



**HON. RANDY M. CLAPP**

DISTRICT JUDGE

329<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT

HISTORIC WHARTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

100 S. FULTON, SUITE 200

WHARTON, TEXAS 77488

**Cassie Ritter, C.C.M.**  
Court Administrator

**Terri Robason, C.S.R.**  
Court Reporter

Phone: (979) 532-1514

Fax: (979) 532-4752

www.329th.com

July 10, 2023

Mr. Joel Lieurance  
Senior Policy Monitor

**Policy Monitoring Issues:**

**County Response for Finding One:**

**Wharton County Action Plan:**

Magistrates advise all inmates at the time of magistration of their right to counsel. I have spoken with Lieutenant Roddy Rodriguez with the Wharton County Sheriff's Office and he has informed me that at the time of magistration, the magistrate informs the inmate on camera that if the inmate needs help the Wharton County Sheriff's Office will assist them. Inmates are not leaving the holding area until the paperwork is completed. The paperwork is then sent over to the appointing court within 24 hours.

Contact Person: Cassie Ritter

**County Response for Finding Two:**

**Wharton County Action Plan:**

All requests for counsel are being sent over to the appointing court within 24 hours.

Contact Person: Cassie Ritter

**County Response for Finding Three:**

**Wharton County Action Plan:**

All requests received for misdemeanors are ruled upon promptly upon receipt by the Indigent Defense Coordinator. Most of these defendants had bonded out prior to the receipt of the paperwork.

In the past, we were not appointing counsel to those defendants who had bonded out before an indigency ruling was made. We have fixed that error in procedure. The Indigent Defense Coordinator now ignores whether or not the defendant has bonded out. The coordinator indicates a negative indigency ruling on the worksheet and sends a copy to the defendant and the prosecutor, who will have that information when the defendant appears in court. If ruled indigent, counsel is appointed immediately and the coordinator sends a copy of the appointment to the appointed counsel and to the prosecutor. We now appoint counsel to all who are determined to be indigent whether or not they have bonded out.

Contact Person: Cassie Ritter

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cassie Ritter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cassie Ritter,  
Court Administrator  
Indigent Defense Coordinator

cr