



Operation Lone Star Panel: Attorney Duties & Responsibilities

The Lone Star Defenders Office (“LSDO”) expects the attorneys it appoints will provide high-quality representation in Operation Lone Star (“OLS”) cases. All attorneys on the OLS panel appointment list are independent contractors and not employees of LSDO. Attorneys are selected for the appointment list after submitting an application. Attorneys must ensure that all information on their application is correct and current. Incorrect information may result in denial of placement on or removal from the panel.

To receive appointments in Operation Lone Star cases, you must agree to comply with the standards listed below:

1. I agree to render zealous, client-centered representation.
2. I will represent clients in accordance with the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct and the State Bar of Texas Performance Guidelines for Non-Captial Criminal Defense Representation, and all performance standards articulated by LSDO.
3. I am eligible to practice law in Texas, or have authorization to practice in Texas pursuant to a Supreme Court Order, and understand that I must remain in good standing with the State Bar of Texas or the jurisdiction in which I am licensed.
4. I agree to attend and report a minimum of 8 hours of CLE related to criminal law and procedure annually. I will attend all mandatory OLS trainings hosted by LSDO.
5. Pursuant to TCCP Article 26.04(j)(4), I agree to report to the Texas Indigent Defense Commission by October 15th of each year the percentage of my practice that was dedicated to work based on appointments accepted in a county for adult criminal cases and juvenile delinquency cases for the prior 12 months (October 1st to September 30th). Texas-licensed attorneys must submit the report through the Texas Indigent Defense Commission’s online portal; out-of-state attorneys must submit the report to LSDO.
6. I will maintain an office capable of email, telephone, video-conference and Zoom calls. I will keep LSDO apprised of any changes to my contact information, including physical address.

7. I agree to provide a high level of advocacy. I will file motions and writs when appropriate. I will make objections in court when appropriate. I will promptly ask for discovery. I will file timely notices of appeal or provide information to the attorney handling the appeal to ensure that such timely notice is filed. I will work with LSDO if I need help with any of these things in a particular case.
8. I agree to keep in regular contact with my clients and ensure that they are kept up to date about their case. I will visit my clients within three business days of my appointment, unless extenuating circumstances are present. I will collect contact information for my clients and their families. I will promptly review discovery with my client. I will ensure that my clients are aware of pending court dates.
9. I understand bail and bail forfeiture are pressing issues. I will help my clients navigate the bail process. When appropriate, I will file writs to try to reduce my client's bail. I understand it is my responsibility to help my client avoid bond forfeiture.
10. I understand that I must promptly convey plea offers to my client. In conveying the offer, I will explain it such that the client can understand the pros and cons of the offer, including any potential immigration consequences that will result. If my client chooses to plead guilty, I will attend the guilty plea hearing rather than asking someone to cover for me unless doing so would prejudice the client.
11. I will keep a case list and an orderly file for each of my cases. The case file must include the charging instrument, discovery received from the State, any information concerning defense investigation, and notes reflecting client and other important communications.
12. I will exhibit professionalism with my clients and their families. I will not treat them any differently than a client who has retained me.
13. I will exhibit professionalism with employees from LSDO. I will promptly review and respond to correspondence from LSDO personnel, including contact through emails, phone calls, or texts. I will participate in any meetings that are requested of me by LSDO personnel.
14. I will exhibit professionalism with all prosecutors, judges, and court staff. I will speak respectfully to the judge and court staff. I will dress appropriately for court, even when court is not in-person but online.

15. I will timely appear in court for all my scheduled appearances. If I am unable to appear in court as scheduled, I will try to seek coverage by another attorney and will notify the court and LSDO as soon as possible. If I miss a scheduled court hearing, I will promptly notify the court and LSDO.
16. I understand that I will be paid for legal services performed according to the OLS fee schedule. I will timely file any voucher payment or reimbursement request, and I will be honest in my accounting of my time and expenses. I will contemporaneously enter time on Legal Server.
17. I understand that there is no expectation as to caseload or income that I will receive from LSDO.
18. I will notify LSDO if I encounter an issue that could impact my ability to provide zealous, client-centered representation, including if my caseload for retained and appointed cases exceeds TIDC caseload guidelines. Among other things, I will notify LSDO if I am arrested or convicted of any offense punishable by confinement; if there is a judicial finding that I provided ineffective assistance of counsel; there are any changes with my bar status; or if any state bar takes disciplinary action against me.
19. I will notify LSDO if I intend to stop taking Operation Lone Star appointments. I understand that my ability to withdraw from a specific case will be dependent upon a finding of good cause, and I will continue to provide quality representation until I am relieved from that case. I will work with LSDO personnel in providing case lists and case files as requested to ensure smooth transition of representation.
20. I will continue to represent my client until the case is resolved or until new counsel has been appointed to the case.
21. I understand I am subject to ongoing evaluation and monitoring to ensure that zealous representation is being rendered pursuant to this agreement. I understand that I am subject to periodic review by LSDO to determine my fitness to remain on the panel. I understand they will review me based on the standards set out in this document.
22. I understand that a failure to abide by the duties and responsibilities outlined above may result in LSDO taking corrective action that could entail removal from the appointment list and/or removal from a specific case if warranted by good cause.

I affirm that I have read and understood the above, and I agree to fulfill the articulated expectations.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

State & Bar No.