

DRAFT - MINUTES	
Committee	UTAH INDIGENT DEFENSE COMMISSION
Date, Time	Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, 2 PM – 4 PM
Location	370 E South Temple, Suite 500, Salt Lake City, UT 84111. Also, virtually via Zoom.
Commissioners Present	Chair John Kwarm, Michael Drechsel, Aaron McKnight, Margaret Lindsay, Richard Mauro, Wally Bugden, Pam Vickrey, Kendall Thomas, Paul Dodd
Commissioners Excused	Lorene Kamalu, Tom Ross, Sen. Todd Weiler, Michael Zimmerman, Rep. Stephanie Gricius, Mary Corporon
Staff	Matthew Barraza, executive director; Adam Trupp, assistant director; Debra Nelson, chief appellate attorney; Katriina Adair, grant manager; Zoraya Gappmaier, managing & training attorney; Leslie Howitt, data analyst; Joshua Buhay, financial analyst
Guests	ABC 4 News
Agenda Item	Welcome & Introductions
	Chair Kwarm welcomed attendees, and everyone introduced themselves.
Agenda Item	Approval of Minutes
	Commissioner Margaret Lindsay moved to approve minutes from the Oct. 16 2025, meeting with a few copy edits. Commissioner Wally Bugden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
Agenda Item	Managing Defender Update and Regionalization Initiatives
	Executive Director Matthew Barraza informed the commission that 6 th District Managing Defender JoHanna Williams has accepted a fulltime position and consequently has given notice that she is no longer able to act as a managing defender. She also has a contract as a youth defender that will be vacated. JoHanna's departure opens up opportunities to pursue regionalization initiatives regarding both the managing defender position and the juvenile defender contract(s) in the 6 th district. He then proceeded to discuss the Juvenile Delinquency Defender Regionalization Project.
Agenda Item	6th District Juvenile Delinquency Defender Regionalization Project

	<p>Matthew Barraza explained that one of the Gault Center Report recommendations was to “encourage regionalization of youth defense.” Currently, there are four part-time juvenile delinquency contracts across Sanpete, Sevier, Wayne, and Kane counties, which total about \$150,000 and a caseload of about 150 episodes per year. This could result in a $\frac{3}{4}$ time calendar if they were combined into a single contract. The court calendars in those counties do not conflict with each other and could be handled by one attorney. Therefore, staff is proposing to modify juvenile delinquency grants in Sanpete, Sevier, and Wayne counties to create a single regionalized juvenile delinquency contract. The contract would be funded with existing grant and system funding, and therefore it would be budget neutral. In addition, there would be enough money available for a conflict contract.</p> <p>In response to Commissioner Michael Drechsel’s question, Matt clarified that the single regionalized contract would cover only juvenile delinquency cases. Since it would be a $\frac{3}{4}$ time contract, the contractor could carry an additional caseload as desired. The contract would be solicited by the IDC using a request for proposals (RFP). According to Matt, there are currently two attorneys in Utah County who practice in the 6th district and might be interested in applying for the regionalized contract. Also, it is hoped that one of those attorneys would be interested in taking over JoHanna’s small child welfare and drug court contracts so services would not be disrupted.</p> <p>Commissioner Lindsay commented that the anticipated caseload of the single contract aligns with the Utah County Public Defender Association attorneys’ juvenile delinquency caseloads. Matt added that Sevier County tends to have the most severe charges and the other two counties tend to have lesser charges.</p> <p>Commissioner Richard Mauro moved to modify juvenile delinquency grants in Sanpete, Sevier, and Wayne counties to create a single regionalized juvenile delinquency contract. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously by all present.</p> <p>Following the Juvenile Delinquency Defender Regionalization discussion, Matt moved on to talk about the managing defender regionalization project in more detail.</p>
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Agenda Item	Managing Defender Update and Regionalization Initiatives Continued
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Matthew Barraza reminded the commission that one of the goals of the IDC Strategic Plan is to create full-time managing defender positions when possible. With JoHanna leaving, Sanpete, Sevier, and Wayne counties are without a managing defender. In addition, since Kristine Rogers' contract ended in September of this year, Grand County is temporarily being managed by IDC's Managing and Training Attorney Zoraya Gappmaier.

The Sanpete/Sevier/Wayne managing defender contract annual IDC grant award is \$80,000 and the annual Grand County managing defender contract IDC grant award is \$50,000, for a total of \$130,000.

The staff proposes regionalizing the managing defender contracts for the four counties into one managing defender position and contract, hoping that one of the existing managing defenders in central or southern Utah would be interested in applying for the RFP the IDC would post because they already have a presence in that region and have relationships with local attorneys.

Commissioner Bugden wondered how many attorneys the regionalized managing defender would oversee. Matt responded that there are seven to eleven full-time equivalent positions that are currently handled by no more than 20 different attorneys. Matt acknowledged that the number of attorneys involved might be challenging but a full-time managing defender could handle the workload. Commissioner Lindsay agreed based on her workload as a managing defender. Matt added that there are other full-time managing defenders who oversee a similar number of contract attorneys. Commissioner Mauro concurred with Commissioner Lindsay and Matt. He also pointed out that the structural component of measuring attorneys' performance must be in place to do the job effectively in such a large geographic area.

Commissioner Mauro expressed some concern about the managing defender situation in Grand County due to possible conflicts with the county officials. But Matt and Zoraya reassured the commissioners that Grand County is willing to work with the IDC and a new managing defender to improve their public defense services.

Commissioners also wondered whether officials in Sanpete, Sevier, Wayne, and Grand counties have any reservations about the regionalized managing defender position. Matt said that JoHanna was not aware of any objections from the counties for this arrangement. He further stated that the commission's approval of the motion to "**modify Sanpete, Sevier,**

	<p>Wayne, and Grand County grants to create a regional managing defender position and admin support" for that position would be the first step in the process. However, if any of the counties objected to a regionalized managing defender, IDC staff would bring the matter back to the commission's consideration. The next step after the commission's approval would be to present the proposal to the participating counties' officials and get their buy-in.</p> <p>Commissioner Lindsay suggested that the motion proposed by the staff be classified as a permissive motion rather than an either or motion. Matt concurred with her idea.</p> <p>Commissioner Mauro proposed an alternative motion to "authorize the IDC staff to reach out to Sanpete, Sevier, Wayne, and Grand counties to gauge their desire to have the IDC choose a managing defender, and...compensate a managing defender, and to evaluate whether or not that is a feasible plan that would be accepted by each one of the counties that would be part of the regional project." As a commissioner he would feel more comfortable knowing that the counties are onboard before proceeding with the consolidation.</p> <p>Matt commented that due to the short time left before JoHanna leaves, he would prefer Commissioner Lindsay's approach for a provisional agreement to move forward as quickly as possible. Commissioner Pam Vickrey seconded Commissioner Lindsay's provisional motion. All commissioners present approved the motion.</p> <p>However, afterward it was pointed out that due to Commissioners Kendall Thomas and Paul Dodd leaving the meeting early because of other commitments, there was no quorum present when the vote on Commissioner Lindsay's motion was taken. Matt stated that even without a formal motion, the commission's backing is sufficient for the IDC staff to start outreach to the counties. A formal motion to regionalize the managing defender contracts will be presented at a later date after the participating counties' support has been obtained.</p> <p>Chair Kwarm thanked the commissioners for the productive and robust discussion.</p>
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Agenda Item	Contract Attorney Survey
	Data and Research Analyst Leslie Howitt presented the results of the Contract Attorney Survey she conducted in October 2025. The survey

	<p>covered three main areas: top challenges, interest in full-time employment, and open comments.</p> <p>Forty-one out of the 114 (36%) indigent defense contract attorneys around the state who received the survey responded to it. They represented all specialty areas (adult criminal, juvenile delinquency, and child welfare), except appeals. The most common challenge was low pay (59%). Nearly half of the contract attorneys (49%) have no interest in working as a full-time employee. Open comments included appreciation for recent improvements, gratitude for the work and colleagues, concerns regarding courts and criminal system processes, and defense-specific concerns.</p> <p>Chair Kwarm thanked Leslie for excellent work on the survey and commented that it is good to get feedback from attorneys periodically.</p>
Agenda Item	Public Comment
	None
Agenda Item	Other Business
	None
Next Meeting	December 18, 2025, 2:00 pm.
Adjourn	Commissioner Lindsay moved to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Commissioner Mauro. The motion was approved unanimously by all present, and the meeting was adjourned.