

MICHIGAN INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 93 of 2013

***** 780.991.amended THIS AMENDED SECTION IS EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 23, 2018 *****

780.991.amended MIDC; establishment of minimum standards, rules, and procedures; principles; application for, and appointment of, indigent criminal defense services; requirements; partially indigent; objective standards.

Sec. 11. (1) The MIDC shall establish minimum standards, rules, and procedures to effectuate the following:

(a) The delivery of indigent criminal defense services must be independent of the judiciary but ensure that the judges of this state are permitted and encouraged to contribute information and advice concerning that delivery of indigent criminal defense services.

(b) If the caseload is sufficiently high, indigent criminal defense services may consist of both an indigent criminal defender office and the active participation of other members of the state bar.

(c) Trial courts shall assure that each criminal defendant is advised of his or her right to counsel. All adults, except those appearing with retained counsel or those who have made an informed waiver of counsel, must be screened for eligibility under this act, and counsel must be assigned as soon as an indigent adult is determined to be eligible for indigent criminal defense services.

(2) The MIDC shall implement minimum standards, rules, and procedures to guarantee the right of indigent defendants to the assistance of counsel as provided under amendment VI of the Constitution of the United States and section 20 of article I of the state constitution of 1963. In establishing minimum standards, rules, and procedures, the MIDC shall adhere to the following principles:

(a) Defense counsel is provided sufficient time and a space where attorney-client confidentiality is safeguarded for meetings with defense counsel's client.

(b) Defense counsel's workload is controlled to permit effective representation. Economic disincentives or incentives that impair defense counsel's ability to provide effective representation must be avoided. The MIDC may develop workload controls to enhance defense counsel's ability to provide effective representation.

(c) Defense counsel's ability, training, and experience match the nature and complexity of the case to which he or she is appointed.

(d) The same defense counsel continuously represents and personally appears at every court appearance throughout the pendency of the case. However, indigent criminal defense systems may exempt ministerial, nonsubstantive tasks, and hearings from this prescription.

(e) Indigent criminal defense systems employ only defense counsel who have attended continuing legal education relevant to counsels' indigent defense clients.

(f) Indigent criminal defense systems systematically review defense counsel at the local level for efficiency and for effective representation according to MIDC standards.

(3) The following requirements apply to the application for, and appointment of, indigent criminal defense services under this act:

(a) A preliminary inquiry regarding, and the determination of, the indigency of any defendant, including a determination regarding whether a defendant is partially indigent, for purposes of this act must be made as determined by the indigent criminal defense system not later than at the defendant's first appearance in court. The determination may be reviewed by the indigent criminal defense system at any other stage of the proceedings. In determining whether a defendant is entitled to the appointment of counsel, the indigent criminal defense system shall consider whether the defendant is indigent and the extent of his or her ability to pay. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, income or funds from employment or any other source, including personal public assistance, to which the defendant is entitled, property owned by the defendant or in which he or she has an economic interest, outstanding obligations, the number and ages of the defendant's dependents, employment and job training history, and his or her level of education. A trial court may play a role in this determination as part of any indigent criminal defense system's compliance plan under the direction and supervision of the supreme court, consistent with section 4 of article VI of the state constitution of 1963. If an indigent criminal defense system determines that a defendant is partially indigent, the indigent criminal defense system shall determine the amount of money the defendant must contribute to his or her defense. An indigent criminal defense system's determination regarding the amount of money a partially indigent defendant must contribute to his or her defense is subject to judicial review. Nothing in this act prevents a court from making a determination of indigency for any purpose consistent with article VI of the state constitution of 1963.

(b) A defendant is considered to be indigent if he or she is unable, without substantial financial hardship to himself or herself or to his or her dependents, to obtain competent, qualified legal representation on his or her own. Substantial financial hardship is rebuttably presumed if the defendant receives personal public assistance, including under the food assistance program, temporary assistance for needy families, Medicaid, or disability insurance, resides in public housing, or earns an income less than 140% of the federal poverty guideline. A defendant is also rebuttably presumed to have a substantial financial hardship if he or she is currently serving a sentence in a correctional institution or is receiving residential treatment in a mental health or substance abuse facility.

(c) A defendant not falling below the presumptive thresholds described in subdivision (b) must be subjected to a more rigorous screening process to determine if his or her particular circumstances, including the seriousness of the charges being faced, his or her monthly expenses, and local private counsel rates would result in a substantial hardship if he or she were required to retain private counsel.

(d) A determination that a defendant is partially indigent may only be made if the indigent criminal defense system determines that a defendant is not fully indigent. An indigent criminal defense system that determines a defendant is not fully indigent but may be partially indigent must utilize the screening process under subdivision (c). The provisions of subdivision (e) apply to a partially indigent defendant.

(e) The MIDC shall promulgate objective standards for indigent criminal defense systems to determine whether a defendant is indigent or partially indigent. These standards must include availability of prompt judicial review, under the direction and supervision of the supreme court, if the indigent criminal defense system is making the determination regarding a defendant's indigency or partial indigency.

(f) The MIDC shall promulgate objective standards for indigent criminal defense systems to determine the amount a partially indigent defendant must contribute to his or her defense. The standards must include availability of prompt judicial review, under the direction and supervision of the supreme court, if the indigent criminal defense system is making the determination regarding how much a partially indigent defendant must contribute to his or her defense.

(g) A defendant is responsible for applying for indigent defense counsel and for establishing his or her indigency and eligibility for appointed counsel under this act. Any oral or written statements made by the defendant in or for use in the criminal proceeding and material to the issue of his or her indigency must be made under oath or an equivalent affirmation.

(4) The MIDC shall establish standards for trainers and organizations conducting training that receive MIDC funds for training and education. The standards established under this subsection must require that the MIDC analyze the quality of the training, and must require that the effectiveness of the training be capable of being measured and validated.

(5) An indigent criminal defense system may include in its compliance plan a request that the MIDC serve as a clearinghouse for experts and investigators. If an indigent criminal defense system makes a request under this subsection, the MIDC may develop and operate a system for determining the need and availability for an expert or investigator in individual cases.

History: 2013, Act 93, Imd. Eff. July 1, 2013;—Am. 2016, Act 439, Imd. Eff. Jan. 4, 2017;—Am. 2018, Act 214, Eff. Dec. 23, 2018.