



MICHIGAN INDIGENT
DEFENSE COMMISSION

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**Michigan Indigent Defense Commission Submits
First Set of Standards to the Michigan Supreme Court**
The Court's review is an important step forward in public defense reform

LANSING, MI -- The Michigan Indigent Defense Commission (MIDC) announced that it has submitted its initial set of standards to the Michigan Supreme Court (the Court).

“Today marks an important achievement for the MIDC,” said Executive Director Jonathan Sacks. “In less than one year since establishing a formal office, the MIDC has developed this set of standards, met with stakeholders, received public comment and held a public hearing. I look forward to the Court’s approval of this first set of standards.”

The initial standards address some of the major problems Michigan faces in the delivery of adequate indigent defense systems: training and education of counsel, the initial client interview, use of investigation and experts, and counsel at first appearance and other critical stages.

Each standard is based on specific provisions of the Michigan and United States Constitutions or the MIDC’s enacting statute.

The Court has 180 days to approve the standards; the MIDC Act then requires each local indigent criminal defense system to submit a plan to provide services that complies with the standards.

The MIDC will develop standards in the future addressing issues including the following: delivery of indigent defense independent of the judiciary, caseload levels, the assignment of counsel, qualifications and review of counsel, economic incentives and disincentives for the practice of indigent defense, and representation of clients by the same attorney at every court appearance.

The MIDC is housed within the judicial branch of state government. Its members are appointed by the Governor with recommendation of the Legislature, Supreme Court, the State Bar, and representing interests from the criminal justice system.

Please see the MIDC’s website for additional information: www.michiganidc.gov.

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