

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR RIGHT TO A COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEY

HOW DO I ASK FOR A COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEY?

1. You can request the appointment of an attorney at the time you meet with the Magistrate shortly after your arrest. If, at this time, you do not know whether you will be able to hire your own attorney or not, you may wait and make this decision at a later time.
2. If you choose to wait, and it turns out you are unable to hire your own attorney, you can request a court appointed attorney at any subsequent court appearance.
3. If you are unable to make bail, you can ask to see the magistrate or the indigent defense coordinator to request a court appointed attorney at any time while you are in jail.

HOW DO I KNOW WHETHER OR NOT I AM ELIGIBLE FOR A COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEY?

1. You will have to provide the magistrate/indigent defense coordinator or the trial court judge with information pertaining to your financial situation under oath.
2. The trial court judge will make the decision as to your eligibility for a court appointed attorney.
3. Many factors are considered in this decision. In general if you and your family's income falls under the following income ranges you may be eligible for a court appointed attorney.

PERSONS IN FAMILY UNIT	125% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES
1	\$15,075
2	\$20,300
3	\$25,525
4	\$30,750
5	\$35,975
6	\$41,200
7	\$46,425
8	\$51,650
For each additional Person add	\$5,225

4. Other factors, such as savings, bank account balances, investments and the existence of property which you may be able to sale or borrow against may bear on your eligibility for a court appointed attorney. To be eligible for a court appointed attorney, your available liquid assets need to be under \$2,500 for a misdemeanor offense and under \$5,000 for a felony offense.
5. Additionally, you may be entitled to a court appointed attorney if you and your family are currently experiencing extraordinary difficulties such as medical emergencies, divorce, recent job loss or reduction in income or the recent death of a person who contributes to your family's financial needs.
6. If you are released from jail on bail and unable to hire your own attorney, you should bring copies of any documents you believe support your eligibility for a court appointed attorney to court with you. Such documents may include, but are not limited to, payroll stubs, tax returns, and proof that you are receiving public assistance such as food stamps, SSI, etc.

IS THE ATTORNEY FREE?

In some cases you may be required to reimburse the county for the expense of your court appointed attorney.

WILL THE ATTORNEY ASSIST ME ON CASES PENDING IN OTHER COUNTIES?

No, your attorney will only be required to assist you on Class A and Class B misdemeanors and felony charges pending in Williamson County. If you have charges pending against you in other counties, you will have to make a request to those counties for the assistance of counsel on those charges.

DO I HAVE TO HAVE AN ATTORNEY?

Texas law, and local rules established by the County Court at Law Judges, permit you to represent yourself in misdemeanor cases. There are disadvantages and pitfalls to representing yourself. It is always a good idea to consult with an attorney regarding any legal issue which you face. However, with the properly executed waivers you will be allowed to handle your misdemeanor case(s) without the assistance of counsel.

CONTACT THE INDIGENT DEFENSE COORDINATOR AT 512-943-1959 M-F 8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.
OR AT THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY JAIL, MONDAY – FRIDAY, 1:00 P.M. TO 2:00 P.M.