

# INDIGENT COUNSEL IN THE HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT COURTS


A REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY RESTORING JUSTICE AND THE TEXAS CENTER FOR JUSTICE AND EQUITY

THIS REPORT USES DATA FROM HARRIS COUNTY'S NEW INDIGENT DEFENSE DASHBOARD TO SHOW HOW FREQUENTLY EACH OF THE DISTRICT COURT JUDGES UTILIZES THE HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE, WHICH IS CAPABLE OF RECEIVING UP TO 20% OF ALL DISTRICT COURT INDIGENT APPOINTMENTS.

## DISTRICT COURTS BY LOWEST PUBLIC DEFENDER APPOINTMENT RATE

OCTOBER 2021

**#1 JUDGE HAZEL B. JONES**




**0%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

174TH DISTRICT COURT

**#2 JUDGE LORI CHAMBERS GRAY**




**0.61%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

262ND DISTRICT COURT

**#3 JUDGE CHRIS MORTON**



**1.33%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

230TH DISTRICT COURT

<u>RANK</u>	<u>COURT</u>	<u>JUDGE</u>	<u>% OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO</u>
4.	338TH	RAMONA FRANKLIN	1.39%
5.	209TH	BRIAN E WARREN	1.50%
6.	185TH	JASON LUONG	1.78%
7.	176TH	NIKITA V. HARMON	6.54%
8.	180TH	DASEAN JONES	9.30%
9.	482ND	JUDGE PRESIDING	10.23%
10.	RIC	BROCK THOMAS	10.37%
11.	248TH	HILARY UNGER	11.05%
12.	182ND	DANILO LACAYO	11.80%
13.	184TH	ABIGAIL ANASTASIO	13.16%
14.	208TH	GREG GLASS	15.95%
15.	228TH	FRANK AGUILAR	17.56%
16.	337TH	COLLEEN GAIDO	18.01%
17.	263RD	AMY MARTIN	18.92%
18.	179TH	ANA MARTINEZ	19.40%
19.	177TH	ROBERT JOHNSON	20.54%
20.	183RD	CHUCK SILVERMAN	21.69%
21.	178TH	KELLI JOHNSON	22.35%
22.	351ST	NATALIA "NATA" CORNELIO	22.99%
23.	232ND	JOSH HILL	25.56%
24.	339TH	TE'IVA J. BELL	29.55%

**TOTAL PDO APPOINTMENT RATE**

**13.33%**

The 6th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires the appointment of an attorney for anyone facing criminal charges that is unable to afford their own. In Harris County, the judges of the district courts select attorneys for any indigent defendant facing charges in their court.

Despite the establishment of the Harris County Public Defender's Office in 2011, many of Harris County's elected district court judges fail to appoint the Public Defender's Office to capacity, opting to appoint private attorneys to represent indigent defendants instead.

Recent research conducted in Harris County shows that private attorneys receiving appointments are less effective than the Harris County Public Defender's Office in addition to frequently donating to judicial re-election campaigns and exceeding the Texas Indigent Defense Commission's maximum recommended caseload limits.