



RESOLUTION

Date: _____



BE IT REMEMBERED, at an open meeting of the Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense (Task Force), in Austin, Texas, held on the 24th day of August, 2006, the following Resolution was adopted:

WHEREAS, The Task Force on Indigent Defense is charged by the Texas Legislature to assist Texas counties in improving their indigent defense systems and to promote compliance with the Fair Defense Act. Toward that objective, the Task Force, working in conjunction with the Office of Court Administration, applied for and received a research grant from the State Justice Institute in July of 2004. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of direct electronic filing systems with enhanced electronic document management for expediting pre-disposition processing of misdemeanor defendants. The Task Force conducted the evaluation in partnership with the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University; and

WHEREAS, Three major urban Texas counties including Bexar, El Paso, and Harris Counties demonstrated progressivism and leadership by agreeing to serve as study sites. Exemplifying the spirit of public service, these counties opened their criminal case processing systems to the research team. In so doing, they facilitated unrestricted access to individuals knowledgeable about all aspects of each local criminal justice system and freely provided all requested defendant data records. Over the course of the study, representatives of each county showed commitment to criminal justice excellence; and

WHEREAS, Following the completion of the research, the Public Policy Research Institute issued a comprehensive report entitled, "*Evaluating the Impact of Integrated Electronic Systems in Criminal Case Filings: Closing the Paper Trap*;" and

WHEREAS, The report summarizes lessons learned from the diverse experiences of the three participating counties, considers costs and benefits of automated systems as compared to traditional "paper" filing systems, and culminates in a model of direct electronic filing in criminal cases;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense hereby expresses appreciation to the representatives of Bexar, Harris, and El Paso counties for the work involved in assisting with the study and help in improving Texas' criminal justice system overall.

Acknowledgements

The Public Policy Research Institute would like to express sincere appreciation to the county officials and other local stakeholders who made this research possible. From the initial planning meetings through the completion of the final report, each of the counties gave full support to the project.

Specifically, the research team received generous assistance identifying and arranging interviews with individuals knowledgeable about various aspects of local criminal case processing. Furthermore, full access was given to data processing expertise in each county. Programmers worked extensively with the research team to provide all data requested and to explain patterns observed in the data. County partners also devoted considerable time to reviewing drafts of the final report for thoroughness and accuracy. Their frank and earnest cooperation exemplified the true spirit of public service. The information they have shared will help to strengthen and improve criminal case processing systems throughout Texas.

We would specifically like to acknowledge the primary contacts at each site who lent their support to the study and facilitated introductions to other key stakeholders. These individuals were invaluable for helping the research team maximize their time on-site and for ensuring the accuracy of final study findings.

Judge Susan Reed, Bexar County District Attorney
Jim Kopp, Intake Division Chief, Bexar County District Attorney's Office

Jaime Esparza, El Paso County District Attorney
Marcos Lizarraga, First Assistant, El Paso County District Attorney's Office

Bob Wessels, Harris County Court Manager
Marshall Shelsy, Staff Attorney, Harris County Office of Court Management

We would also like to acknowledge the computer programmers at each site who provided downloads of defendant data records. They demonstrated professionalism and extensive knowledge of their local automated records systems over the course of the study.

Thomas Stewart, Supervisor, Bexar County Information Services
Carlos Puga, System Analyst, El Paso County Information Technology Dept.
Cheryl Price, Data Manager, Harris County, Justice Information Management Center

Altogether, over 75 individuals knowledgeable about local criminal case processing systems were interviewed for this study. These professionals deserve our recognition and gratitude for the important service they have provided.