

Amend CSSB 1717 (house committee printing) by adding the following appropriately numbered ARTICLE to the bill and renumbering subsequent ARTICLES and SECTIONS of the bill accordingly:

ARTICLE _____. MANAGED ASSIGNED COUNSEL PROGRAMS

SECTION _____.01. Article 26.04, Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (f-1) to read as follows:

(a) The judges of the county courts, statutory county courts, and district courts trying criminal cases in each county, by local rule, shall adopt and publish written countywide procedures for timely and fairly appointing counsel for an indigent defendant in the county arrested for or charged with a misdemeanor punishable by confinement or a felony. The procedures must be consistent with this article and Articles 1.051, 15.17, 26.05, and 26.052. A court shall appoint an attorney from a public appointment list using a system of rotation, unless the court appoints an attorney under Subsection (f), (f-1), (h), or (i). The court shall appoint attorneys from among the next five names on the appointment list in the order in which the attorneys' names appear on the list, unless the court makes a finding of good cause on the record for appointing an attorney out of order. An attorney who is not appointed in the order in which the attorney's name appears on the list shall remain next in order on the list.

(f-1) In a county in which a managed assigned counsel program is operated in accordance with Article 26.047, the managed assigned counsel program may appoint counsel to represent the defendant in accordance with guidelines established for the program.

SECTION _____.02. Chapter 26, Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended by adding Article 26.047 to read as follows:

Art. 26.047. MANAGED ASSIGNED COUNSEL PROGRAM. (a) In this article:

(1) "Governmental entity" has the meaning assigned by Article 26.044.

(2) "Managed assigned counsel program" or "program" means a program operated with public funds:

(A) by a governmental entity, nonprofit corporation, or bar association under a written agreement with a governmental entity, other than an individual judge or court; and

(B) for the purpose of appointing counsel under Article 26.04 or Section 51.10, Family Code.

(b) The commissioners court of any county, on written approval of a judge of the juvenile court of a county or a county court, statutory county court, or district court trying criminal cases in the county, may appoint a governmental entity, nonprofit corporation, or bar association to operate a managed assigned counsel program. The commissioners courts of two or more counties may enter into a written agreement to jointly appoint and fund a governmental entity, nonprofit corporation, or bar association to operate a managed assigned counsel program. In appointing an entity to operate a managed assigned counsel program under this subsection, the commissioners court shall specify or the commissioners courts shall jointly specify:

(1) the types of cases in which the program may appoint counsel under Article 26.04 or Section 51.10, Family Code, and the courts in which the counsel appointed by the program may be required to appear; and

(2) the term of any agreement establishing a program and how the agreement may be terminated or renewed.

(c) The commissioners court or commissioners courts shall require a written plan of operation from an entity operating a program under this article. The plan of operation must include:

(1) a budget for the program, including salaries;

(2) a description of each personnel position, including the program's director;

(3) the maximum allowable caseload for each attorney appointed by the program;

(4) provisions for training personnel of the program and attorneys appointed under the program;

(5) a description of anticipated overhead costs for the program;

(6) a policy regarding licensed investigators and expert witnesses used by attorneys appointed under the program;

(7) a policy to ensure that appointments are reasonably and impartially allocated among qualified attorneys; and

(8) a policy to ensure that an attorney appointed under the program does not accept appointment in a case that involves a conflict of interest for the attorney that has not been waived by all affected clients.

(d) A program under this article must have a director. Unless the program uses a review committee appointed under Subsection (e), a program under this article must be directed by a person who:

(1) is a member of the State Bar of Texas;
(2) has practiced law for at least three years; and
(3) has substantial experience in the practice of criminal law.

(e) The governmental entity, nonprofit corporation, or bar association appointed under Subsection (b) may appoint a review committee of three or more individuals to appoint attorneys to the program's public appointment list described by Subsection (f). Each member of the committee:

(1) must meet the requirements described by Subsection (d);
(2) may not be employed as a prosecutor; and
(3) may not be included on or apply for inclusion on the public appointment list described by Subsection (f).

(f) The program's public appointment list from which an attorney is appointed must contain the names of qualified attorneys, each of whom:

(1) applies to be included on the list;
(2) meets any applicable requirements specified by the procedure for appointing counsel adopted under Article 26.04(a) and the Task Force on Indigent Defense; and
(3) is approved by the program director or review committee, as applicable.

(g) A court may replace an attorney appointed by the program for the same reasons and in the same manner described by Article 26.04(k).

(h) A managed assigned counsel program is entitled to receive funds for personnel costs and expenses incurred in amounts fixed by the commissioners court and paid out of the appropriate county fund, or jointly fixed by the commissioners courts and proportionately paid out of each appropriate county fund if the program serves more than one county.

(i) A managed assigned counsel program may employ personnel and enter into contracts necessary to perform the program's duties as specified by the commissioners court or commissioners courts under this article.

SECTION _____.03. Article 26.05(c), Code of Criminal Procedure, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Each fee schedule adopted shall state reasonable fixed rates or minimum and maximum hourly rates, taking into consideration reasonable and necessary overhead costs and the availability of qualified attorneys willing to accept the stated rates, and shall provide a form for the appointed counsel to itemize the types of services performed. No payment shall be made under this article until the form for itemizing the services performed is submitted to the judge presiding over the proceedings or, if the county operates a managed assigned counsel program under Article 26.047, the director of the program, and the judge or director, as applicable, approves the payment. If the judge or director disapproves the requested amount of payment, the judge or director shall make written findings stating the amount of payment that the judge or director approves and each reason for approving an amount different from the requested amount. An attorney whose request for payment is disapproved or is not otherwise acted on by the 60th day after the date the request for payment is submitted may appeal the disapproval or failure to act by filing a motion with the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region. On the filing of a motion, the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region shall review the disapproval of payment or failure to act and determine the appropriate amount of payment. In reviewing the disapproval or failure to act, the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region may conduct a hearing. Not later than the 45th day after the date an application for payment of a fee

is submitted under this article, the commissioners court shall pay to the appointed counsel the amount that is approved by the presiding judge of the administrative judicial region and that is in accordance with the fee schedule for that county.

SECTION ____ .04. Section 71.001, Government Code, is amended by adding Subdivision (8-a) to read as follows:

(8-a) "Managed assigned counsel program" has the meaning assigned by Article 26.047, Code of Criminal Procedure.

SECTION ____ .05. Section 71.060(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The Task Force on Indigent Defense shall develop policies and standards for providing legal representation and other defense services to indigent defendants at trial, on appeal, and in postconviction proceedings. The policies and standards may include:

(1) performance standards for counsel appointed to represent indigent defendants;

(2) qualification standards under which attorneys may qualify for appointment to represent indigent defendants, including:

(A) qualifications commensurate with the seriousness of the nature of the proceeding;

(B) qualifications appropriate for representation of mentally ill defendants and noncitizen defendants;

(C) successful completion of relevant continuing legal education programs approved by the council; and

(D) testing and certification standards;

(3) standards for ensuring appropriate appointed caseloads for counsel appointed to represent indigent defendants;

(4) standards for determining whether a person accused of a crime or juvenile offense is indigent;

(5) policies and standards governing the organization and operation of an assigned counsel program;

(6) policies and standards governing the organization and operation of a public defender consistent with recognized national policies and standards;

(7) standards for providing indigent defense services under a contract defender program consistent with recognized national policies and standards;

(8) standards governing the reasonable compensation of counsel appointed to represent indigent defendants;

(9) standards governing the availability and reasonable compensation of providers of indigent defense support services for counsel appointed to represent indigent defendants;

(10) standards governing the operation of a legal clinic or program that provides legal services to indigent defendants and is sponsored by a law school approved by the supreme court;

(11) policies and standards governing the appointment of attorneys to represent children in proceedings under Title 3, Family Code; ~~and~~

(12) policies and standards governing the organization and operation of a managed assigned counsel program consistent with nationally recognized policies and standards; and

(13) other policies and standards for providing indigent defense services as determined by the task force to be appropriate.