Texas Commission on Jail Standards

Workforce Plan
FY 2027-2031

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Agency Overview

The Texas Legislature created the Commission on Jail Standards in 1975 to implement a declared state policy that all county jail facilities conform to minimum standards of construction, maintenance, and operation. In 1983, the Texas Legislature expanded the jurisdiction of the commission to include county and municipal jails operated under vendor contract. In 1991, the Texas Legislature added the requirement for count, payment, and transfer of inmates when precipitated by crowded conditions as well as expanding the commission's role of consultation and technical assistance. In 1993, the legislative function expanded the role of the commission again by requiring that it provide consultation and technical assistance for the State Jail program. In 1997, the Texas legislature affirmed that counties, municipalities and private vendors housing out-of-state inmates are within the commission's jurisdiction. It is the duty of the commission to promulgate reasonable written rules and procedures establishing minimum standards, inspection procedures, enforcement policies and technical assistance for:

1. **The construction, equipment, maintenance, and operation of jail facilities under its jurisdiction;**
2. **The custody, care and treatment of inmates;**
3. **Programs of rehabilitation, education, and recreation for inmates confined in county and municipal jail facilities under its jurisdiction.**

The Commission's office is in downtown Austin, Texas, and there are currently 26 FTE's and 28 are appropriated and budgeted. One new inspector is scheduled to begin in June and a support specialist shortly afterwards.

Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards is to empower local government to provide safe, secure and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas. During its regular session of 1975, the 64th Legislature enacted House Bill 272 creating the Texas Commission on Jail Standards in an effort to end federal court intervention into county jail matters and return jail control to state and local jurisdictions. Formerly through Title 81 of the Civil Statutes and currently through Chapters 499 and 511 of the Government Code, the state has evinced a strong commitment to improving conditions in the jails by granting us the authority and responsibility to promulgate and enforce minimum standards for jail construction, equipment, maintenance, and operation. Related duties and rules are set forth in Chapters 351 and 361 of the Local Government Code, Title 37 of the Administrative Code, and our own Minimum Jail Standards.

Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Related Functions

Goal 1 - Inspection and Enforcement: Develop and implement a uniform process to inspect, monitor compliance and ensure due process in enforcement of standards for local jails.

Objective: Monitor local facilities and enforce standards Strategy: Perform inspection of facilities and enforce standards

Goal 2 - Construction Plan Review: Develop and implement a comprehensive facility needs analysis program and review and comment on construction documents for construction projects.
Objective: Provide consultation and training for jail construction/operation. Strategy: Assist with facility need analysis and construction document review.

Goal 3 - Management Consultation: Review and approve jail operation plans, provide needed jail management training and consultation and perform objective jail staffing analyses.
Objective: Provide consultation and training for jail construction/operation Strategy: Assist with staffing analysis, operating plans and program development.

Goal 4 - Auditing Population and Costs: Collect, analyze and disseminate data concerning inmate population, felony backlog and jail operational costs.
Objective: Implement process to relieve crowding or ensure accurate compensation Strategy: Collect and analyze data concerning inmate population, backlogs and costs.

Through Chapters 499 and 511 of the *Government Code*, the Commission on Jail Standards is given the authority and responsibility to promulgate and enforce minimum standards for jail construction, equipment, maintenance, and operations. Texas Minimum Jail Standards are contained in Title 37, Part IX, and Chapters 251 – 301 of the Texas Administrative Code. Related duties and rules are set forth in Chapters 351 and 361 of the *Local Government Code*.

Most of our activities are oriented toward county functions; however, we retain the responsibility to regulate privately operated county and municipal facilities. Our principal operations include on-site inspections of jails to verify compliance with standards, review of proposed construction and renovation plans to assess conformity to standards, provision of jail management technical assistance and training, administration of inmate population reports and audits, resolution of inmate grievances, providing counties with objective staffing and facility needs analyses, and various other activities relating to policy development and enforcement.

Primary relationships exist with county judges, commissioners, and sheriffs. Secondary relationships are maintained with architectural firms, private operators, criminal justice professional associations and regulatory agencies concerned with issues such as fire safety, legal matters, and civil liberties. Jail inmates awaiting trial, serving sentences, or awaiting transfer to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Institutional Division, jail staff and the public are served by the enforcement of standards that are based on safety, security, and sanitation.

While on-site inspections remain the most visible activity, awareness of our ability to provide technical assistance has increased due mostly to a strong effort to provide quality regional training and a greater emphasis on providing assistance by all staff, including the Inspectors.

Administrative staff provide internal administrative support to the agency, including human resources, accounting, budgeting, information technology, reporting and other staff services functions.

Anticipated Changes in Strategies

Although the mission of the agency remains unchanged, the implementation of HB 1545 (87R) has required adjustments to several strategies and goals to comply with its requirements. Now three years into the risk-based inspection model, the agency has observed a notable increase in the number of non-compliant county jails, a trend tied both to the nature of risk-based inspections and to broader operational challenges affecting the jail system statewide.

The continued growth of the state's population, coupled with inflationary pressures, has strained county resources and contributed to rising noncompliance. Additionally, the number of inmate complaints continues to increase, and with expanded staffing to process those complaints, the agency anticipates a corresponding rise in the number of founded complaints, further reflecting compliance concerns.

Compounding these issues, county jails are facing significant workforce shortages, as many potential employees are reluctant to pursue careers in corrections at the salary levels offered by most counties. While court activity has recently increased, the intake rate into the state prison system has slowed, placing additional population pressures on local jails.

While the Commission does not foresee major changes to its overall mission or core strategies, adjustments to specific goals will likely be necessary over the next five years as the risk-based inspection process continues to mature. The agency remains committed to providing high-quality service, guidance, and oversight to county jails to support safe, healthy, and secure detention environments. As conditions evolve, the Commission will continue refining its strategies to uphold these goals.

Finally, the increasing emphasis on information technology and data-driven oversight will continue to shape the agency's future. Despite being a small agency, a committed and professional workforce will remain essential to keeping the Commission aligned with its mission and responsive to the operational realities faced by Texas county jails.

Current Workforce Profile

a) Skills

Every Commission employee is valuable to the success of agency operations. A majority of the 28 employees have more than one critical function. Some of the critical skills required to complete our mission include customer service, auditing, communication, problem solving, accounting, project management, and information analysis.

b) Demographics

The following data reflect the current profile of the agency's workforce as of May 2026. As of May 2026, the Commission's workforce is comprised of 46% male and 54% female. 7% are African American, 8% are Hispanic and 85% are Caucasian. The agency has over 23% of veterans employed. The average age for the Agency staff is approximately 47 and staff have an average of 5 years with the agency. The Agency's positions are as follows:

Occupational Category	Headcount
Accounting, Auditing, and Finance	1
Administrative Support	3
Information Technology	1
Inspectors and Investigators	10
Planning, Research, and Statistics	1
Program Management	12

(Source: Internal data and State Auditor's Office/E-Class system)

c) Employee Turnover

In FY 2025, there were zero separations from the agency including interagency transfers. The longest tenured employee has been with the agency for 9 years. 65% of staff members have been with the agency for less than 5 years.

d) Employee Attrition

No members of the Agency's employees will be eligible to retire within the next 5 years.

Future Workforce

e) Expected Workforce Changes

The Commission's average salary is $59,749 (excluding the Executive Director's salary), which is slightly below the statewide median salary , reported by the Texas Tribune, of $61,225.00. While the difference is modest, it places the agency at a competitive disadvantage in the current labor market.

The statewide workforce environment remains highly strained, with several major Texas agencies pursuing significant salary increases to address persistent staffing shortages. These conditions, coupled with rising cost-of-living expenses and a limited applicant pool in the Austin area, continue to challenge TCJS in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel.

Without targeted salary adjustments, the agency may face continued turnover and the gradual loss of institutional knowledge. Strategic investment in compensation will be critical to maintaining a stable, experienced workforce and sustaining the agency's operational effectiveness.

f) Future Workforce Skills Needed

Communication and interpersonal skills will continue to be critical, as the agency staff have daily contact with the public and with county officials. Computer skills are also vital, as the agency continues to upgrade information resources, dependent on available funding.

g) Number of Employees Needed

Currently the agency has two vacancies. After the Sunset Review that resulted in HB1545, the agency undertook a review of how its FTEs were allocated. After the study, several FTEs were repurposed to meet the most urgent demands. The largest shift has occurred in the Inspection & Enforcement Strategy, which has been increased, specifically in the area of Complaint Investigations. Prior to HB1545, there was one FTE assigned, but the workload became untenable and was a major contributing factor to continuous turnover. This in turn led to an increased backlog as the agency would temporarily assign other staff until the position could be filled. Even after the position was filled, it is estimated that it required at a minimum six months to become proficient in this task. The decision to reassign FTEs was only possible due to the conclusion of a statutorily mandated training program. Two of the three FTEs assigned to that program were shifted to complaints, but the workload has only continued to increase. To operate at a level that is acceptable to complainants and counties (who are required to respond then await a ruling), a fourth Inspector, a dedicated administrative support FTE and a first level supervisor were added to the division. In the upcoming LAR, the agency will request funding to restore and fill an FTE position that has remained vacant since 2022 due to budget constraints. TCJS was required to fill this position during the 2025–2026 budget year in order to comply with audit findings issued by the State Auditor's Office for the Complaints Division, placing a significant and unanticipated strain on the agency's budget

In addition to the complaints increase, the agency has moved to a risk-based inspection program which was envisioned to reduce the workload of the field inspectors and eliminate the attrition we have experienced in that section. While retention has improved, the requirement to conduct a random percentage of all re-inspections as full, comprehensive inspections as mandated by HB1545 has reduced the envisioned efficiency. Management is continuing to review this conflict and has implemented changes to address this concern.

The agency was named by the Governor to the Border Security Task Force. Previously, the additional duties associated with advising and assisting with Operation Lone Star were undertaken by the Executive Director and two existing staff members. After HB9 87(2) was passed, the monies that the agency was appropriated were used to backfill the cost of any time that existing employees expended on Operation Lone Star rather than attempting to recruit and retain one FTE that possessed all the required skills. During the

88th legislative session sufficient funding was provided to employ sufficient staff and accomplish the required tasks.

h) Critical Functions that must be performed

The performance of all agency functions is critical to achieving the agency's goals and objectives which are directly tied to statutorily mandated duties. The agency is not carrying out any function that is not directly related to our reason for being.

Gap Analysis

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Staffing Levels or Skills:

The Texas Commission on Jail Standards continues to benefit from a dedicated and highly skilled workforce; however, statewide labor market pressures present ongoing challenges. Competition from other public agencies and private employers combined with rising cost-of-living demands in the Austin area makes attracting qualified candidates increasingly difficult. While the agency's flexible work and telecommuting options have significantly improved retention, current hiring restrictions prevent TCJS from advertising these benefits, limiting their effectiveness in recruitment.
Recent retirements and transitions to county positions reflect the strong skill sets of TCJS staff and the demand for their experience. As a smaller agency, this turnover impacts institutional knowledge and increases the need for competitive salaries and expanded flexibility to maintain a stable talent pipeline. Continued investment in employee retention, targeted benefits, and professional development will be essential to sustaining the agency's capacity to fulfill its mission and statutory responsibilities.

Strategy Development

a) Retention Programs

Historically, the agency has supported its employees through merit increases and retention bonus programs awarded to those performing above satisfactory levels. The agency remains committed to promoting from within and fostering a flexible work environment that supports productivity and reduces the financial and logistical burden of long-distance commuting. To that end, an alternate work schedule and telecommuting opportunities have been implemented for all employees, which has strengthened retention and supported a positive work culture.
While these measures have been effective in retaining valuable personnel, it is uncertain whether the agency will be able to utilize retention bonuses this year due to the financial impact of filling the required FTE position that had remained vacant since 2022.

b) Recruitment Plans

The agency maintains a comprehensive and multi-faceted recruitment strategy designed to attract a diverse and highly qualified applicant pool capable of supporting the agency's mission and operational needs. Recruitment efforts are conducted on an ongoing basis and are aligned with workforce planning objectives, anticipated vacancies, and evolving programmatic requirements.

To maximize visibility and outreach, the agency advertises employment opportunities through multiple platforms, including WorkInTexas and the Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS). When appropriate, supplemental outreach is conducted through additional platforms such as Indeed to broaden the applicant pool and reach candidates beyond traditional state employment channels.

In addition to online job postings, the agency leverages established professional networks within the corrections field by distributing vacancy announcements through three listservs associated with sheriff's offices and corrections professionals. This targeted approach ensures that recruitment efforts reach experienced practitioners and individuals with specialized knowledge relevant to jail operations, compliance, and regulatory oversight.

The agency continually evaluates the effectiveness of its recruitment methods and makes adjustments as needed to ensure access to a sufficient number of qualified applicants. These efforts may include refining job postings, expanding outreach channels, and coordinating with partner organizations to enhance candidate engagement.

To the fullest extent possible, the agency is committed to recruiting the number of qualified individuals necessary to carry out its mission without regard to ethnicity, disability, religion, or gender. Recruitment practices are conducted in a manner that promotes fairness, accessibility, and equal employment opportunity, ensuring that all applicants are afforded consideration based on merit and qualifications.

c) Employee Training and Career Development

The agency provides specific subject and organizational training. This includes equal employment opportunity, sexual harassment, cybersecurity, and procedural training. The transition to CAPPS HR allows the agency to track employee training more effectively. The agency utilizes cross training to enhance the knowledge and skill levels of all employees and prepare for retirements and attrition. The agency provides for the cost of training when in the best interest of the agency, and where funding permits. The agency transitioned September 1, 2019 to CAPPS Financials as part of the statewide mandate and later transitioned to CAPPS Human Resources in June of 2022. The agency managed these transitions without additional financial resources.

d) Leadership Development

Cross training is essential in leadership development for a small agency. Division managers share their experience and knowledge with staff. The agency provides leadership training for professional staff, subject to budgetary constraints.

e) Succession Planning

All the factors indicated for organizational training, employee, leadership and career development are essential in planning for succession. Additionally, the agency will maintain awareness of qualified sources outside of the agency.

Supplemental Schedule G. Workforce Development System Strategic Planning

The Texas Commission on Jail Standards does not administer a workforce program or service, and is not required to submit this report.

Supplemental Schedule H. Report on Customer

Service