
Court Managers & Indigent Defense

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Texas

- Court Manager's Role in Right to Counsel
- Level of Objectivity
- Policy Recommendation & Funding Requests
- Procedural Fairness

Court Manager's Role in Right to Counsel

From a report by BJS (<http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/clpdo07.pdf>) in 2007, the majority of states are local level indigent defense (public defender, assigned counsel, contract defender, etc.)

Court management likewise occurs overwhelmingly at a local level

Court Managers are uniquely situated to observe the entirety of the justice process, including right to counsel piece

Level of Objectivity

A system of defense should be independent

In an assigned counsel environment, the Courts may play an active role in appointing counsel

Court Managers can aid in ensuring the appointment business process is fair and objective

Policy Recommendations & Funding Requests

Most jurisdictions have a system or business process set up for a magistrate to find probable cause within a specific time from arrest

Requesting an attorney should likewise be systematized

In assigned counsel environment, court managers can make recommendations for improved access (timelines, standards, compensation, etc.)

Policy Recommendations & Funding Requests

Court managers, as liaison with funding authorities, can provide valuable and quantifiable information about the justice system

Likewise, court managers can recognize how indigent defense processes closely interact with caseflow management practices

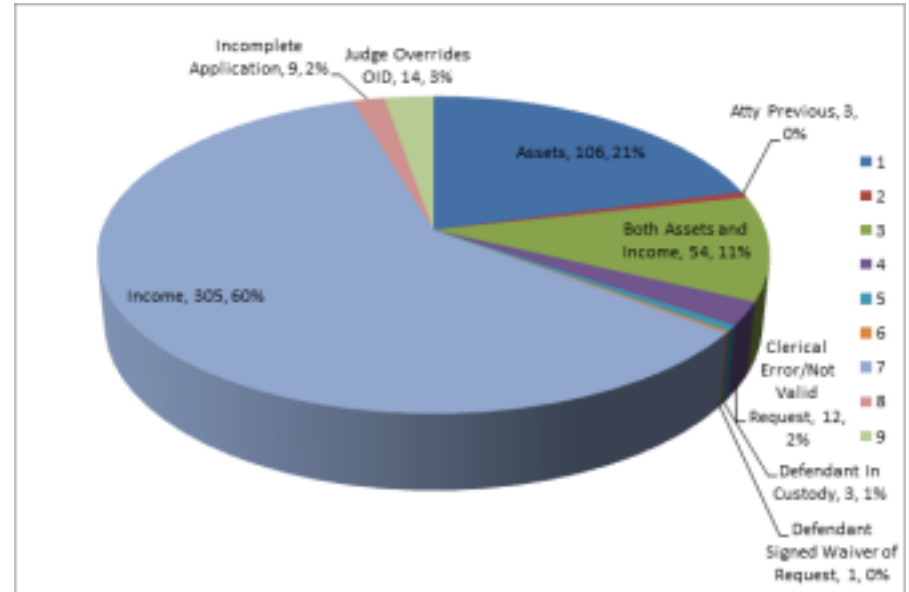
Court managers have a vested interest in monitoring the system

Policy Recommendations & Funding Requests

Using data to measure Indigent Defense is essential

Both process and expenditure

Can drive meaningful discussions



Procedural Fairness

Again, in an assigned counsel system, court managers need to monitor attorney caseloads and quality of representation questions

Ultimately, the overall perception of justice is closely tied to perception of representation

Questions?

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