

## Introduction

The survey was sent out by the Correctional Management Institute of Texas (CMIT) to listservs for Jail Administrators, Sheriffs, County Auditors, County Judges, and Texas Jail Association members. The first email solicitation was sent out on August 29, with two reminder emails sent on September 5 and 12. Of those 967 individuals, 54 undeliverable notices came back. Of the 913 individuals who received the email solicitation, 433 opened the survey. Of those, 418 opted to participate, producing a final response rate of 45.8%.

This iteration of the TCJS Customer Service Survey had 20 questions, many of which had several parts. The survey was kept anonymous so that respondents felt more comfortable sharing their opinions and thoughts. All the collected data are reviewed in this report; a summary is included for some sections for simplification and recommendations for review. The written responses shared in this report are kept verbatim.

## Participant Demographics

Participants provided two pieces of demographic information: their profession and jail size (if applicable). Respondents' professions included:

<b>Profession</b>	<b>n</b>
Jail Administrator	154
Jailer	76
Sheriff	54
Auditor	43
Judge	35
Member of the Public	4
Other (fill-in-the-blank)	38
<i>Non-specified staff (e.g., Captain, Deputy, Officer)</i>	15
<i>Jail Staff</i>	8
<i>Non-specified administrator (e.g., Case Manager, Admin, Administrative Assistant)</i>	6
<i>Medical Staff</i>	3
<i>Sheriff's Department Staff</i>	3
<i>Consultant</i>	3
Choose to not identify	8

Of the 388 respondents that work in a jail setting, their jail capacity was:

<b>Number of Beds</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 50	100	25.8
50-500	186	47.9
501-999	34	8.8
1000+	68	17.5

## Participant Communication with TCJS

The next two questions asked respondents about their contact (by phone, email, or in-person) with TCJS in 2023. Seventy-eight (19.8%) respondents had no contact, 177 (45.0%) contacted TCJS one to five times, 60 (15.3%) contacted TCJS six to 10 times, and 78 (19.8%) did so more than 10 times. Respondent's communication with TCJS pertained to:

Reason for Contact	n	%
General Information	219	71.1
Inspection/Investigation	185	60.1
Problem Resolution	126	40.9
Technical Assistance	123	39.9
Construction	51	16.6
Other (fill-in-the-blank)	32	10.4
<i>Complaints/Grievances (including the process)</i>	9	
<i>Annual Reports</i>	7	
<i>Audit</i>	4	
<i>Conference</i>	3	
<i>Death in facility</i>	2	
<i>Compliance/TCJS policies</i>	2	
<i>Medical</i>	2	
<i>Inspection</i>	1	
<i>All Others (questions; maintaining a line of communication; bunk bed acquisition; assistance with parole)</i>	4	

## TCJS Office

Participants were asked about their satisfaction with three aspects of TCJS' office. Of those who went to TCJS' office in 2023, 57.3% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the location, and 38.8% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Similar results were found for office signage (52.1% satisfied or extremely satisfied, 44.7% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) and office cleanliness (56.0% satisfied or extremely satisfied, 42.9% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied).

## TCJS Staff Performance

**Summary:** *According to respondents, TCJS staff are very courteous, friendly, and knowledgeable. Wait time for service was considered reasonable whether it was for online or in-person service. A large majority of respondents felt understood by TCJS staff when they communicated with them. A few written comments shared later in the survey should be reviewed by the agency.*

Two questions on the survey asked respondents about TCJS staff performance in general. The first question asked about interactions between respondents and TCJS staff. Over two-thirds (205; 67.7%) were extremely satisfied with TCJS staff's courtesy/friendliness, with 49 (16.2%) somewhat satisfied, 29 (9.6%) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 20 (6.6%) either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

Similar results were found for TCJS staff knowledge (205 (67.7%) were extremely satisfied; 52 (17.2%) were somewhat satisfied; 28 (9.2%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 18 (5.9%) either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied) and TCJS staff identifying themselves by name (207 (70.6%) were extremely satisfied; 40 (13.5%) somewhat satisfied, 40 (13.5%) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 (3.3%) either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied).

The second question pertained to service time, outcome, and satisfaction with the outcome. Of those that needed something from TCJS, 147 (58.3%) were extremely satisfied with TCJS' ability to timely serve them, with 55 (21.8%) somewhat satisfied, 31 (12.3%) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 19 (7.5%) either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

Of the 211 respondents who received in-person service, 102 (48.3%) were extremely satisfied with the wait time 49 (23.2%) were somewhat satisfied, 50 (23.7%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 20 (9.5%) were either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

Almost two-thirds of respondents to this question (141; 58.0%) were extremely satisfied with how TCJS addressed their inquiry/problem, 51 (21.0%) were somewhat satisfied, 35 (14.4%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 16 (6.6%) were either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

Most respondents (139; 56.3%) were extremely satisfied with how they felt understood by TCJS, 52 (21.1%) were somewhat satisfied with how understood they felt, 34 (13.8%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 22 (8.9%) were either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

## TCJS Complaint Filing Process

**Summary:** *Just over half of respondents said they were satisfied with TCJS' complaint process overall as well as with the timeliness of TCJS' response to the complaint. A little over two-thirds of respondents were satisfied with the response they received from TCJS. Written responses shared later in the survey concerning complaints should be considered by the agency.*

The survey asked respondents about their experiences with TCJS' complaint filing process. Of the 168 who filed a complaint in 2023, one-third (56 respondents) were extremely satisfied with the process, 46 (27.4%) were somewhat satisfied, 44 (26.2%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 22 (13.1%) were either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with the complaint filing process.

For respondents that filed a complaint, 64 (39.0%) were extremely satisfied with the timeliness of TCJS' response to the complaint, 43 (26.2%) were somewhat satisfied, 36 (22.0%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 21 (12.8%) were either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

Regarding TCJS' response to their complaint, 69 (41.0%) of participants were extremely satisfied with the response, 39 (23.6%) were somewhat satisfied, 38 (23.0%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 19 (11.5%) were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with TCJS' response.

## TCJS Website

**Summary:** *A large majority of respondents felt that the TCJS website is easy to use, with slightly worse (but still positive) attitudes toward the mobile version of the website. Respondents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the information found on the website and its accuracy. Respondents provided multiple recommendations for the TCJS website that should be considered by the agency (see table below).*

The survey asked respondents about their interactions with and perception of TCJS' website. For those that visited the website in 2023, 135 (47.0%) were extremely satisfied with its ease of use, 99 (34.5%) were somewhat satisfied, 35 (12.2%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 18 (6.3%) were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with how easy it is to use the TCJS website.

Respondents' satisfaction with the mobile version of TCJS' website was relatively similar; 105 (42.5%) were extremely satisfied with it, 70 (28.3%) were somewhat satisfied, 62 (25.1%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 (4.0%) were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

The next three parts of the question asked about information on TCJS' website. Regarding the website's information on the agency's location, 135 (47.0%) were extremely satisfied with it, 99 (34.5%) were somewhat satisfied, 60 (21.7%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and eight (2.9%) were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

Concerning the accessibility of important information on TCJS' website (e.g., a list of services and programs, contact information), 136 (48.2%) were extremely satisfied with what they found, 85 (30.1%) were somewhat satisfied, 49 (17.4%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 12 (4.3%) were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

As for the accuracy of the information on the website, 145 respondents (51.1%) were extremely satisfied with it, 81 (28.5%) were somewhat satisfied, 48 (16.9%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 10 (3.5%) were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

32 respondents provided suggestions for the TCJS website. Their suggestions fell into six broad categories shown in the following table.

<b>Make the Website More User-Friendly (mentioned by 9 respondents)</b>
Organize code sections of jail standards
Better mobile access/useability (dropdowns do not work properly)
Make it easier to find policies
Have a search bar
Make the website font and color more readable
PDFs should meet accessibility compliance standards (make them screen reader-compatible)
Include a TCJS employee list with job responsibilities to ensure you contact the right person

<b>Reports (mentioned by 8 respondents)</b>
Add a link for the portal and a list of monthly reports that need to be submitted
Want to be able to see what forms have already been submitted to TCJS
Want control over the population reports again
More objectivity in how [TCJS] wants things done
Put the former Inmate Count Report back instead of the Excel spreadsheet
The process of listing non-compliant jails is not helpful

<b>TA Memos and Jail Standards (mentioned by 7 respondents)</b>
Organize the code sections for them
Have a keyword search feature
Want to be able to search the memos and standards
They are not easily searchable for specific content
Some accountability information is vague
Change the access to the minimum jail standards from a link to a searchable document
Want to know how risk factors are scored

<b>Information Availability, Clarity, and Accuracy (mentioned by 6 respondents)</b>
Information on the website is very vague
Information on holding facilities accountable is vague
There is a lack of available jail data reports
You can reduce Public Information Requests if reports and data are archived on the website
Would like to see the number of founded/unfounded inmate complaints filed by the jail
Would like the ability to watch TCJS Commission meetings on the website

<b>Make Timely Updates to the Website (mentioned by 3 respondents)</b>
Update the website in a timely manner

<b>More Training Opportunities (mentioned by 2 respondents)</b>
Would like the availability of training opportunities to be more visible

## **TCJS' Printed Information**

One survey question asked respondents about their satisfaction with TCJS' printed information offerings. Of those that looked at TCJS' brochures, 66 of the 159 respondents (41.5%) were extremely satisfied with them, 39 (24.5%) were somewhat satisfied, 52 (32.7%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and two (1.3%) were somewhat dissatisfied.

As for TCJS' other printed information, 81 of the 186 respondents (43.5%) were extremely satisfied with it, 51 (24.7%) were somewhat satisfied, 50 (26.9%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and four (2.2%) were somewhat dissatisfied.

## **TCJS Communications**

The survey asked respondents about the timeliness of TCJS' communications to agencies (e.g., inspection reports, certificates, etc.). For those that received communication from TCJS in 2023, 156 (47.3%) strongly agreed they received these communications in a timely manner, 99 (30.0%) agreed, 41 (12.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed, six (3.6%) disagreed, and five (1.5%) strongly disagreed.

Regarding their satisfaction with the information they received from TCJS, 151 respondents (45.8%) strongly agreed they were satisfied, 101 (30.6%) agreed, 41 (12.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed, six (1.8%) disagreed, and eight (2.4%) strongly disagreed.

## **TCJS Facility Needs Analysis**

The survey asked respondents if they were aware that TCJS offers Facility Needs Analysis at no cost to counties. Nearly three-quarters (240; 72.9%) of respondents were aware.

## **TCJS Assistance with Construction Plans**

Roughly 20% (67) of respondents asked TCJS for help with their construction plans in 2023. Of those, 30 (44.8%) strongly agreed that the Facility Needs Analysis was helpful with their construction plans, while 20 (29.9%) agreed, 14 (20.9%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and three (4.5%) disagreed.

## TCJS Training

Four survey questions examined respondents' knowledge and opinions of TCJS' training offerings. Nearly 80% (263) of survey-takers knew that TCJS offers training opportunities. Of those, a little over 25% (67) received any form of training from TCJS in 2023. The chart below details the type of training those respondents received.

Type of Training	n
TJA Conference	28
Conference	8
Jail Mental Health Officer Training (JMHO) (TCOLE 5900)	7
Sheriff's Conference	5
Suicide Detection & Prevention Training (TCOLE 4901)	4
Jail Administration and Operations Training (JAMO)	3
Jail Management Issues Conference (JMI)	3
Intellectual and Developmental Disability Training (IDD) (TCOLE 2831)	3
Online	2
All other responses: (TEEX training; basic CO course; Classification; Certs; Jail School; Hot Topics; Presentation on Inspection; New Supervisors; TCJS Updates; Yes; Asked for training by calling but got no response)	12

Respondents gave suggestions for future training opportunities, which fell into seven categories:

<b>Regional Training Requests (mentioned by 5 respondents)</b>
<i>Panhandle and South Plains</i>
<i>Local jail school</i>
<i>(Respondent offered their agency's space if needed)</i>
<b>More communication/advertisement for TCJS offers (mentioned by 4 respondents)</b>
<b>Request more training offerings in general (mentioned by 3 respondents)</b>
<b>Leadership/Operations and Inspection Process training for Jail Administrators (mentioned by 5 respondents)</b>
<i>Something like the New Training Coordinator course on TCOLE</i>
<i>TCJS offering this is important for agencies that cannot afford to contract it out</i>
<b>Mental Health Training for Jailers (mentioned by 2 respondents)</b>
<b>Ask TCJS to improve their training offerings/capabilities (mentioned by 2 respondents)</b>
<b>Specific training topics (mentioned by 6 respondents)</b>
<i>Report and incident writing</i>
<i>Nursing/medical</i>
<i>Classification</i>
<i>How to combat frivolous complaints</i>
<i>K9 in jail facilities</i>
<i>Case law</i>
<i>In-class academy for COs besides TEEX</i>
<i>Auditing</i>
<i>Financial reporting</i>



### **TCJS' Handling of Inmate Complaints**

The survey asked respondents if they felt that TCJS investigates inmate complaints in a timely manner. Of the 289 respondents, 103 (35.6%) strongly agreed that TCJS does so, 108 (37.4%) agreed, 55 (19.0%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 13 (4.5%) disagreed, and 10 (3.5%) strongly disagreed.

As for the fairness of the investigations, 114 (39.4%) strongly agreed that TCJS investigates inmate complaints fairly, 108 (37.4%) agreed, 47 (16.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and seven (2.4%) strongly disagreed.

### **TCJS Jail Staffing Assistance**

The survey asked two questions about the jail staffing assistance TCJS offers. Twenty-five (7.7%) respondents requested TCJS' assistance with jail staffing in 2023. Of those, eight (32.0%) strongly agreed that TCJS helped them to make better jail staffing decisions, 7 (28.0%) agreed, 8 (32.0%) neither agreed nor disagreed, one (4.0%) disagreed, and one (4.0%) strongly disagreed.

### **Monthly Population Reports**

Participants were asked if monthly population reports are reasonably easy to compile. Of the 284 respondents whose agency submits them, 75 (26.4%) strongly agreed they are reasonably easy to compile, 126 (44.0%) agreed, 63 (22.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 14 (4.9%) disagreed, and six (2.1%) strongly disagreed.

### **Public Information Requests**

Four respondents indicated they filed a Public Information Request (PIR) with TCJS in 2023. All four said they strongly agreed that TCJS responded to their PIR within the required statutory deadline and responded fully and accurately to it following the requirements and limits of the Public Information Act and other Texas laws.

## Jail Non-Compliance

**Summary:** *A large majority of respondents from a jail that had been found noncompliant some time in 2022-2023 agreed that TCJS was helpful in working with them and that TCJS treats non-compliant jails fairly. A few suggestions were shared about how TCJS could better serve non-compliant jails.*

The survey asked respondents about their jail's compliance over the past two years (2022-2023). One-third (102) indicated their jail was found non-compliant (decertified) at some point during those two years, 174 (57.4%) indicated their jail remained compliant, and 27 (8.9%) were unsure.

Respondents who indicated their jail had been found non-compliant were then asked three follow-up questions. Fifty-nine (57.8%) respondents strongly agreed that TCJS was helpful in working with their non-compliant jail, 29 (28.4%) agreed, 12 (11.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and two (2.0%) disagreed.

Respondents felt similarly about whether TCJS treats non-compliant jails fairly; 59 (57.8%) strongly agreed, 27 (26.5%) agreed, 13 (12.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed, two (2.0%) disagreed, and one (1.0%) strongly disagreed.

Four of the 102 respondents had suggestions for how TCJS could better serve non-compliant jails:

Put pressure on county commissioners' courts to approve larger facilities to meet needs
Do exactly what you did to help my facility get back on track
Provide a better walkthrough of procedures expected when [a jail] is found non-compliant due to an incident or death in custody
The inspector spent over 3 hours going through paperwork until he found a 3-minute late inspection of a jail cell. Be realistic!

## Overall Satisfaction and Feedback/Suggestions

*Note: Many of the recommendations shared by respondents should be considered by the agency.*

The survey asked about overall satisfaction with TCJS. Of the 335 respondents who answered, 180 (53.7%) were extremely satisfied with TCJS overall, 85 (25.4%) were somewhat satisfied, 53 (15.8%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 12 (3.6%) were somewhat dissatisfied, and five (1.5%) were extremely dissatisfied.

Thirty respondents offered suggestions/feedback about how TCJS can better serve them. Their responses fell into the six themes shown below, with further details provided about each:

<b>Better communication from TCJS (mentioned by 3 respondents)</b>
Communicate better with jails and the governing body they service
Reach out/check in more to learn needs rather than just seeing them at inspection time

<b>Want to be able to see the forms that have been submitted (mentioned by 2 respondents)</b>
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<b>Complaints and complaint inspectors (mentioned by 15 respondents)</b>
Better complaint communication
Complaint inspectors are unprofessional
Complaint emails appear in spam and need to be more officially identified to avoid this
Do not like the drop box for complaints, especially if the inmate has not followed the grievance process
It is frustrating to receive a complaint at an inconvenient time that needs immediate response
Want TCJS complaint investigators to identify the complaint and figure it out rather than immediately passing it on to jails (want more vetting)
Since I have 10 days to respond to a filed complaint, I would like to know the outcome in a timely manner too
Provide inmates and jails with written responses to complaints
Want more reporting time to respond to inmate complaints
TCJS should develop clear, detailed procedures
Be more concerned with law enforcement than coddling inmates

<b>Inspections (mentioned by 7 respondents)</b>
Bring back annual inspections
More recommendations for questions that inspectors often see
Inspectors should be more knowledgeable at their jobs and the standards they enforce
Inspectors should share more information about other facilities to ensure everyone's success
Inspectors and TCJS feel very judgmental and punitive
Inspectors need to communicate better in writing (by phone works but we cannot reference it later)
Our jail inspector has always been available and communicative

<b>Jail Standards (mentioned by 4 respondents)</b>
Explore changes to jail standards and do so proactively, remove the vagueness in them
TCJS discourages quality plans to exceed minimum standards
Should have more standards since all jails are built differently
TCJS has informal staff guidelines
Want jail deficiencies tied to a standard

<b>Positive comments about TCJS (mentioned by 2 respondents)</b>
TCJS staff are professional and diligent in their duties and are fair and understanding

The second question at the end of the survey asked for any other feedback or suggestions for TCJS to improve how it operates and serves agencies and their staff. Twenty-two respondents had additional suggestions/feedback, which fell into three broad categories.

<b>Inmate Complaints (mentioned by 7 respondents)</b>
Notify jails of resolution/findings of complaints is finished, whether unfounded or founded
Some complaints are not in TCJS' purview but still get sent to your office
The inspector should highlight the areas of the complaint they are worried about, it would greatly speed up the process and be less work for everyone
The process takes too long, with months in between each step: the complaint filed, TCJS reviews it, and then TCJS requests additional information
Sometimes the answering documentation sent by the agency has been somehow lost by the inspector and must be redone
Hire complaint inspectors with county jail experience rather than TDCJ experience
Chris Keith (a complaint inspector) is unprofessional and rude [mentioned by 2 respondents]

<b>Reports and Paperwork (mentioned by 6 respondents)</b>
Should not have to do the paper-ready report submission 2 times, the state should help
The paper-ready and ICE Detainer Report spreadsheets are awkward to fill out
Make reports easier to compile
Revert the population reports back
No differing months on the monthly population paperwork
Move the monthly reporting online rather than have it on paper and require a fax
Don't ask people to go back and change something that has been submitted and already accepted by TCJS because you decide it needs to be done differently

<b>TCJS Operations (mentioned by 8 respondents)</b>
Want more consistency from TCJS
Have more knowledgeable/experienced employees
Embrace a teamwork mentality rather than being judgmental; be more helpful and realistic
You are getting better, keep improving
TCJS needs to research the effectiveness of the current classification methods and ideas; mental health and societal changes have impacted their effectiveness