

## **ABSTRACT**

**THESIS:** *Gideon* in the Hoosier State: The Response to Indigent Defense Standards and the Impact of the Indiana Public Defender Commission

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In an effort to ensure that poor defendants receive the effective assistance of counsel, many states have adopted indigent defense standards for public defender offices. The present study focuses on Indiana public defender offices that participate in the Indiana Public Defender Commission's (IPDC) standards and reimbursement program. This study assesses the extent to which resource needs and workload demands influence participation in the IPDC reimbursement program. Analysis of public defender data from counties across the state shows that counties that opt into the state's reimbursement program have, in general, greater resource needs than those counties that do not pursue state reimbursement. In addition to the comparison of counties that participate in the state's reimbursement program with those that do not, this study also takes a closer look at the attorneys who serve as public defenders in participating counties, assessing the effect that standards seem to have on attorney qualifications, compensation, and workload. This research points the way for future avenues of research that might further evaluate the differences between counties that participate in the IPDC standards and reimbursement program and those that do not.