

**Marla McCowan** is the Director of Training, Outreach and Support with the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission. The MIDC is dedicated to ensuring fair, transparent, accessible and client-centered public defense for all adults charged with crimes in the State of Michigan. Marla works with trial court funding units to facilitate implementation of new continuing legal education requirements for over 2,000 attorneys accepting assigned criminal cases in Michigan. Marla also works with a team of statewide Regional Managers who provide ongoing assistance to court systems to comply with the MIDC's standards for indigent defense.

Prior to joining the MIDC, Marla served as a public defender at the appellate level for over sixteen years at the Michigan State Appellate Defender Office, nearly four of which included overseeing training for indigent defense practitioners around Michigan in her capacity as the Manager of SADO's Criminal Defense Resource Center and Training Director at SADO. While at SADO, Marla represented clients in cases in a variety of stages of appeals and post-conviction proceedings in Michigan and federal courts, including an argument in the United States Supreme Court.

Marla graduated from Eastern Michigan University (B.S. '94) and University of Detroit Mercy School of Law (J.D. '97). She is a Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation, a member of the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, a member of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, a member of the National Association for Public Defense, and a member of the Michigan Women Lawyers Association. Marla was nominated to be part of Michigan Lawyers Weekly's 2018 class of Women in the Law and was voted ["Woman of the Year" by her peers that year](#) and was a recent recipient of the State Bar of Michigan's ["Champion of Justice" award \(Sept 2019\)](#).