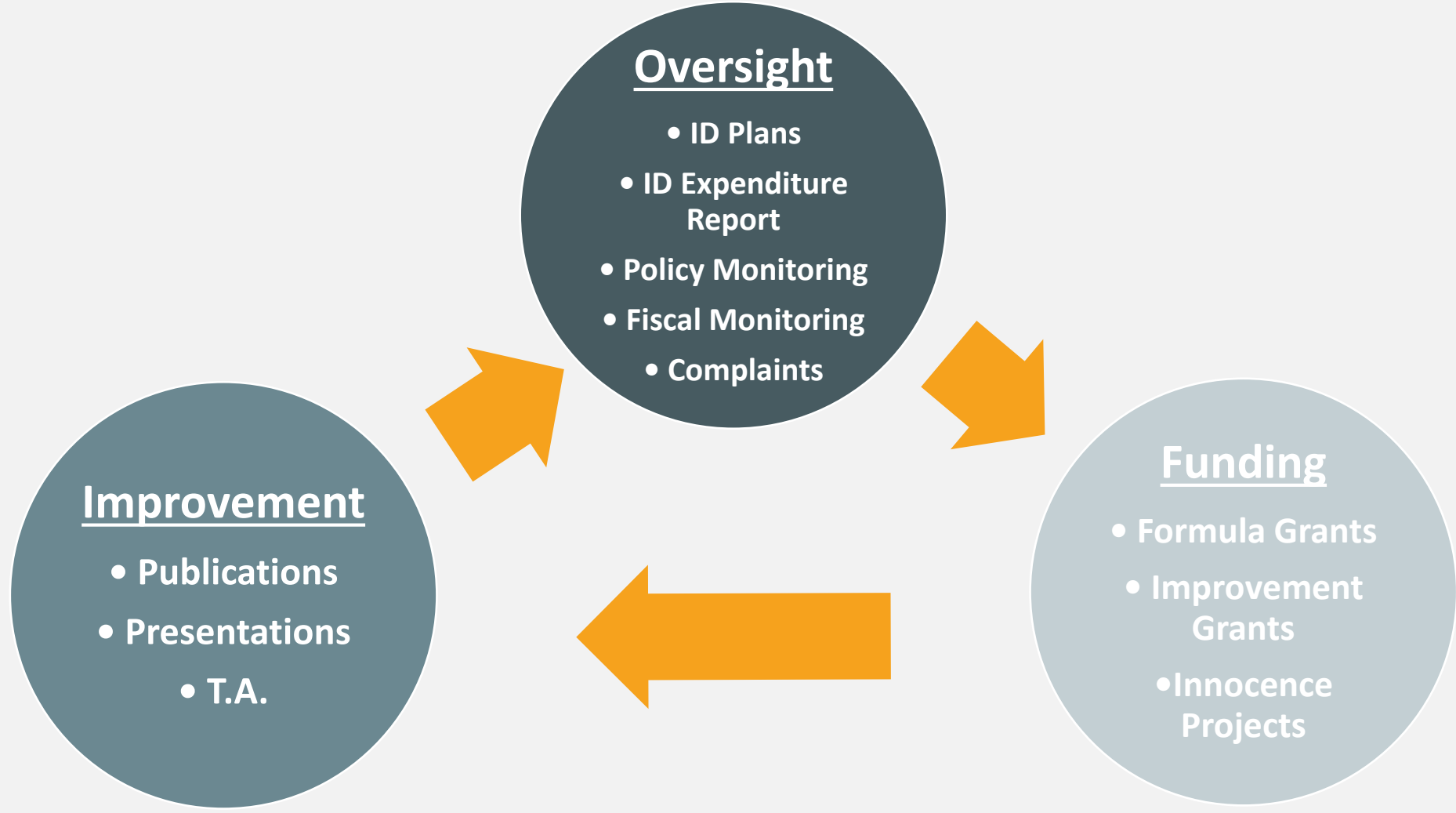
ROADMAP

- Who We Are
- Pt. 1: Prompt Indigency Determinations, Appointment of Counsel, & Pretrial Release
- Pt. 2: Helping Defendants Succeed
- Pt. 3: Improving Defense Representation
- Additional Resources



WHO WE ARE

WHAT TIDC DOES



WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE FEATURES OF A
GOOD INDIGENT DEFENSE SYSTEM?

**SEVEN CORE
REQUIREMENTS
OF THE FAIR
DEFENSE ACT**

1. Prompt and accurate magistration hearings
2. Develop a standard of indigence and process to determine eligibility
3. Timely appointment of counsel
4. Minimum attorney qualifications
5. Fair, neutral, and non-discriminatory attorney selection process
6. Standard attorney fee schedule and payment process
7. State reporting

**PART I: PROMPT INDIGENCY
DETERMINATIONS, APPOINTMENT OF
COUNSEL, & PRETRIAL RELEASE**

**Why are prompt appointment of counsel
and pretrial release so important for a
defendant's case?**

How do your early post-arrest processes work?

How do your processes make sure that indigency determinations and appointments of counsel are made promptly?

What are you doing to make sure the “right” attorney is being appointed?

How do you determine if someone should be released on a personal bond?

About what percentage of defendants are being released on personal bonds?

**PART 2:
HELPING DEFENDANTS SUCCEED**

What is a program or two your county has put in place to help defendants:

- be successful
- show up to court
- address issues they are facing in their lives
- resolve their cases successfully?

Travis County Programs

- House Arrest Program
- Funding for GPS Bond Conditions
- Mental Health Bond Program

Bell County Step-Down Program

- Pretrial determines who qualifies to be on step-down program
- Program goal: reduce pretrial conditions over time
- Pretrial identifies when someone's conditions should be reduced

Bexar Co. Programs

- Jail-based Competency Restoration Program
- Pretrial worked with the MAC to identify attorneys who are proactive in working with MH defendants
- Pretrial training of court-appointed attorneys on the MH process, diversion programs

PART 3
IMPROVING INDIGENT DEFENSE
REPRESENTATION

What is your office doing to improve indigent defense representation?

In Travis and Bexar Co., how are pretrial services and the MAC working together to improve representation?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Indigent Defense Coordinator Meetup



Next meeting: May 21

Discussion on automation tools to aid requests for counsel and defendant complaints.

E-mail: Joel Lieurance jlieurance@tidc.texas.gov to join!

HELPFUL PUBLICATIONS

Indigent Defense Coordinator Guide



[Available at this link.](#)



Primer on Managed Assigned Counsel Programs



September 2017

[Available at this link.](#)

TIDC IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

- Help counties develop new programs or processes to improve indigent defense
- Fund programs like new public defender offices, managed assigned counsel programs, and indigent defense coordinators
- Application Due Date for Priority Consideration: May 10, 2024
- Request for Applications:
<https://tidc.texas.gov/media/ddfhm4ho/fy2025-improvement-grant-rfa.pdf>

**THANK YOU!
CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE**

**Jennifer Armendariz
Bell County
Pretrial Services**

Jennifer.Armendariz@bellcounty.Texas.gov

**Stacy Brown
Travis County
Pretrial Services**

Stacy.brown@traviscountytexas.gov

**Bradley Hargis
Capital Area
Private Defender Service**

Bradley@capds.org

**Jim Bethke
Bexar County
Managed Assigned Counsel**

Jim.Bethke@bexar.org

**Scott Ehlers
Texas Indigent Defense
Commission**

sehlers@tidc.Texas.gov

**Antonio Salazar-Rosas
Bexar County
Pretrial Services**

Antonios.rosas@bexar.org