

**2020 Fort Bend County Discretionary Grant Application Narrative
(Multi-Year Grant)**

a. Application Form

Counties Represented: **Fort Bend**

Fiscal Year: **2020**

State Payee Identification Number: **746001969**

Division To Administer Grant: **County Auditor**

Program Title: **Immigration Attorney**

Requested Grant Amount: **\$99,207.00**

Financial Officer: **Robert Ed Sturdivant**

Program Director: **Roderick Glass**

Mailing Address: **301 Jackson Street; Richmond, TX 77469**

b. Introduction (Executive Summary)

The Immigration Attorney will write evaluations of non-citizen indigent defendants for both the Public Defender Office and other indigent defendants. The evaluations will take into account the status of the non-citizen, the alleged charge, and the possible immigration consequences of a plea, trial, or acquittal.

c. Problem Statement

The number of non-citizens in Fort Bend County is increasing as our population increases. The non-citizens in Fort Bend County encompass citizens from many countries including Asia, Indian Subcontinent, Africa, and Latin America. It includes DACA, Student Visa Holders, and undocumented immigrants. As the number of non-citizens increases, so does the number non-citizen defendants in our County Jail.

While some Courts inquire whether counsel has consulted with an immigration specialist, others do not. Moreover, many non-citizen defendants who are here on a visa or are DACA recipients often downplay the possible consequences and tell their lawyers that they do not need to speak to an immigration attorney.

Public Defender Immigration Attorney would be available to all indigent defendants. All Courts will know that each attorney representing a non-citizen will have had the opportunity to speak to an immigration attorney and have had an evaluation of the possible consequences of a plea, trial, or acquittal.

The number of evaluations, and number of interviews will be counted. In addition, Immigration Attorney will spend time each week keeping track of any changes to immigration law changes.

Changes in the law requires attorneys to give specific instruction to non-citizen defendants. If not done, it is ineffective assistance of counsel and could result in unknowing pleas or trials on appeal meaning that several cases could be overturned on appeal.

d. Objectives

Objective 1. Attend Immigration Law Update - must be completed within 3 months of employment unless done up 6 months before employment.

Objective 2. Meet with Local Bar Association to train lawyers on the need to consulting with immigration attorney whether or not the non-citizen defendant requests - done within 1 month of employment.

Objective 3. Interview each non-citizen defendant before giving an evaluation in person - to begin within 1 month of employment.

Objective 4. Assist on representation of non-citizen defendants assigned to Public Defender Office - to begin within 1 month of employment.

e. Activities

1. Post position
2. Facilities to do office build out. IT to drop computer lines.
3. Order desk, computer, printer, phone, office divider.
4. Once hired, send to training included legislative update on immigration law. (May meet with Dallas Immigration Attorney).
5. Begin work evaluating non-citizen defendants. Including jail visits when required.
6. Begin sitting second chair on non-citizen cases at Public Defender Office.
7. Meet with Counsel of Judges
9. Meet with Local Bar Association
10. Set up training for Local Bar Association.

f. Evaluation

Measure:

1. Number of evaluations done each month at Public Defender and outside counsel. Separate misdemeanor v. felony.
2. Number of trainings and outside resources gathered.
3. Measure number of days in jail for each non-citizen defendant before evaluation is complete.
4. Will use existing Defender Data to gather the information.

g. Future Funding

Fort Bend County is committed to giving the best representation for indigent defendants within budgetary constraints. The Fort Bend County Public Defender program allows Fort Bend County to provide quality representation for the indigent defendants while allowing Commissioners Court to have some say on budget.

Having started with a grant for indigent Mentally Ill defendants, then a grant for a full Public Defender Program, we have expanded the office beyond the grants in both sections of the office and have now included attorneys at magistration.

An Immigration Attorney is the next step in providing the best representation we can give for indigent defendants.

The Public Defender programs save the county money by disposing of cases quickly or requesting lowered bonds, or personal recognizance bonds thereby reducing jail days.

An immigration attorney does the same. Non-citizen defendants need to know their rights before cases can be disposed, either by plea, trial, acquittal, or dismissal.

h. Budget Narrative and Budget Form

Salary is for an Attorney II

Fringe Benefits includes: Health Insurance, workers comp, employment tax, etc

Travel and Training costs includes CLE, Legislative Updates, Federal Immigration Updates, travel both in state and out of state due to the nature of the federal immigration seminars.

Equipment includes computer, desk, phone, build out for office, printer, desk chair.

Supplies includes paper, pens, printer cartridge, etc.

Contract Services includes Bar Dues, Local Bar Dues, TCDLA dues, CLE program fees, and Defender Data fees.

Personnel Costs		\$115,909.00
FTE's	1.00	
Salary	\$85,483.00	

Fringe Benefits	\$30,426.00	
Travel and Training		\$1,125.00
Equipment		\$5,600.00
Supplies		\$250.00
Contract Services		\$1,125.00
Indirect		
Total		\$124,009.00
Required County Match		\$24,802.00
Total less County Match		\$99,207.00

