



**Collin County
Court Administration**

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To: County Judge and Commissioners Court
From: Judge John Roach, Jr., 296th Judicial District Court
Judge Corinne Mason, County Court-at-Law #1
Date: September 4, 2014
Re: FY14 Indigent Defense Budget

The Indigent Defense account is currently \$64,082.29 negative. While appointed-attorney invoices continue to be paid, interpreter and other service-related invoices need approval for processing. The District Courts and County Courts-at-Law are requesting a budget amendment to fund this account through FY14.

Court-Appointed Attorney line item is negative \$212,903.36, with September payments to date of \$215,722. Average monthly expenditures is \$451,075, so approximately \$235,350 additional is needed to fund this account. The percentage of cases defended with appointed counsel continues to increase annually: felony increased from 46.97% (2012) to 62.38% (2013) - state average 70.35%; misdemeanor increased from 23.90% to 35.05% during the same time period - state average 41.59%. Of Texas' top ten counties, only Denton county pays less per capita in Indigent Defense costs, with Collin County \$2.00 below the state average of \$8.27. Both felony and misdemeanor case fees increased modestly last November with adoption of updated Indigent Defense Plans. The courts continue to attempt to collect legal fee reimbursement from defendants when appropriate, with \$262,522 collected through August.

Psychological Evaluations line item is negative \$20,248.15. The average monthly expenditures for psychological evaluations is \$9,958 with September payments to date of \$5,010, so an additional \$4,900 is required to fund this account. The MHMC program continues to address inmate mental-health concerns, and according to Ms. Ferguson, we are seeing more cases of alzheimers, dementia, TBI, and general mental-health issues, rendering inmates incompetent for trial and in need of treatment.

The Interpreter line item and other expense items remain solvent and should have sufficient funds to complete FY14. Requesting \$304,500 to fund the Indigent Defense account through FY14.

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John R. Roach, Jr.,
Local Administrative Judge, District Courts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Q. Mason", written over a horizontal line.

Corinne Mason,
Local Administrative Judge,
County Court-at-Law Courts