

TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS



WORKFORCE PLAN
FY 2017-2021

Texas Commission on Jail Standards Workforce Plan 2017-2021

I. 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 located in downtown Austin, Texas, and there are currently 17 FTE's budgeted.

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.

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

B. Anticipated Changes in Strategies

The Commission does not anticipate significant change to the agency mission, strategies, and/or goals over the next five years. The Commission is and will remain committed to providing high-quality service to county jails and ensure that counties are working to maintain safe and secure jails in their communities. With time, of course, adjustments are often necessary in the strategies used to meet these goals. The emphasis on information technology in the agency will be a major driver in the future of the Commission; however, a small yet dedicated workforce of professional and administrative personnel will continue to keep the agency on course toward achieving its goals and stated mission.

II. Current Workforce Profile

a) Skills

Every Commission employee is valuable to the success of agency operations. Each of the 17 employees has more than one critical function that supports the Commission on Jail Standards. Some of the critical skills required to complete our mission are include customer service, auditing, communication, problem solving, project management, information analysis.

b) Demographics

The following data reflect the current profile of the agency's workforce. The Commission's workforce is comprised of 62.5% male and 37.5% female, 50% are African American or Hispanic. The average age for the Agency staff is 43.8 and

the total staff has an average of 7.1 years with the agency. There is a higher ratio of professional staff due to the Agency's objectives. Sixty-eight percent are professionals, providing inspections, training and technical assistance, much of which is conducted in the field. (Source: State Auditor's Office/E-Class system)

c) Employee Turnover

In FY2015, there was one separation (termination) from the agency. As of May 2016, the agency has one vacant position available. The longest tenured employee has been with the agency for 24 years. Twenty five percent of the current staff has been with the agency for less than 2 years.

d) Employee Attrition

Thirteen percent or two staff members of the Agency's workforce will be eligible to retire within the next 5 years. Replacement of these positions may prove to be difficult to find due to the loss of institutional knowledge, key positions and the combination of numerous years of experience. When long-term experienced individuals vacate positions, it is our practice to fill those positions at a lower level until the individual gains experience in that position and then promote or provide merit increases.

III. Future Workforce

a) Expected Workforce Changes

The Commission on Jail Standards will experience many of the workforce changes seen across the country, impacted by an aging population and an improving economy. The agency expects that these factors may shrink the pool of qualified employees, requiring greater recruiting efforts and more job skills training for new and current employees.

b) Future Workforce Skills Needed

Communication and interpersonal skills will continue to be critical, as the agency staff has 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.

c) Number of Employees Needed

Currently the agency is fully staffed. If new duties or initiatives are added to the agency's mission, needed positions will be identified and requested during subsequent legislative appropriations submittals.

d) Critical Functions that must be performed

Performance of all agency functions is critical to achieving the agency's goals and objectives.

III. Gap Analysis

Anticipated Surplus or Shortage of Staffing Levels or Skills:

The agency has a concern that its ability to attract future employees and retain current employees who possess the needed skills may be impaired by a disparity in salaries between state employees and employees in private industry. In addition to the disparity, the high cost of living in the Austin metro area makes it difficult to attract qualified individuals. This often results in the hiring of individuals that reside in excess of 30 miles from our headquarters in downtown Austin. This in turn results in excessive commutes that impact employee morale which is exacerbated by the complete lack of infrastructure planning and congested roadways that exemplifies Austin. It is virtually impossible to attract quality professional candidates that possess the skill sets necessary to advance into management and leadership roles due to this. This is not a slight at the dedicated and professional employees of the agency, but an honest assessment of the challenges faced by management when attempting to fill vacancies that occur periodically.

IV. Strategy Development

a) Retention Programs

Historically, the agency has supported its employees by rewarding merit increases to employees who perform above satisfactory levels and will also enter into retention bonus agreements with key personnel. Additionally, the agency continually strives to maintain a work environment that allows for flexibility, without compromising productivity. The agency recently implemented an alternate work schedule to address the needs of employees in order to lessen the physical and financial burden of long distance commutes to the office. To date, thirty eight percent of the agency is currently enrolled in this program.

b) Recruitment Plans

To the fullest extent possible, the agency will strive to recruit the number of qualified individuals required to carry out the agency's mission, including qualified persons of minority, disability, and/or the female gender.

c) Organizational Training, Employee and Career Development

The agency provides organizational training, including equal employment opportunity, sexual harassment and procedural training. The agency utilizes cross training to enhance the knowledge and skill levels of all employees. The agency provides for the cost of training for its employees, when the training is in the best interest of the agency, and funding allows for the expense.

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 for leadership training for the professional staff, subject to budgetary constraints.

e) Succession Planning

All of 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.