

Press Release



Pennsylvania's Indigent Defense Advisory Committee Releases First Biennial Report

Harrisburg, PA — The Indigent Defense Advisory Committee (IDAC) has released its first Biennial Report, marking a significant milestone in the ongoing effort to strengthen and modernize indigent defense services in the Commonwealth.

Established under Act 34 of 2023, IDAC was created to improve the delivery of legal representation for indigent defendants across Pennsylvania and advise the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) on funding to supplement county-level spending. Before the passage of Act 34, Pennsylvania was one of two states that provided neither state funding nor state-level supervision for indigent defense. The Biennial Report outlines the Committee's progress over its first two years, including the development of statewide standards, grant distribution, data collection initiatives, and recommendations for the improvement of indigent defense services.

Key highlights from the report include:

- **\$7.5 million** in appropriations to PCCD for the Indigent Defense Grant Program in each of the last three fiscal years
- **\$12.3 million** in Indigent Defense Grant Program funds awarded to **all 67 counties**
- **37 new attorney and support staff positions** created to expand local capacity
- **14 counties** upgraded or implemented case management systems
- **Two statewide standards** adopted by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to guide effective representation
- **Over 300 stakeholders** engaged through surveys, meetings, and webinars

Contact:

www.pa-interbranchcommission.com
pcfj@pacourts.us
[@pacomforfj](https://www.instagram.com/pacomforfj)

**Pennsylvania
Commission for
Fairness & Justice**

Press Release



Pennsylvania's Indigent Defense Advisory Committee Releases First Biennial Report

"This report is a comprehensive accounting of the tremendous work the IDAC has put into improving indigent over the last two years," said Maraleen Shields, Esq., Co-Chair of the Data Collection, Technology, & Research Subcommittee. "But it's also an unflinching look at the ongoing questions, the work and barriers that remain, and the real need for a commitment across all levels of government to drive this work forward in the coming years."

The report also acknowledges the leadership of the Pennsylvania Commission for Fairness and Justice (PCFJ)—formerly the Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness—which has long been at the forefront of efforts to improve indigent defense in the Commonwealth. PCFJ's advocacy and data-driven approach have helped shape the foundation for statewide reform.

The Biennial Report includes recommendations for improving funding sustainability, enhancing workforce development, and expanding training and data infrastructure. It will be shared with the Governor, the General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, and the public via PCCD's website. The full report can be accessed through this [link](#).

About the Pennsylvania Commission for Fairness & Justice

The Pennsylvania Commission for Fairness & Justice was established in 2005 by the three branches of Pennsylvania government and is dedicated to promoting fairness and justice in the Commonwealth through collaborative policy development, research, advocacy, and community engagement.

Contact:

www.pa-interbranchcommission.com
pcfj@pacourts.us
[@pacomforfj](https://www.instagram.com/pacomforfj)

**Pennsylvania
Commission for
Fairness & Justice**