



MICHIGAN INDIGENT  
DEFENSE COMMISSION

# Strategic Plan

February 2022

# Contents

- 03 // Overview**
- 04 // Mission**
- 05 // Core Values**
- 06 // Vission**
- 07 // Priorities**
- 11 // Commissioners**

---

## **Strategic Planning Committee Members**

Christine Green, Committee Chair  
Joshua Blanchard  
Hon. Jeffrey Collins  
Nathaniel "Hakim" Crampton  
Margaret McAvoy  
William Swor

# Overview

The Michigan Indigent Defense Commission (MIDC) was created by legislation in 2013. The MIDC Act is found at MCL §780.981 et seq.

The MIDC develops and oversees the implementation, enforcement, and modification of minimum standards, rules, and procedures to ensure that criminal defense services are delivered to all indigent adults in this state consistent with the safeguards of the United States Constitution, the Michigan Constitution of 1963, and with the MIDC Act.

The Governor makes appointments to the 18-member commission pursuant to MCL §780.987, and began doing so in 2014. The interests of a diverse group of partners in the criminal legal system are represented by Commissioners appointed on behalf of defense attorneys, judges, prosecutors, lawmakers, the state bar, bar associations advocating for minorities, local units of government, the state budget office, and the general public.

# Mission

**The Michigan Indigent Defense Commission ensures that quality public defense services are accessible to all eligible adults charged with a criminal offense in Michigan.**

---

**To accomplish its mission, the MIDC:**

- ◆ Develops and supports implementation of minimum standards and best practices for indigent defense;
- ◆ Advocates for public and private funding to ensure sustainable, resourced public defense systems that meet MIDC minimum standards and constitutional requirements for effective assistance of counsel;
- ◆ Monitors compliance with minimum standards for indigent defense;
- ◆ Exercises good stewardship of public funds designated to support indigent defense;
- ◆ Collects and analyzes data to assess the impact of the Commission's work and inform its decisions.

# Core Values

**In honoring the legal mandates for quality public defense services and fulfilling its mission, the MIDC is guided by these principles:**

---

- ◆ The presumption of innocence is the highest priority in a constitutionally adequate criminal legal system.
- ◆ The pursuit of equal protection for all persons charged with criminal offenses and the elimination of systemic bias from the criminal legal system are bedrock to the Commission’s mission.
- ◆ Our communities and the broader public welfare are enhanced by a quality public defense system that recognizes the value, dignity, and humanity of all persons charged in criminal court through zealous, client-centered advocacy.
- ◆ Authentic partnerships with local governments is fundamental to the successful implementation of a quality public defense under the MIDC Act.
- ◆ Access to comprehensive and accurate criminal legal system data is necessary and important to inform the Commission’s work.
- ◆ Training and education of defense attorneys and other defense team members is critical to a quality public defense system.
- ◆ Partnerships with other stakeholders in the criminal legal system at the state and local level are critical to the Commission’s fulfillment of its mission.
- ◆ Public funding for indigent defense should be used effectively and efficiently to support quality public defense in Michigan.

# Vision

## Through its contributions, the Commission envisions:

---

- ◆ A sustainable, well-resourced public defense system that honors the dignity of all persons that it serves;
- ◆ Improved trust in the legal process through the provision of quality public defense services;
- ◆ A just and equitable criminal legal system.

# Priorities

## Ensure the effective use of public funds approved and distributed by the MIDC

### Short Term Goals:

1. Identify and communicate best practices and resource sharing.
2. Continue to refine tools to evaluate spending.
3. Create a committee to review unexpended balances.
4. Promote efficiency through the internal review process.

### Long Term Goals:

1. Consider recommendations proposed in the local share study completed in 2020.
2. Develop processes for monitoring or reviewing spending practices in systems.

---

## Act on the MIDC's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion

### Short Term Goals:

1. Develop implicit bias and cultural competency training for staff and the Commission.
2. Follow DEI best practices in hiring and retaining the Commission's staff.
3. Encourage local systems to use best practices in hiring indigent defense service providers.
4. Support local efforts to collect data to help identify disparities.
5. Collaborate with systems to support appointed attorneys in receiving training on implicit bias, cultural competency, and how to litigate issues like racial disparity.

**Long Term Goals:**

1. Regularly review all Commission policies and standards with a DEI lens and assess whether new policies to promote DEI should be adopted.
  2. Communicate with scholars and local groups working on DEI.
  3. Collect data to help identify disparities at various stages of criminal prosecutions.
- 

## **Support compliance with the MIDC's standards**

**Short Term Goals:**

1. Refine and implement a process for dispute resolution between MIDC and local systems to resolve compliance issues.
  2. Set a regular schedule for review of our Grant Manual and other published policies.
  3. Provide technical resources to local funding units in accordance with the statutory directive.
- 

## **Implement all MIDC standards**

**Short Term Goals:**

1. Review and revise as necessary any pending standards previously approved by the MIDC.
2. Work with LARA to secure approval of the pending standards.

**Long Term Goals:**

1. Propose additional standards if necessary and/or not included in MIDC Act.



# Encourage innovation and best practices in public defense systems

## Short Term Goals:

1. Improve communication about best practices.
2. Receive regular updates from staff and systems.

## Long Term Goals:

1. Establish innovation grant opportunities for trial court funding units from public and private sources.
  2. Seek grants designed to support indigent defense initiatives in Michigan.
- 

# Ensure operations and funding are in place to sustain the MIDC's mission over time; explore national and private sources of funding

## Short Term Goals:

1. Review onboarding and orientation for new Commissioners.
2. Establish open communications between staff and Commissioners through Executive Director.
3. Revisit organizational structure periodically as necessary.
4. Respond to collective suggestions and concerns from staff through the Executive Director about policy or system reform issues.
5. Demonstrate MIDC's impact through data collection and performance metrics.
6. Establish an ad hoc committee to make recommendations about data collection.

**Long Term Goals:**

1. Explore a permanent source of state revenue for the MIDC.
  2. Explore potential statutory or contract amendments to collect data to standardize the method of reporting and make the process less burdensome for the local units.
  3. Take a leadership role in ongoing efforts to modernize and standardize indigent criminal defense data collection.
- 

## **Provide leadership in the criminal legal system**

**Short Term Goals:**

1. Identify audiences and leaders whose primary role is to improve public defense services and provide leadership to those stakeholders.
2. Approach our supportive role with flexibility, recognition of ongoing trends, and developments in the criminal legal system.

**Long Term Goals:**

1. Engage with, and prioritize feedback from, justice impacted people.
  2. Encourage collaboration and creativity in the community of defender leaders and facilitate access to resources for leaders.
-

# Commissioners

**Christine A. Green, Ann Arbor**

Chair of the Michigan Indigent  
Defense Commission  
Represents the State  
Budget Office

---

**Joshua Blanchard, Greenville**

Represents the Criminal  
Defense Attorneys of Michigan

---

**Tracey Brame, Grand Rapids**

Represents the Chief Justice of  
the Michigan Supreme Court

---

**Kimberly Buddin, Novi**

Represents those  
whose primary mission or  
purpose is to advocate for  
minority interests

---

**Paul E. Bullock, Evart**

Represents the Senate  
Majority Leader

---

**Nathaniel “Hakim” L. Crampton,  
Jackson**

Represents the general public

---

**Andrew D. DeLeeuw,  
Manchester**

Represents the Michigan  
Association of Counties

---

**Hon. James Fisher (Retired),  
Hastings**

Represents the Michigan  
Judges Association

**Hon. Kristina Robinson  
Garrett, Detroit**

Represents the Michigan  
District Judges Association

**David W. Jones, Detroit**

Represents the State Bar  
of Michigan

**James R. Krizan, Allen Park**

Represents the Michigan  
Municipal League

**Debra Kubitskey, South Lyon**

Represents the Senate  
Majority Leader

**Margaret McAvoy, Owosso**

Represents the Michigan  
Association of Counties

**Tom McMillin, Oakland  
Township**

Represents the Speaker of  
the House of Representatives

**Cami M. Pendell**

Supreme Court Chief Justice  
Designee, ex officio member

**John Shea, Ann Arbor**

Represents the Criminal  
Defense Attorneys of Michigan

**William Swor, Grosse  
Pointe Woods**

Represents the Criminal  
Defense Attorneys of Michigan

---

**Robert VerHeulen, Walker**

Represents the Speaker of the  
House of Representatives

---

**Gary Walker, Marquette**

Represents the Prosecuting  
Attorneys Association of  
Michigan

