



TEXAS  
JUVENILE JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT

2025 - 2029  
FISCAL YEAR

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

# TJJJ Mission and Values

## Mission Statement

Build a unified juvenile justice system that exemplifies TJJJ's core values of safety, accountability, and transparency. Building this system requires:

- Developing and maintaining constructive relationships with county juvenile probation departments and other key stakeholders through effective communication, ongoing collaboration, and timely adaptation to evolving needs.
- Providing a systemwide, evidence-based continuum of services designed to produce optimal outcomes for youth, families, and communities.
- Supporting the well-being of juvenile justice professionals, who in turn provide systemwide staff and youth with the highest levels of service, professionalism, and integrity.
- Allocating agency resources throughout the system based on risk and progress toward strategic goals.

## Core Values

**Safety: Our number one priority is public safety.** Providing a safe environment for our staff and youth is necessary for us to implement the most effective evidence-based programming in the most appropriate setting.

**Accountability:** We are a system rooted in accountability for our staff and youth, where everyone is held responsible for their actions and outcomes. We believe the behavior we desire to see in others should first be seen through our own actions.

**Transparency:** We maintain trust and transparency with all stakeholders through direct, honest, accurate, and proactive communication. We do not shy away from difficult conversations.

# Schedule F:

## Agency Workforce Plan

### Introduction

The TJJD Agency Workforce Plan is developed in compliance with the Texas Government Code, Section 2056.0021. The statute requires state agencies to conduct a strategic staffing analysis and develop a workforce plan, according to guidelines developed by the State Auditor, to address critical staffing and training needs of the agency. In addition to being included in the Agency Strategic Plan, the Agency Workforce Plan is submitted to the State Auditor's Office State Classification Team as a separate document.

### Section I: Agency Overview

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) is the state's standalone juvenile justice agency. TJJD was created effective December 2011 by the 82nd Legislature. At this time, the powers and duties of the former Texas Youth Commission and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission were transferred to TJJD.

After merging TJJD's predecessors into one entity, the Legislature directed the agency to work in partnership with local county probation departments, governments, courts, law enforcement, and communities to promote public safety by providing a full continuum of effective supports and services to youth from initial contact with the juvenile justice system through termination of supervision. (See Sec. 201.002(1), Texas Human Resources Code.) This task requires TJJD to implement key functions at both the locally driven "front end" of the juvenile justice system and the state-driven "back end" of the system.

At the front end of the system, TJJD partners with local stakeholders to promote delinquency prevention and early intervention programs, support county probation professionals, and develop safe diversion options. Statute requires the agency to prioritize the use of community-based or family-based programs and services for youth over the placement in or commitment of youth to a state-operated secure facility. (See Sec. 201.002(2)(C), Texas Human Resources Code.) TJJD employs program specialists, investigators, and training specialists with job duties that focus on developing delinquency prevention and early intervention programs, monitoring and enforcing established standards for community-based programs and county juvenile justice facilities, and certifying and training certain county-level employees. Agency staff also distribute formula-funded and competitive grants to county probation departments and coordinate statewide regionalization initiatives designed to promote diversion.

At the back end of the system, the vast majority of the TJJD's employees operate the agency's secure facilities and halfway houses. These staff directly supervise youth and provided care for their basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, safety, medical care, legal rights, visitation, and spiritual needs. Employees also provide specialized rehabilitative programming designed for youth with serious violent offenses, sex

offenses, alcohol and other drug abuse or dependency, high-level mental health treatment needs, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. In addition, TJJJ operates year-round educational programs within each of its secure facilities and partners with local school districts to provide these services in halfway houses. Finally, state staff also perform job duties related to the agency's reentry system and parole programs for youth who have been released from a facility.

Notably, while TJJJ's functions at the front and back ends of the system have remained steady over time, youth treatment needs and risk profiles have intensified. For example, between fiscal years 2013 and 2023, the number of youth admitted to TJJJ's custody fell by about 30%; during the same timeframe, however, the number of admitted youth with moderate or high mental health treatment needs increased by 130%. Similarly, the criminogenic risk profile of youth in the juvenile justice system has increased. Between fiscal years 2019 and 2023, system referrals for homicide more than doubled. As discussed throughout the report, youths' growing needs and risks, coupled with staffing challenges, create operational challenges across the state's juvenile justice system that TJJJ is tasked with managing.

## Agency Mission, Core Values, and Vision

Since submitting its previous strategic plan, TJJJ has updated its mission statement and core values to better align with and clarify systemwide goals. Staff developed the information provided below with feedback from state and local stakeholders. Agency leadership has been leaning upon this revamped direction to make strategic decisions for TJJJ's future.

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## Organizational Structure

TJJD is governed by a nine-member Board appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Texas Senate.

The **Executive Director** is the administrative head of the agency and is selected by and reports to the TJJD Board. The Chief Inspector General and the Chief Auditor also report directly to the TJJD Board.

The **Chief Inspector General** oversees the Office of Inspector General (OIG), which is responsible for the investigating allegations of criminal and administrative misconduct against youth, staff, and other relevant individuals at state, county, and private contract facilities, including incidents involving abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Additionally, OIG performs location and apprehension efforts of TJJD youth who have escaped, absconded, or violated a condition of their release from TJJD; secure gatehouse operations including contraband prevention, detection, and interception within TJJD facilities; investigations analytics and research; operation of the 24-hour Incident Reporting Center; and use-of-force monitoring.

The **Chief Auditor** oversees the TJJD Internal Audit Department, which is responsible for evaluating and assessing agency services, operations, and processes; providing consultation to agency management regarding design and implementation of internal controls; and coordinating external audit activities.

The **Office of the Independent Ombudsman** (OIO) is a state agency established to investigate, evaluate, and secure the rights of post-adjudicated youth who are confined in a county, state, or contract care facility or who are released on parole. The Chief Ombudsman is appointed by and reports to the Governor, not to TJJD Executive Management or the TJJD Board. OIO's responsibilities include:

- Reviewing complaints, other than those alleging criminal behavior, filed with the OIO and investigating each complaint in which it appears that a youth may be in need of assistance;
- Providing assistance to certain post-adjudicated youth whom the OIO determines are in need of assistance, including advocating with an agency, provider, or other person in the best interests of the youth;
- Inspecting facilities and procedures of the facilities where post-adjudicated youth have been placed to ensure that their rights are fully observed;
- Reviewing the procedures established by TJJD and evaluating the delivery of services to youth to ensure that the rights of those youth are fully observed;
- Reviewing reports related to complaints regarding juvenile probation programs, services, or facilities, and analyzing the data contained in the reports to identify trends in complaints; and

- Reporting a possible standards violation by a local juvenile probation department to the appropriate division within TJJD.

The following staff report directly to TJJD's **Executive Director**:

- The **Deputy Executive Director** (DED) directly assists the Executive Director in leading and managing the operations of the agency. The DED oversees the operations of the secure correctional facilities, the juvenile justice training academy, the monitoring and inspections division, and medical services.
- The **Deputy Executive Director for Probation, Reentry, and Community Services** manages and oversees the departments and program areas responsible for overseeing certain grant programs designed to support county partners; developing and implementing the statewide Regionalization Plan; promoting prevention and early intervention services to at-risk youth; monitoring performance accountability of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs; administering and monitoring Federal Title IV-E Foster Care Program contracts for the agency and participating juvenile probation departments; overseeing the agency's Office of Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) who ensure compliance with ICJ laws and rules relating to juveniles traveling or relocating across state lines; and providing a continuum of care and supervision for TJJD youth housed in halfway houses or released to parole.
- The **Deputy Executive Director for Finance and Operations** is responsible for leading the agency's fiscal and business affairs and overseeing the departments responsible for administrative support of the agency, including Finance, Business Operations, Information Technology, and Human Resources.
- The **General Counsel** oversees the Office of General Counsel (OGC), which provides in-house legal services to TJJD. Such services include providing legal counsel to the TJJD Board and agency management, including assisting with proposed rules, policies, practices, and legislation; overseeing the publication of rules and policies; managing the youth grievance system; managing the functions of the Release Review Panel, which makes decisions regarding release to parole, discharge from TJJD, or extensions in lengths of stay for certain committed youth; conducting administrative due process hearings for youth and employees; maintaining youth records; and overseeing any litigation involving the agency.
- The **Senior Director Integrated Treatment & Intervention Services** is responsible for leading the agency's mental health and treatment programming. The Director is responsible for the case management, family engagement, mental health, and specialized treatment departments within the agency. These departments' primary focus is ensuring safe, rehabilitative programming within each secure facility.
- The **Director of Structured Programming and Accountability** works with agency and facility leadership to define, describe, and implement elements of the Texas Model – TJJD's foundational model for improving youth behavior so they may return home safely. The Director provides research support for decision making as needed, clinical manuals, program descriptions, and training for administrators and front-line staff in practices and principles related to the model.

- The **Chief of Staff** provides direction and guidance to the Executive Director and executive management on strategic operations and planning, the establishment of functional and organizational relationships to achieve and advance the agency’s goals and objectives, and executive-level projects related to the oversight of agency operations. The COS oversees TJJJ’s policy, external relations, research, and communications functions.

## Critical Functions

TJJJ’s organizational structure enables the agency to build and oversee a unified juvenile justice system for the State of Texas. TJJJ’s functions include collaborating with and supporting local juvenile probation departments in the development of a consistent county-based continuum of services; increasing reliance on alternatives to placement and TJJJ commitment; overseeing regional cooperation; facilitating interagency coordination among juvenile probation departments; providing ongoing training and technical assistance; monitoring juvenile detention and post-adjudication facilities; and ensuring performance accountability for juvenile justice alternative education programs. In addition, TJJJ operates its own juvenile justice facilities in which staff emphasize a highly structured residential model; individualized intervention based on community risk; and a culture of safety, accountability, and transparency.

### Support the development of a consistent county-based continuum of effective interventions, supports, and services to increase the reliance on alternatives to placement and state commitment.

- Provide Discretionary State Aid (DSA) funding to support more research- and evidence-based practices that have well-defined recidivism reduction goals and outcomes.
- Assist local departments in the development and implementation of community-based programs and services through technical assistance and data analysis.
- Provide funding and guidance for the enhancement and expansion of community-based programs and services.
- Improve partnerships with other statewide youth-serving agencies to keep youth as shallow as appropriate in the juvenile justice system.
- Continue investment in regional diversion alternatives to further reduce commitments to TJJJ where safe and appropriate.

### Encourage regional cooperation that enhances county collaboration.

- Provide grant opportunities that incentivize regional collaboration and positive outcomes to ensure community safety and minimize waste of taxpayer funds.
- Maintain and expand comprehensive integrated juvenile case management systems that detail juvenile referrals, offenses, placement, programming, and supervision; and that allow for information sharing and standardized case management across the system.
- Facilitate interagency coordination and collaboration among juvenile probation departments, school districts, and the Texas Education Agency.

### Enhance continuity of care throughout the juvenile justice system.

- Provide continual training and technical assistance to promote compliance with established standards and assist local authorities in improving the operation of probation services.
- Monitor operations of juvenile detention and post-adjudication facilities.
- Monitor performance accountability for juvenile justice alternative education programs.
- Ensure the appropriate levels of communication and staff support to improve the outcomes of youth who are referred to the juvenile justice system.
- Certify certain county-level employees and monitor professional responsibilities related to certification.
- Prioritize successful youth reentry through permanency planning beginning from the time of commitment, and collaborative and timely case planning as youth move through the system.

### Operate secure facilities safely and effectively.

- Implement strategies under the Texas Model to ensure high fidelity to the residential model, a common vernacular for staff and youth to use, and functional analysis within behavior chains to inform decision making.
- Provide each youth with high-quality and individualized intervention in a residential model of service delivery aimed at generalizing skills to various areas, including treatment, education, vocations, and family involvement, with high standards of accountability for the youth.
- Maintain a culture of safety, accountability, and transparency within TJJD facilities to promote a positive and structured atmosphere that empowers staff in their work, ensures staff and youth safety, and upholds facility security.
- Prepare youth within state-operated facilities for effective reentry into their schools and communities through a comprehensive education program encompassing reading skills, GED preparation, vocational skill building, and advanced training, with specialized support for students with learning difficulties or special education needs. Facilitate smooth transitions by addressing employability skills and reentry preparations before students leave secure facilities.
- Develop community reentry plans with input from multiple stakeholders to ensure successful transitions back to the community.
- Emphasize prevention, training enhancements, and corrective actions based on incident reviews to uphold safety standards.

## Agency Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

### **GOAL A: Community Juvenile Justice**

#### OBJECTIVE A.1: Grants for Community Juvenile Justice Services

##### *Outcome Measures:*

- 1.1.1 Rate of Successful Completion of Deferred Prosecution (Key)
- 1.1.2 Rate of Successful Completion of Court-Ordered Probation (Key)
- 1.1.3 Re-Referral Rate (Key)
- 1.1.4 Adjudication Rate



- 1.1.5 Referral Rate/Juveniles Served by Prevention and Intervention Programs
- 1.1.6 Number of Absconders From Basic Supervision
- 1.1.7 Completion of Prevention and Intervention Programs

**STRATEGY A.1.1: Prevention and Intervention**

*Output Measure:*

- 1.1.1.1 Number of Juveniles Served by Prevention/Intervention

**STRATEGY A.1.2: Basic Probation Services**

*Efficiency Measure:*

- 1.1.2.1 Cost Per Day (CPD): Basic Supervision (Key)
- 1.1.2.2 Cost Per Formal Referral (Key)

*Explanatory Measures:*

- 1.1.2.1 Total Number of Delinquent Referrals
- 1.1.2.2 Total Number of Referrals (Key)
- 1.1.2.3 Total Number of Felony Referrals (Key)
- 1.1.2.4 Number of Juveniles Receiving Title IV-E Services
- 1.1.2.5 Total Number of Crisis Intervention Referrals

*Output Measures:*

- 1.1.2.1 Average Daily Population (ADP): Juveniles Supervised under Conditional Release
- 1.1.2.2 ADP: Juveniles Supervised under Deferred Prosecution
- 1.1.2.3 ADP: Juveniles Supervised under Adjudicated Probation
- 1.1.2.4 Number of County Juvenile Probation Depts Utilizing Federal Title IV-E Dollars
- 1.1.2.5 ADP of Juveniles in Basic Supervision

**STRATEGY A.1.3: Community Programs**

*Efficiency Measures:*

- 1.1.3.1 CPD: Community Non-Residential Program

*Output Measures:*

- 1.1.3.1 Juveniles Served-Community Non-Residential Programs

**STRATEGY A.1.4: Pre and Post Adjudication Facilities**

*Efficiency Measure:*

- 1.1.4.1 CPD Per Youth for Residential Placement

*Output Measure:*

- 1.1.4.1 ADP: Residential Placements

### **STRATEGY A.1.5: Commitment Diversion Initiatives**

#### *Efficiency Measure:*

- 1.1.5.1 CPD: Commitment Diversion (Key)

#### *Output Measure:*

- 1.1.5.1 ADP: Commitment Diversion Initiatives (Key)

### **STRATEGY A.1.6: Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs**

#### *Output Measures:*

- 1.1.6.1 Number of Mandatory Students Entering JJAEPs (Key)
- 1.1.6.2 Mandatory Student Attendance Days in JJAEP During the Reg School Year (Key)

### **STRATEGY A.1.7: Mental Health Services Grant**

### **STRATEGY A.1.8: Regional Diversion Alternatives**

#### *Output Measures:*

- 1.1.8.1 Number of Regional Diversion Placements (Key)
- 1.1.8.2 ADP: Regional Diversion Placements

### **STRATEGY A.1.9: Probation System Support**

## **GOAL B: State Services and Facilities**

### **OBJECTIVE B.1: State-Operated Programs and Services**

#### *Outcome Measures:*

- 2.1.1 Total Number of New Admissions to JJD (Key)
- 2.1.2 Diploma or High School Equivalency Rate (JJD-Operated Schools) (Key)
- 2.1.3 Percent Improved Reading Grade Level at Release (Key)
- 2.1.4 Turnover Rate of Juvenile Correctional Officers (Key)
- 2.1.5 Industrial Certification Rate in JJD-Operated Schools
- 2.1.6 Rearrest/Re-Referral Rate (Key)
- 2.1.7 One-year Rearrest/Re-Referral Rate for Violent Felony Offenses (Key)
- 2.1.8 One-year Rearrest/Re-referral Rate for Offenses as or more Severe than Committing Offense (Key)
- 2.1.9 Reincarceration Rate: Within One Year (Key)
- 2.1.10 Reincarceration Rate: Within Three Years (Key)
- 2.1.11 Average Math Gain Per Month of Instruction
- 2.1.12 Average Reading Gain Per Month of Instruction

### **STRATEGY B.1.1: Assessment, Orientation, and Placement**

#### *Efficiency Measure:*

- 2.1.1.1 Assessment and Orientation Cost Per Juvenile Day

*Explanatory Measure:*

- 2.1.1.1 Total Residential Intakes

*Output Measure:*

- 2.1.1.1 ADP: Assessment and Orientation (Key)

### **STRATEGY B.1.2: Facility Operations and Overhead**

### **STRATEGY B.1.3: Facility Supervision and Food Service**

*Efficiency Measure:*

- 2.1.3.1 CPD: State-Operated Secure Correctional Facility (Key)

*Explanatory Measure:*

- 2.1.3.1 Juveniles under JCO Direct Supervision Per Shift (Key)

*Output Measure:*

- 2.1.3.1 ADP: State Operated Secure Correctional Facilities (Key)

### **STRATEGY B.1.4: Education**

*Efficiency Measure:*

- 2.1.4.1 Education and Workforce Cost in JJD-Operated Schools

*Explanatory Measure:*

- 2.1.4.1 Percent Reading at Grade Level at Commitment

*Output Measures:*

- 2.1.4.1 Average Daily Attendance in JJD-Operated Schools (Key)
- 2.1.4.2 Number of Industrial Certifications Earned by Juveniles

### **STRATEGY B.1.5: Alternatives to State Secure Placement**

*Efficiency Measure:*

- 2.1.5.1 Halfway House Cost Per Juvenile Day
- 2.1.5.2 Capacity Cost in Contract Programs Per Juvenile Day

*Output Measure:*

- 2.1.5.1 ADP: Halfway House Programs (Key)
- 2.1.5.2 ADP: Contract Programs (Key)

### **STRATEGY B.1.6: Health Care**

*Efficiency Measure:*

- 2.1.6.1 Cost of Health Care Services Per Juvenile Day
- 2.1.6.2 Cost of Psychiatric Services Per Juvenile Day

*Output Measure:*

- 2.1.6.1 Average Daily Population: Health Care
- 2.1.6.2 Average Daily Population: Psychiatric Services

#### **STRATEGY B.1.7: Integrated Behavior Management**

*Efficiency Measures:*

- 2.1.7.1 General Rehabilitation Treatment Cost Per Juvenile Day
- 2.1.7.2 Specialized Treatment Cost Per Juvenile Day

*Output Measures:*

- 2.1.7.1 ADP: General Rehabilitation Treatment (Key)
- 2.1.7.2 ADP: Specialized Treatment (Key)

#### **STRATEGY B.1.8: Residential System Support**

Provide oversight and management of the state residential system.

### OBJECTIVE B.3: Maintain State Facilities

#### **STRATEGY B.3.1: Construct and Renovate Facilities**

*Efficiency Measure:*

- 2.3.1.1 Change Orders and Add-ons as a % of Budgeted Project Const. Costs

## **GOAL C: Parole Services**

### OBJECTIVE C.1: Parole Services

*Outcome Measures:*

- 3.1.1 Constructive Activity

#### **STRATEGY C.1.1.: Parole Direct Supervision and Reentry Services**

*Efficiency Measure:*

- 3.1.1.1 Parole Cost Per Juvenile Day

*Output Measures:*

- 3.1.1.1 ADP: Parole (Key)
- 3.1.1.2 ADP: Contract Parole
- 3.1.1.3 ADP: Aftercare Services

## **GOAL D: Office of the Independent Ombudsman**

OBJECTIVE D.1: Office of the Independent Ombudsman

### **STRATEGY D.1.1: Office of the Independent Ombudsman**

*Output Measure:*

- 4.1.1.1 Number of Juvenile Directly Served through the Office of the Independent Ombudsman

## **GOAL E: Juvenile Justice System**

OBJECTIVE E.1: Juvenile Justice System

### **STRATEGY E.1.1: Training and Certification**

*Output Measure:*

- 5.1.1.1 Number of Officers Certified

### **STRATEGY E.1.2: Monitoring and Inspections**

*Output Measures:*

- 5.1.2.1 Number of Local Facility Inspections Conducted
- 5.1.2.2 Number of Annual Comprehensive Monitoring Reviews
- 5.1.2.3 Number of On-site Consultations Conducted in Connection with Risk-based Monitoring Activities

### **STRATEGY E.1.3: Interstate Agreement**

*Output Measure:*

- 5.1.3.1 Juveniles Served through Interstate Compact

## **GOAL F: Indirect Administration**

OBJECTIVE F.1: Provide Administrative Management

### **STRATEGY F.1.1: Central Administration**

Central Administration

### **STRATEGY F.1.2: Information Resources**

Information Resources

## **GOAL G: Office of Inspector General**

OBJECTIVE G.1: Conduct oversight of juvenile justice services and facilities

### **STRATEGY G.1.1: Office of the Inspector General**

*Explanatory Measures:*

- 7.1.1.1 Number of Allegations Reported to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) (Key)

- 7.1.1.2 Number of JJD Juveniles Apprehended by OIG (Key)

*Output Measures:*

- 7.1.1.1 Number of Completed Criminal Investigative Cases (Key)
- 7.1.1.2 Number of Completed OIG County Investigation Unit ANE Cases (Key)
- 7.1.1.3 Number of Completed OIG State Investigation Unit ANE and Admin Cases (Key)

## Anticipated Changes – Mission, Strategies, and Goals

The agency does not anticipate significant changes to TJJD’s mission and core values. Public safety will continue to be the agency’s number one priority. Agency workforce initiatives could be affected by significant changes to the population of youth within state secure facilities. Further utilization of alternatives to placement will continue to serve youth adjudicated to the county level of the juvenile justice system, which constitutes the vast majority of justice-involved youth in the state. However, at present, there are no viable alternatives to commitment for most of the youth sent to TJJD’s custody, as made evident by the collapse of secure contract placement options for this population. The average daily population of TJJD youth supervised in a contract placement dropped from about 100 in FY 2020 to only eight in FY 2024.

This biennium, the agency invested significant time into bolstering the expertise of and tools available to staff, training clinical skills to an appropriate level for all staff members.

The agency is currently implementing an enterprise-level initiative to refine and sustainably integrate the **Texas Model**, which was initiated in 2019. The original Texas Model was a comprehensive strategy for enhancing the juvenile justice system through evidence-based principles, focusing on equipping staff with tools for a youth’s safe and successful return to the community. In its first iteration, the Texas Model prioritized physical and psychological safety, establishing a paradigm of trauma-responsive interventions to problematic or unsafe behaviors, and implementing structured de-escalation techniques.

Now, with the latest iteration of the Texas Model, TJJD is refining its approach while maintaining its focus on safety. This newest phase of the model emphasizes a structured, safe environment and enhances skill development for staff and youth. The agency’s core values of safety, accountability, and transparency drive this model, promoting a unified juvenile justice system where staff use a team approach to achieve positive outcomes for youth and Texas communities.

Key components of Texas Model 2.0 include:

- Collaborative partnerships with county probation departments;
- A highly structured residential environment targeting individual risk factors;
- High-quality services delivered by well-trained staff;
- A cohesive framework of evidence-based practices founded upon Dialectical Behavior Therapy principles; and
- A culture of accountability and transparency within TJJD facilities.

This model represents a transformative shift, empowering juvenile justice practitioners and promoting safer communities. Under the Texas Model, the agency is implementing several initiatives within state facilities to enhance service delivery through a residential framework, where the impacts of specialized treatment services (which are provided to virtually all youth committed to TJJD) are augmented by the maintenance of a structured, therapeutic milieu. This is achieved by ensuring all staff members have appropriate expertise and fidelity to basic behavior management and change principles. To succeed in TJJD's care and beyond, youth must receive reinforcement when they demonstrate safe and skillful behavior throughout their entire facility environment (e.g., the classroom, during recreation, receiving negative news during a phone call on the dorm, etc.), not just in the context of a group or individually specialized treatment setting. Similarly, they must be held consistently and appropriately accountable for unsafe or unskillful behavior.

These initiatives are key to TJJD maintaining highly structured and safe facilities in the context of a youth population demonstrating higher criminogenic risk and treatment needs than ever before. The five functions of the residential model that will shape agency actions and staff roles are:

1. Enhancing youth capabilities
2. Enhancing youth motivation
3. Ensuring skill generalization
4. Structuring the environment
5. Enhancing staff capabilities and motivation to deliver treatment effectively

## Recent Legislative Changes

### Sunset Review

During the 2022-23 biennium, TJJD underwent a Sunset review, which culminated in the passage of SB 1727 (88R, Schwertner/Canales). The bill continued the agency until September 2027 and amended statutory requirements across various agency functions including but not limited to: board governance, diversion planning, regulatory duties, inspection schedules, investigation processes, and data sharing. Since SB 1727's passage, TJJD has worked diligently to come into compliance with the act. While TJJD can achieve and maintain compliance with most bill requirements using existing resources and staff, the agency anticipates requesting additional funding to assist with the following changes:

- Increased staffing for OIG and OGC to assist with updates to abuse, neglect, and exploitation investigations;
- Increased appropriations to better incentivize diversion through the state aid formula; and
- Additional training for monitoring staff to align risk management procedures with best practices.

Additionally, the General Appropriations Act (HB 1) included a Sunset recommendation regarding the construction of new facilities. The act appropriated \$200M for TJJD to expand state facility capacity by 200 beds in areas near existing workforce resources. A feasibility study conducted by an independent contractor showed building two new facilities totaling 176 beds would cost about \$210M. The agency

anticipates requesting additional funding to complete the construction project in alignment with the Legislature's capacity expectations.

### **SB 30 (88R, Huffman/Bonnen)**

During the 88th regular session, the Legislature passed SB 30 (Huffman/Bonnen), which appropriated \$15M to TJJD so the agency could reimburse counties for the cost of holding youth committed to state custody but awaiting a state bed. Workforce supply at the state level of the juvenile justice system directly causes the waitlist at the county level. TJJD lacks the staffing strength to safely supervise all youth committed to its custody. As a result, youth must wait in county-level facilities until a bed becomes available following staffing improvements, appropriate facility releases, or a combination of both. Despite retention and recruitment gains, the demand for state beds continues to outstrip the workforce supply needed to supervise those beds. In FY 2024, demand continued to increase as commitments to state custody rose above similar levels in the previous year, while staffing strength in secure facilities remained at about 70% (as of May 2024). The agency anticipates requesting supplemental funding to ensure counties are again made whole after absorbing additional costs associated with housing waitlisted youth.

### **SB 1849 (88R, Kolkhorst/Frank)**

During the 88th regular session, the Legislature passed SB 1849 (Kolkhorst/Noble), which required the creation of a shared search engine between the state's child-serving agencies. The search engine will ultimately allow these agencies to share their lists of individuals who have committed certain misconduct, including abuse, neglect, or exploitation (ANE) against individuals in their care. In an effort to prevent bad actors from moving between child-serving systems, the bill directs the Department of Information Resources (DIR) to build a search engine that will tap into misconduct-related lists for TJJD, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The four agencies included the bill and the entities that they each regulate (e.g., school districts by TEA or county probation departments by TJJD) must use the registry when making hiring, volunteering, or contracting decisions to ensure that a bad actor has not concealed conduct tracked by another agency which might prove the applicant unfit to work with youth. Before being identified within the shared search engine, individuals must be afforded due process to contest whether reportable conduct occurred, which, for TJJD, could include a hearing with the State Office of Administrative Hearings. Specific to TJJD, the bill creates a provisional certification that can be revoked if an individual engages in misconduct while they are in training and before they have achieved their full certification.

During the 88th session, TJJD estimated a fiscal cost of about \$1.2M for three new attorneys to ensure due process requirements were upheld, a programmer and administrator to ensure IT compatibility, and three new ANE investigators to ensure timely additions to the search engine when appropriate. The Legislature funded DIR to create the search engine with an expectation that funding for the other agencies' operational needs would come in the following session. TJJD will be including the costs for implementation of SB 1849 in its Legislative Appropriations Request for the FY 2026-27 budget cycle.



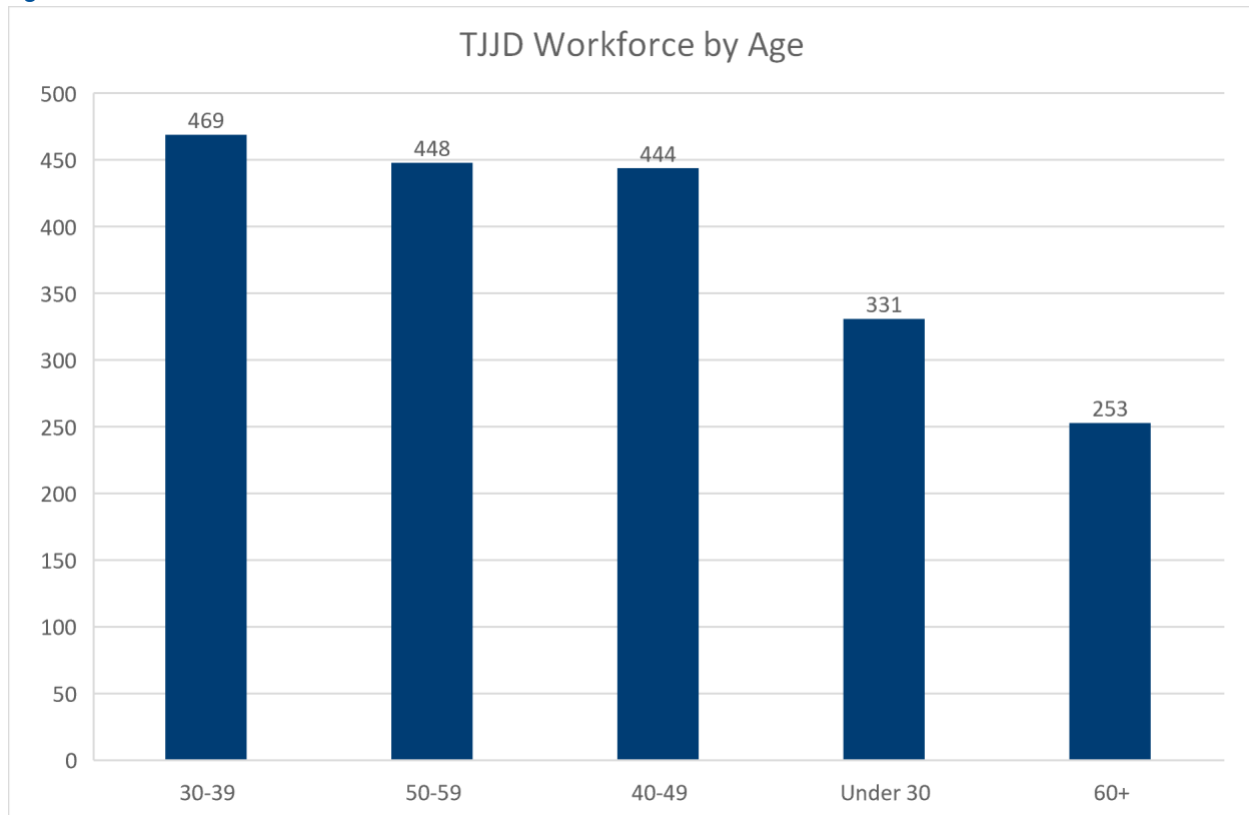
## Section II: Workforce Analysis

### Current Workforce Profile – Demand Analysis

Below, TJJJ has provided statistical information regarding its workforce as of April 30, 2024. Charts are included in the following subsection based on SAO instructions.

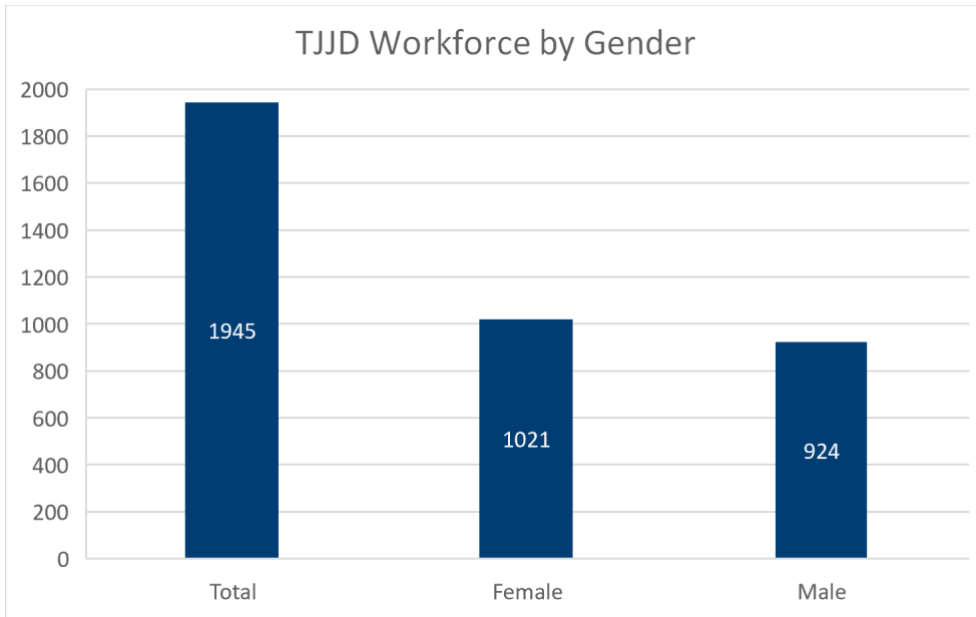
#### Employee Demographics & Statistics

##### Age



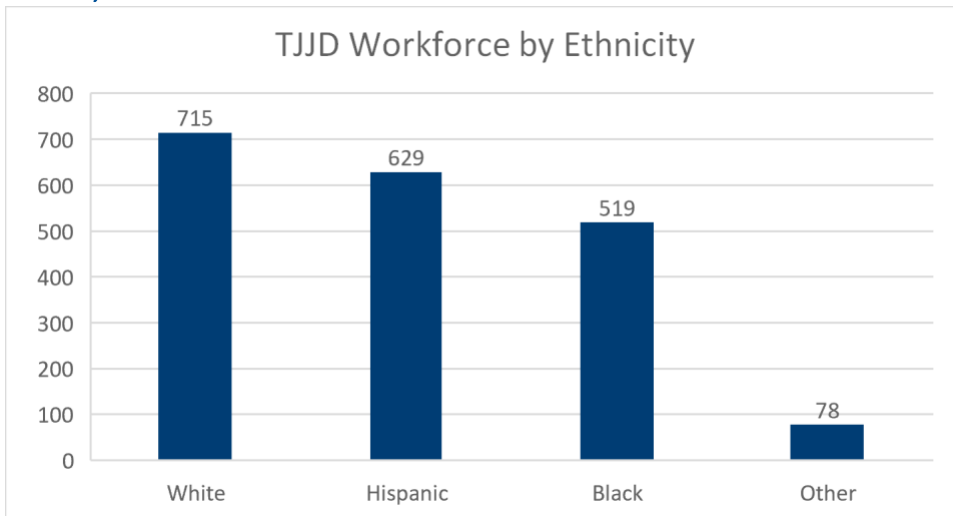
TJJJ employee age clusters around the middle categories with fewer staff falling into older (60+) or younger (<30) categories. The largest age category is 30-39 with approximately 24 percent of staff members falling into this category.

*Gender*



The TJJD workforce has a slightly higher percentage of female employees (52%) than male employees (48%).

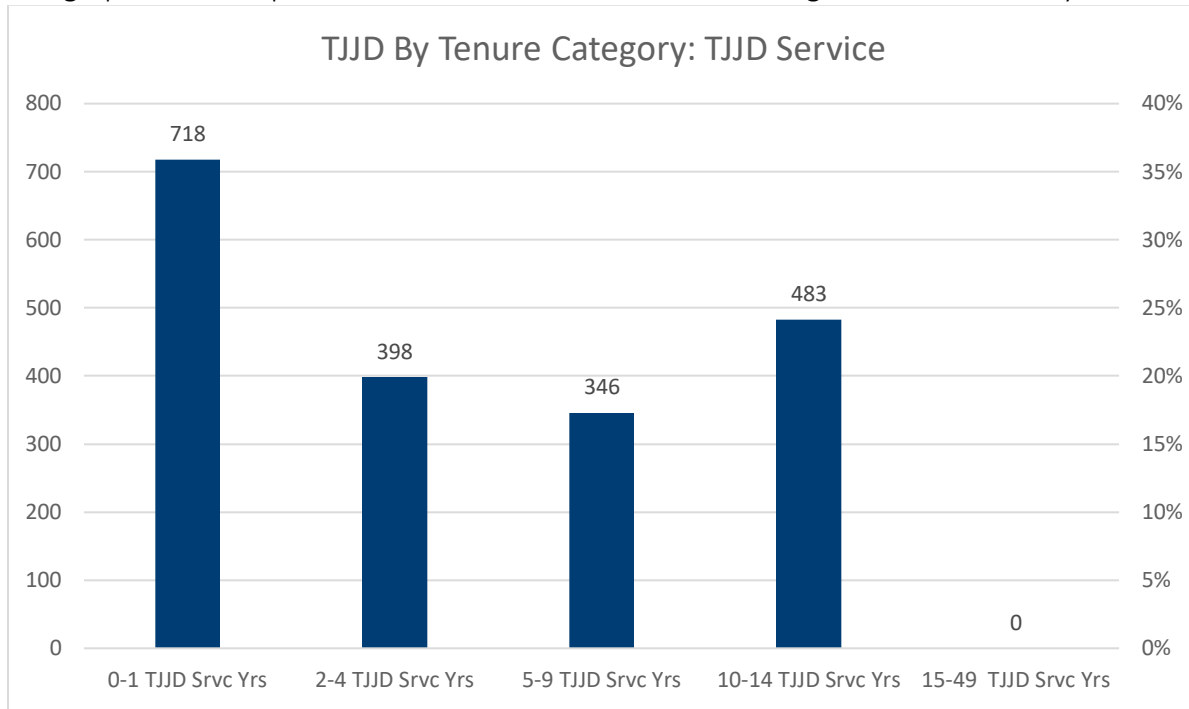
*Ethnicity*



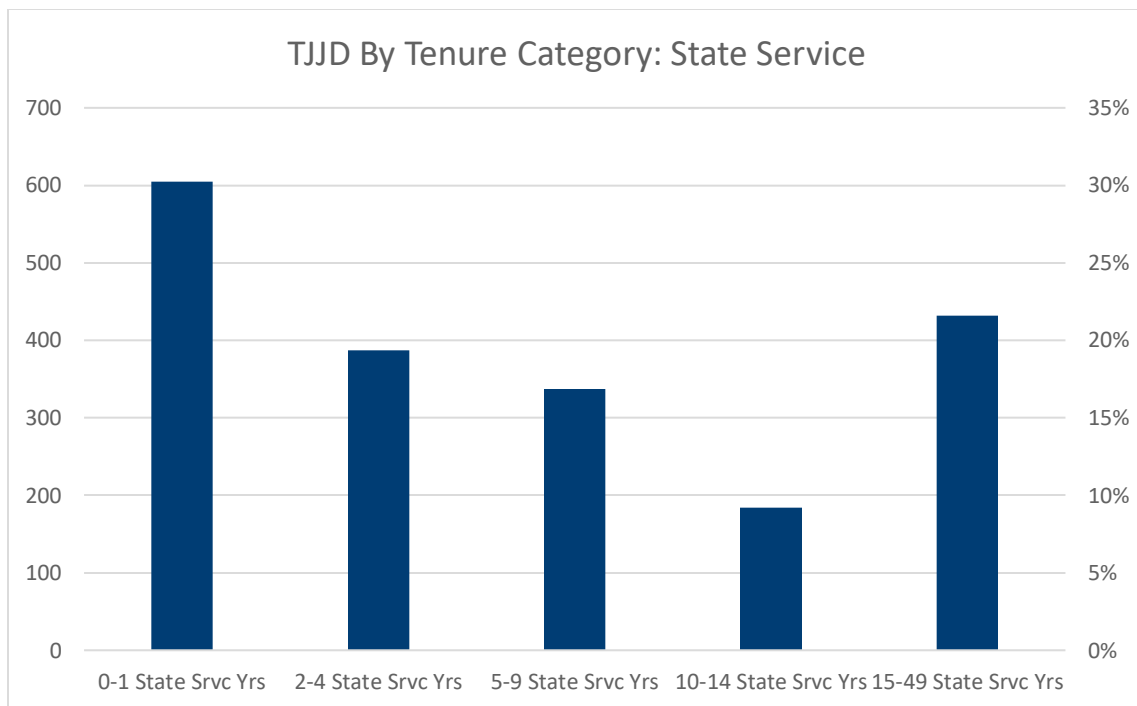
The TJJD workforce is 37% White, 32% Hispanic, 27% African-American, and 4% Other.

*Length of service*

The graphs below represent staff tenure from the least to the greatest number of years.

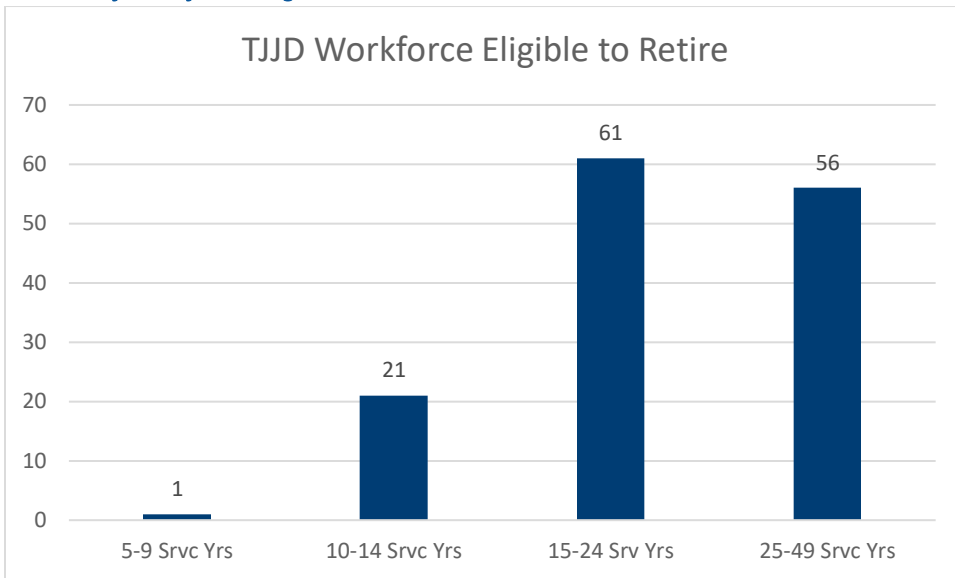


Please note, due to conversion of Texas Youth Commission service to TJJD in the CAPPS HR system, employees may reflect only 12 years of service to TJJD while overall state service may be longer.



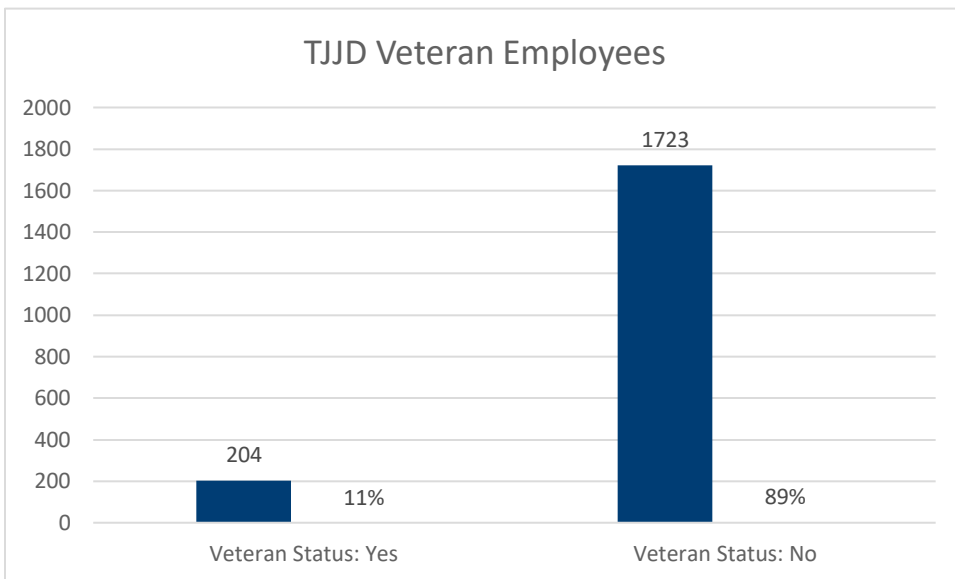
The largest population of both TJJD-tenured workforce and State of Texas-tenured workforce belong in the 0-1 year category.

*Percent of workforce eligible to retire and return-to-work retirees*



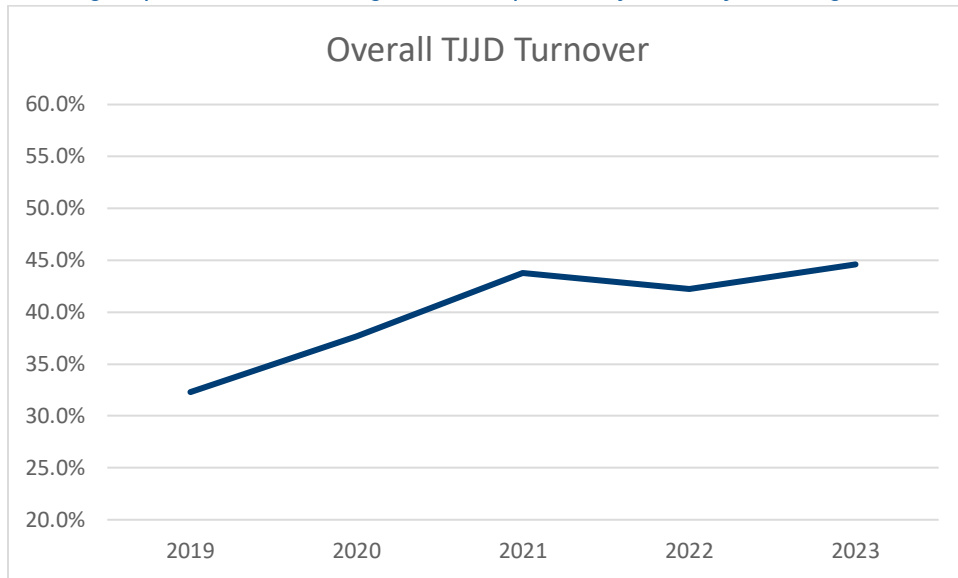
Of the TJJD workforce, 139 of 1945 individuals (7%) are eligible to retire. Only 82 individuals (4%) are return-to-work retirees.

*Percent of veterans employed by the agency*

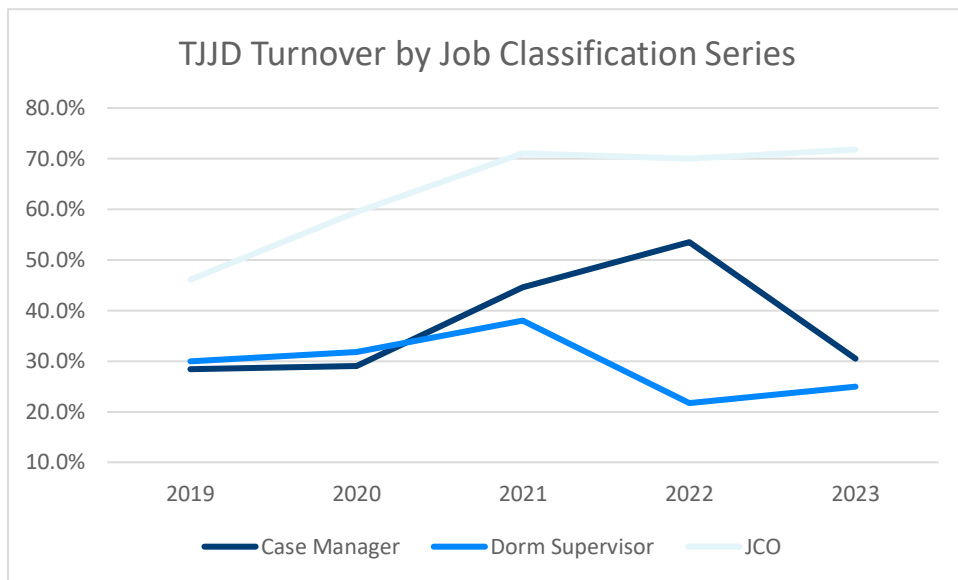


The vast majority of TJJD employees are not veterans. However, the agency has worked diligently to recruit veterans and military service members and will continue doing so in the upcoming biennium.

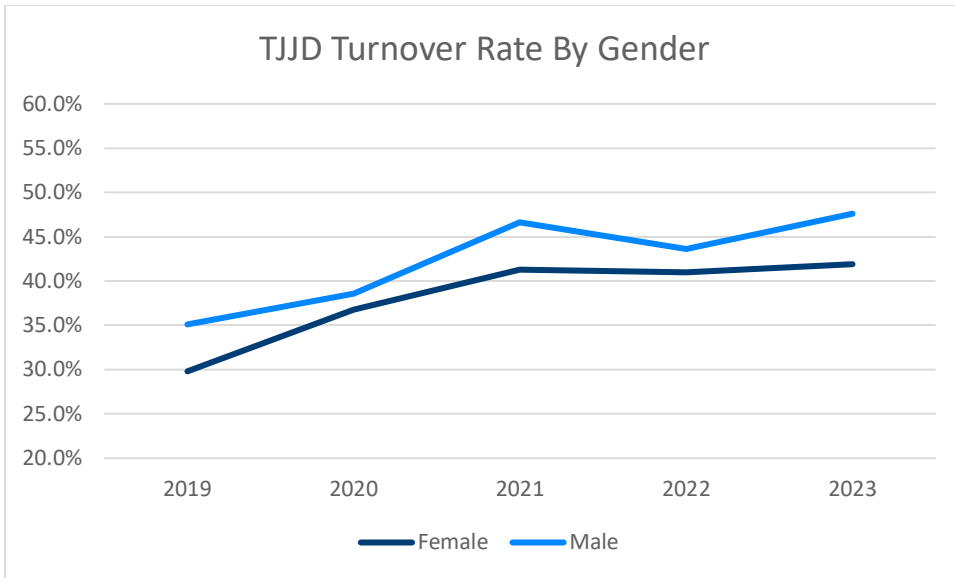
*Total agency turnover, including turnover by certain job classification, gender, and ethnicity*



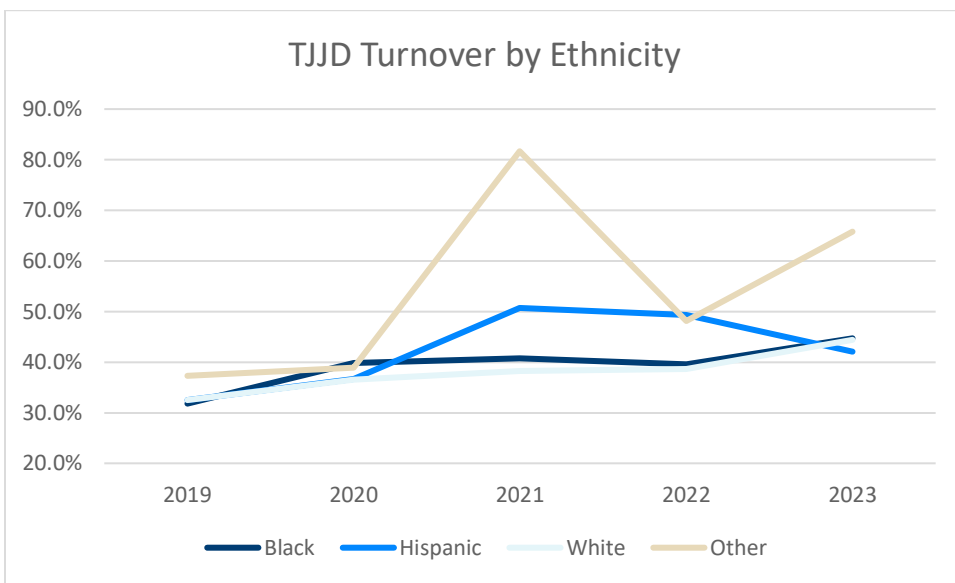
Overall turnover remains high but has leveled after increasing from FYs 2019 to 2021.



Case manager positions have shown noteworthy improvement in turnover after worsening in FYs 2020 and 2021. Juvenile correctional officer (JCO) turnover remains high due to resignations during the COVID-19 pandemic and Great Resignation, compensation, and work environment issues. Insufficient staffing strength impacts facility safety, culture, and programming, which further fuels turnover and creates a cycle of retention challenges.

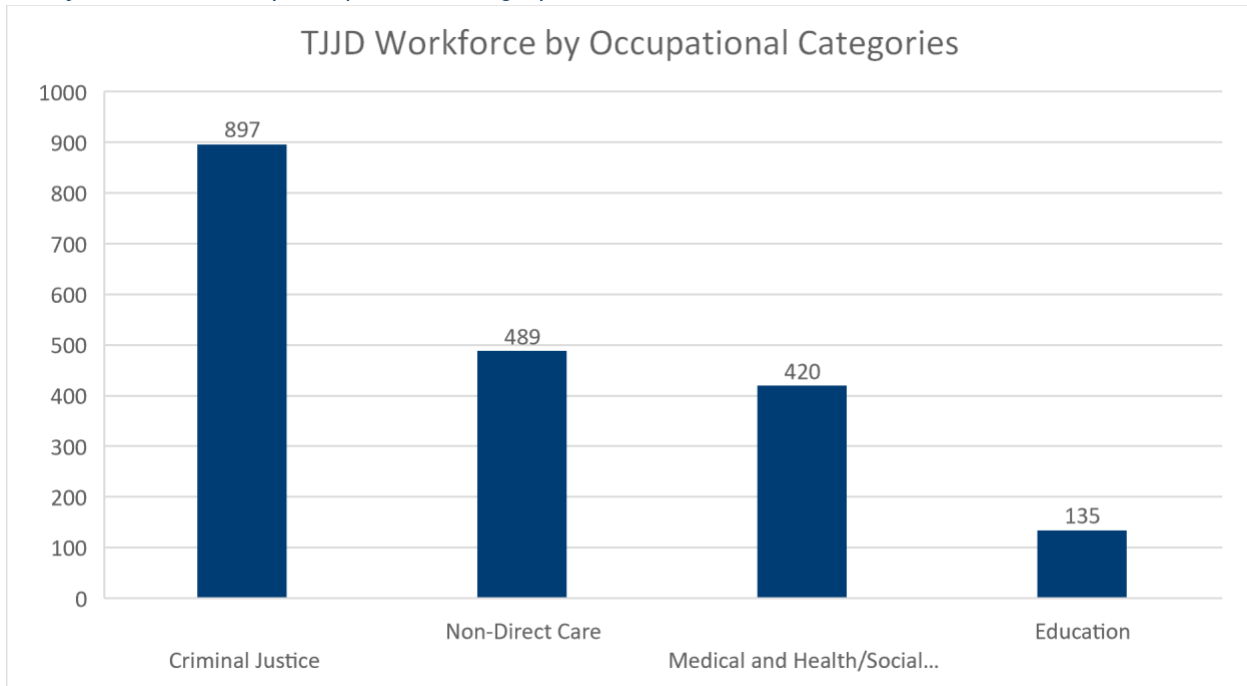


Turnover is marginally but consistently higher among male staff members.



Turnover increased but has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels for the “Hispanic” category, while it has increased for the “Black” and “White” categories. The “Other” category includes a comparatively small sample size (4% of total employees as of May 2024) and consequently fluctuates to a greater extent than the “Black,” “Hispanic,” and “White” categories.

### Workforce allocation by occupational category



This profile uses the occupational categories identified in the FYs 2023-2024 SAO Job Classification Index of Criminal Justice, Education, Medical and Health/Social Services, and Non-Direct Care. "Criminal Justice" remains the category with the most employees, followed by non-direct care employees such as administrative support staff.

## Critical Workforce Skills and Functions

### General Workforce Skills and Functions

The majority of the agency's positions perform duties that involve:

- Interacting directly with TJJD-committed youth inside state-operated secure facilities or medium-restriction halfway houses, youth on TJJD parole, and families of youth;
- Managing the operations of state facilities, including the programs and services provided within the facilities; and
- Maintaining cooperation with, monitoring certain functions of, and providing training and other support to county juvenile probation departments and agencies providing prevention and early intervention programs, operating county-level facilities, or operating other community-based programs.

Critical workforce skills necessary to fulfill these duties effectively and efficiently include the ability to:

- Perform job responsibilities in a correctional setting with aggressive or combative youth who have high-level treatment needs;

- Work with highly dysregulated youth in a manner that emphasizes safety, accountability, and transparency;
- Maintain order and youth accountability;
- Act quickly, safely, and in accordance with agency training during emergencies;
- Perform verbal and physical crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques;
- Intervene, correct behavior, and facilitate group discussions or counseling sessions, depending on the employee's position;
- Direct and facilitate individual and group activities;
- Develop and/or implement case plans;
- Support the goals of or directly implement specialized treatment programs (e.g., mental health, sex offender, alcohol and other drug treatment);
- Foster the cooperation of youth in the rehabilitation, treatment, and education process;
- Communicate effectively with youth and explain their progress to family members and other direct care staff;
- Conduct reading interventions and other learning needs interventions;
- Develop and evaluate new programming to meet the evolving needs of committed youth;
- Establish program goals and objectives, and track progress toward those goals and objectives;
- Identify problems, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, and implement effective solutions;
- Interpret and apply rules and regulations, and provide technical assistance to stakeholders;
- Identify measures or indicators of program performance, conduct reviews of performance, and assess the findings;
- Assess training needs and provide responsive training opportunities;
- Maintain adequate and accurate records;
- Review technical data, and prepare or direct the preparation of technical and management reports; and
- Use high-level data and informational reports as an administrative management tool.

Additionally, JCOs are required by Human Resources Code Section 242.009 to complete at least 300 hours of training in the officer's first year of employment, with at least 240 hours of training before the officer independently commences their duties at a facility. This training must include information and instruction concerning:

- The juvenile justice system of this state, including the juvenile correctional facility system;
- Security procedures;
- The supervision of youth committed to TJJD;
- Signs of suicide risks and suicide precautions;
- Signs and symptoms of the abuse, assault, neglect, and exploitation of a youth, including sexual abuse, sexual assault, and human trafficking, and the manner in which to report the abuse, assault, neglect, or exploitation of a youth;
- The neurological, physical, and psychological development of adolescents;



- TJJJ rules and regulations, including rules, regulations, and tactics concerning the use of force;
- Appropriate restraint techniques;
- The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (42 U.S.C. Section 15601, et seq.);
- The rights and responsibilities of youth in TJJJ’s custody;
- Interpersonal relationship skills;
- The social and cultural lifestyles of youth in TJJJ’s custody;
- First aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
- Counseling techniques;
- Conflict resolution and dispute mediation, including de-escalation techniques;
- Behavior management;
- Mental health issues;
- Employee rights, employment discrimination, and sexual harassment; and
- Trauma-informed care.

### Major Factors Influencing Current Workforce and Supply of Workforce

The needed supply for the workforce at TJJJ and in the probation field is largely driven by juvenile justice population trends. At the county level, formal referrals to juvenile probation departments have returned to pre-pandemic levels. Adult certification dispositions are stabilizing, while TJJJ commitment dispositions increased during the first half of FY 2024. State-level trends include a rise in new admissions to TJJJ with higher risk profiles, particularly for youth with the most serious offense histories, reflecting an increased need for specialized treatment and behavior management. The average daily population in state-operated facilities increased at the same time as the waitlist increased, causing consistent strain on county- and state-level resources. Higher-risk youth are harder to supervise and safely release, causing contract care options to nearly disappear, halfway house sites to close, and parole populations to decrease.

The impact of economic changes such as inflation, coupled with changes in the juvenile justice landscape such as an intensifying youth risk profiles, cannot be understated. Together, these factors have made juvenile justice jobs more demanding in both financial and practical terms. Raises for JCOs have helped TJJJ hire new staff and manage a rising youth population in secure facilities. However, this hiring alone has only enabled an average daily population increase of about 100 youth. A balanced, continual investment in *both* appropriate compensation for the job at hand *and* facility culture improvements are simultaneously necessary to ensure TJJJ’s initiatives succeed and communities are kept safe.

TJJJ secure facilities are a critical piece of the juvenile justice system but are simply one piece. When building sustainable workforce solutions for juvenile justice, TJJJ and state leaders must carefully consider strategies to expand local probation capacity, fully leverage existing secure facilities while new ones are built, and provide viable transition opportunities for youth to exit TJJJ, whether to TJJJ parole or TDCJ’s custody.

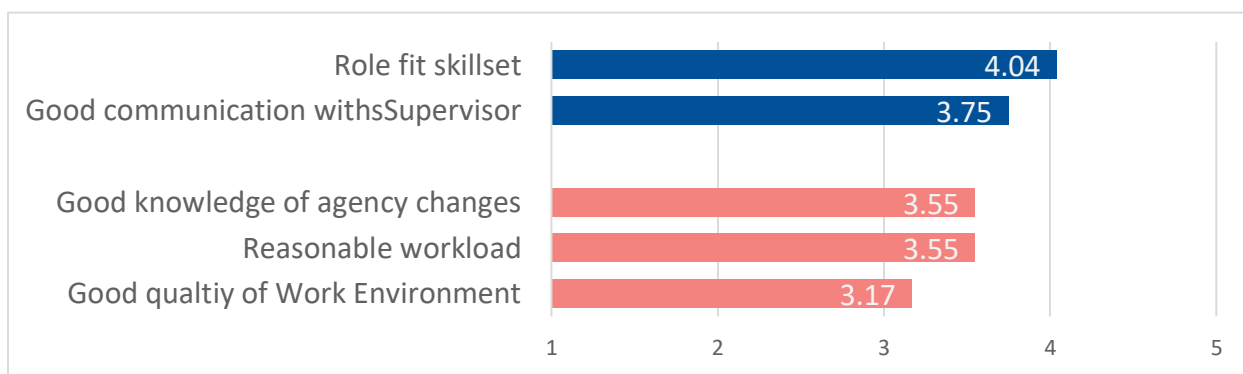
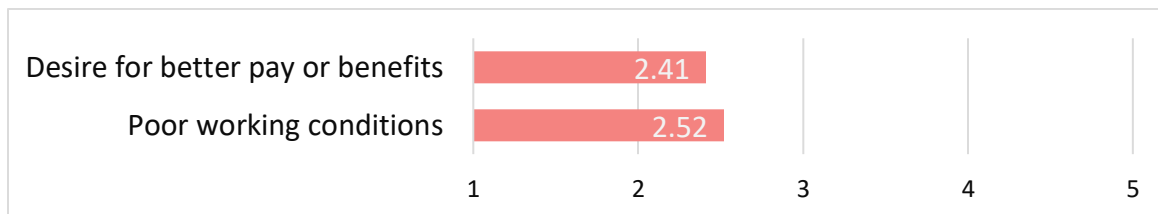
### Exit Survey Analysis

Beyond analyzing referral trends and youth population needs, TJJJ also reviews staff surveys to better understand why individual employees leave the agency and tackle turnover causes wherever possible

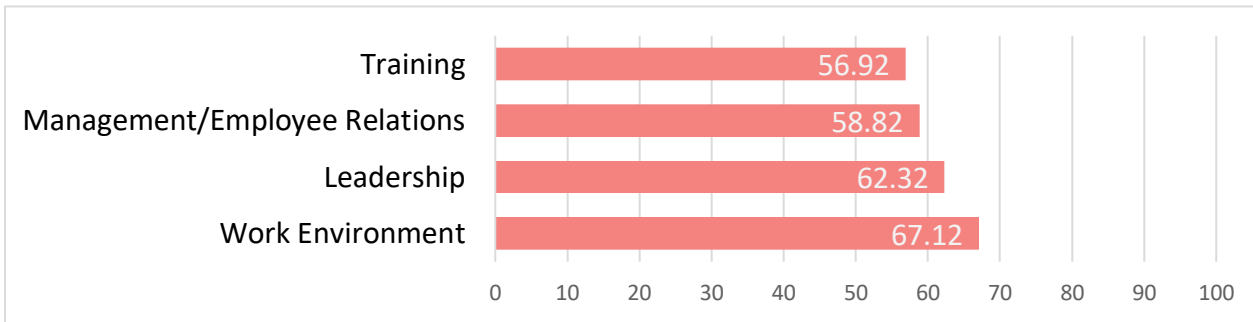
moving forward. TJJJ’s Research Division analyzed exit survey responses since the beginning of FY 24. Of the 569 staff who were terminated for any reason during this fiscal year (as of April 2024), 180 filled out an exit survey (31.6% response rate). Key takeaways include the following:

- Respondents identified “Work Environment” as their most significant concern. More specifically, respondents identified quality of the work environment, the overall workload, and a lack of communication/knowledge about agency changes as issues of interest.
- The top two reasons provided for leaving TJJJ were experiencing a poor work environment (2.52) and desiring better pay or benefits (2.41). The only other items that averaged higher than a 2.00 were leaving due to personal or family health (2.21) and having inadequate work resources (2.11).
- Over 50% of staff who left the agency in FY 24 said they would change their work environment, leadership, management/employee relations, and training. Over 40% of staff who left the agency said they would change their compensation/benefits, internal policies and procedures, and work resources.
- Staff reported that they tend to think their role within the agency fits their skillset. Staff also responded more positively about communication with their supervisors than ever before, indicating recent agency investments in supervision training has had an impact among direct reports.

Please note that none of these data points have changed radically since FY 2023, and that exit survey analysis should be taken in context of selection bias, as responses only reflect those individuals who left TJJJ and chose to take the survey.



5=Staff agree; 1= Staff disagree

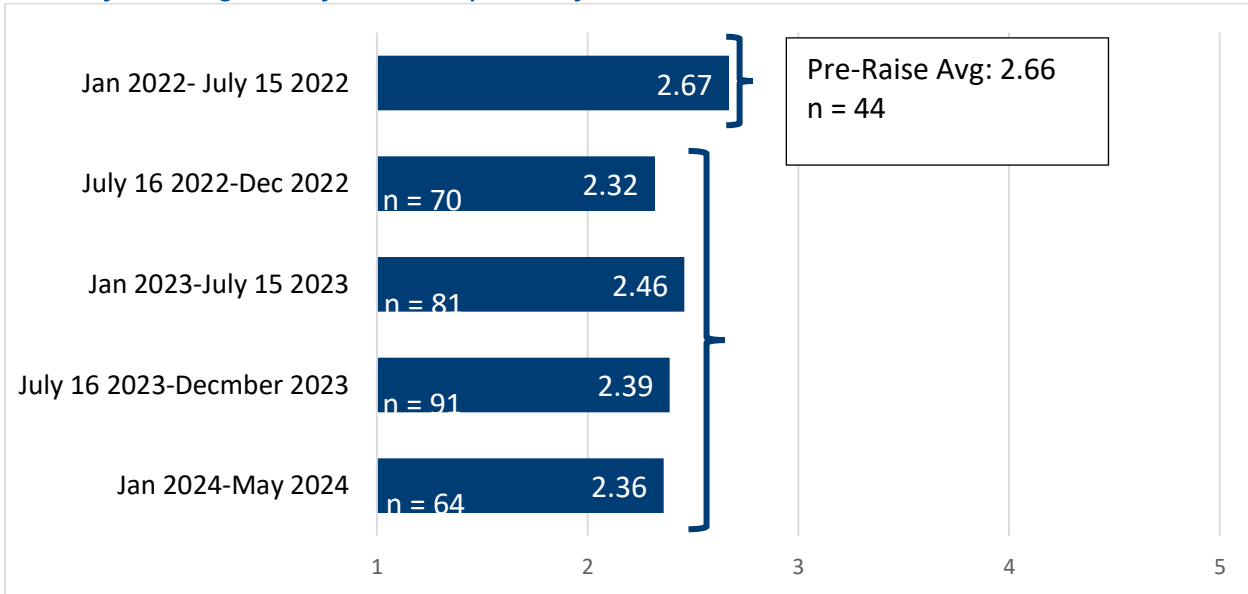


Percent of staff who said they would change the corresponding item.

### JCO-Specific Compensation Response Analysis

During the summer of 2022, the agency — with assistance from the Legislature and Office of the Governor — implemented a 15% pay increase for certain direct care staff, including JCOs. To better understand the impact of these raises on JCO retention, the Research Division analyzed exit survey data before and after the raise went into effect. Of the 350 total analyzed responses from JCOs from January 2022 to May 2024, 44 were from the pre-raise period, while 306 were from the post-raise period. The data showed a decrease in JCOs citing pay as a reason for leaving the agency right after the raises were announced. However, the data has since returned to pre-raise levels, demonstrating the impact of economic factors like inflation and low unemployment levels, as well as the importance of pairing salary increases with culture improvement initiatives to maximize impact.

### Reasons for Leaving: Desire for Better Pay or Benefits



1 = Not a reason for leaving; 5 = A big reason for leaving

### Staff Survey Analysis

To better predict and respond to staff needs, TJJd not only conducts exit surveys; staff also design, disseminate, and analyze responses to the Texas Model Staff Survey. Starting in 2019, the survey has

provided employees with another opportunity to annually share feedback, concerns, and potential reasons for leaving TJJJ. The resulting data allows agency leaders to assess turnover intent, predict retention issues across various agency positions, and make decisions accordingly to improve operations. The most recent iteration of the survey was distributed in February 2024 and had a 57% response rate. Survey results ultimately influenced agency initiatives related to facility safety, training, and communication, among other topics. During the next biennium, the agency will continue disseminating surveys to state staff, youth, and county stakeholders to gather feedback on initiative implementation and progress toward systemwide goals.

## Future Workforce Profile and Expected Changes – Demand Analysis

### Role-Specific Workforce Skills Needed and Functions

#### *Juvenile Correctional Officers*

TJJJ's JCOs have a tremendously challenging job. These positions, which are vital to public safety, involve long and demanding hours including weekends and holidays, on-call statuses, and overnight shifts. They regularly encounter violent, aggressive, or self-injurious behaviors exhibited by youth, necessitating quick thinking, de-escalation skills, and the ability to maintain order and safety at all times. This environment exposes JCOs to high levels of stress, emotional strain, and the risk of physical harm or injury. Their roles encompass facets of law enforcement, behavior management, mentoring, and crisis intervention, requiring a diverse skillset and a deep understanding of TJJJ's trauma-responsive behavior management approach. This involves utilizing the appropriate intervention methods in response to behavioral issues to aid in correcting behavior and teaching new skills, maintaining a consistently safe and structured environment, and employing security measures when youth pose a threat to safety. These factors collectively contribute to the recognition that JCOs face some of the toughest challenges and responsibilities within the state workforce. In a very real sense, these employees are first responders and deserve this designation.

Critical workforce skills and functions for JCOs include:

- Maintaining a clear understanding of youth development and youth rights to ensure effective engagement with and accountability for youth in TJJJ's custody.
- Maintaining legally required supervision of youth in various settings, including dorms, cafeteria, and recreation, ensuring safety and security of the facility at all times. Maintaining orderly transition to and from daily activities across the secure facility.
- Ensuring compliance with rules and consequences for residential facilities, using disciplinary and non-disciplinary techniques to maintain safety and order. Assisting youth in basic behavior change principles and interventions, providing skills to respond to behavioral and emotional challenges, helping youth develop positive and more skillful behavior.
- Providing guidance, support, and reinforcement to youth, helping them develop skillful behavior to replace problem behaviors.
- Maintaining accurate records and reports on youth behavior, incidents, and activities, ensuring all documentation is completed thoroughly and timely.

- Conducting regular safety checks, suicide alert protocols, searches, and inspections to prevent contraband, ensure secure environments, and respond to serious and critical incidents.
- Ensuring compliance with Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and preventing abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Facilitating and ensuring youth participation in the daily schedule and redirecting behaviors that affect the delivery of the daily schedule.
- Mediating conflicts between youth by using de-escalation techniques to resolve issues before they worsen. Responding appropriately and safely to potentially dangerous situations, in adherence to TJJJ Use of Force policy and Handle with Care® approved methods.
- Collaborating with case managers and mental health professionals to ensure effectual behavioral management across settings.
- Monitoring the physical and mental health of youth, providing first aid when necessary, and ensuring access to medical and specialized treatment.
- Transporting youth to and from other secure facilities, court hearings, and other off-site activities as required.

### Case Managers

Case Managers perform an essential role in our system, safeguarding public safety by ensuring youth are accountable to what is expected of them so they may progress through TJJJ's programming. They serve as steady hands to ensure that juveniles comprehend their circumstances within the juvenile justice system and outline the pathway to safe reintegration into society and the consequences for the inability to achieve it. Their role extends to building trusting relationships youth, youth families, and other staff; explaining programmatic requirements; celebrating successes and responding appropriately to areas for growth; and facilitating transitions to new challenges, with the overarching goal of ensuring public safety and fostering positive outcomes for Texas communities.

Critical workforce skills and functions for case managers include:

- Conducting comprehensive assessments of youth risks and needs to develop individualized case plans.
- Updating individualized case plans that outline goals, target behaviors, and interventions tailored to each youth's specific risk factors.
- Coordinating with various staff members, including JCOs, mental health professionals, specialized treatment providers, to ensure progress toward case plan goals and create a cohesive and structured environment for youth.
- Meet with youth regularly to review progress in meeting their case plan goals, making adjustments as necessary.
- Providing individual sessions to address behavioral issues and conduct behavior chain analyses to identify target behaviors in response to incidents.
- Maintaining detailed and accurate case records, documenting interactions, progress, and any changes to the case plan.

- Engaging and working with families to support the youth's goals and case plan when the youth returns to the community.
- Preparing reports and documentation regarding the youth's progress, compliance with the treatment plan, and recommendations for future interventions.
- Assisting JCOs in facilitating programs on the dorm to help youth develop competencies for successful reentry.
- Identifying and connecting youth and their families with external resources, such as substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and educational programs.
- Developing and implementing aftercare plans in coordination with parole staff to ensure continuity of care and support following the youth's release from the facility.

### Mental Health Professionals

Our mental health professionals play a crucial role in ensuring public safety within our system. They serve as pillars of expertise and support, making sure that juveniles receive comprehensive assessments, individualized treatment plans, and the necessary individual and group therapy sessions. MHPs also assess and identify skills that youth must learn and that are directly related to each youth's treatment plan. Their expertise ensures that each youth's treatment plan is tailored to their unique needs, addressing underlying mental health challenges and promoting positive behavioral outcomes. Our mental health professionals contribute significantly to the overall mission of bolstering public safety and fostering improved outcomes for youth by working with JCOs and case managers to implement these case plans effectively.

Critical workforce skills and functions for mental health professionals include:

- Conducting a variety of comprehensive psychological and behavioral assessments to diagnose mental health conditions and identify specialized treatment needs.
- Developing individualized treatment plans based on assessment results, outlining therapeutic goals, youth participation, interventions, and strategies.
- Providing individual, group, and family therapy to address mental health diagnoses and emotional/cognitive challenges.
- Responding during mental health crises by providing immediate support for case managers and JCOs, developing safety and behavior support plans, and reviewing suicide alert protocols.
- Coordinating with psychiatrists and other medical professionals to manage and monitor the use of psychiatric medications.
- Implementing evidence-based behavioral interventions to help youth develop skillful behavior, manage dysregulation, and manage symptoms.
- Collaborating with case managers, JCOs, and other staff to ensure staff are reinforcing the same areas of focus in various settings.
- Maintaining accurate and confidential records of assessments, treatment plans, sessions, and progress.

- Providing clinical expertise and support to staff on mental health symptoms, trauma-responsive behavior management, and effective intervention strategies.

### Factors Influencing the Agency’s Ability to Compete in the Labor Market

Given the increasingly challenging work of juvenile justice practitioners, a robust, stable JCO workforce remains the most significant factor in the ability of the agency to compete in the labor market. Economically, the agency must offer competitive salaries to attract and retain qualified JCOs amidst a competitive job market. As described in the previous sections, these professionals require specialized training and skills to effectively manage and rehabilitate youth. Competing in the labor market requires not only offering attractive compensation but also providing opportunities for professional development within the agency. A stable and skilled JCO workforce enhances the agency's reputation and reinforces our ability to fulfill our core value of promoting public safety. Thus, investing in the recruitment, training, and retention of competent JCOs is essential for the agency's long-term success and sustainability.

During the 88th legislative session, TJJJ received significant funding increases to boost salaries and address critical staffing issues, particularly among JCOs. The agency was provided \$263.6M in appropriations for 2,205.3 full time equivalents (FTEs). Each position in TJJJ will receive a total of 10.25% salary increase over the FY 2024-25 biennium. The agency’s direct care staff also received additional targeted salary adjustments. The below chart provides details on starting salary base pay for JCOs, which is the most difficult to fill position in the agency:

Year	JCO Starting Pay	% Increase
FY2018	\$ 31,512	
FY2019	\$ 36,238	15%
FY2020	\$ 36,238	0%
FY2021	\$ 36,238	0%
FY2022	\$ 36,238	0%
FY2023	\$ 41,674	15%
FY2024	\$ 44,674	7%
FY2025	\$ 47,674	7%

After the raises initiated by the Legislature, TJJJ saw significant improvements in staff recruitment, but overall staffing levels have since returned to critical levels. Factors contributing to this trend include the economic impacts of inflation, low unemployment, and competition with other state agencies and private businesses; the cultural impacts of serving more youth with rising risk and need levels for longer periods of time; and the geographic impacts of attempting to recruit and retain employees in rural areas. The table below shows TJJJ’s strongest JCO staffing strength exists at the Evins facility where, despite a higher

concentration of youth with violent behavior treatment needs, the facility benefits from larger local population, a higher unemployment rate, and a high-structure culture of accountability.

TJJD anticipates requesting additional investment in direct care staff salaries next legislative session to ensure the agency can compete economically with other entities (including other state agencies) and maximize the impact of culture improvement initiatives. Staff are partnering with economic experts and related state agencies to conduct the necessary analysis that will shape the precise request.

Facility/County	Population	Labor Force	Unemployed Persons	Unemployment rate (%)	TJJD available JCO staffing rate
Giddings/Lee	9,098	8,768	330	3.6	58%
Ron Jackson/Brown	15,513	14,772	741	4.8	61%
Gainesville/Cooke	20,615	19,851	764	3.7	64%
Mart/McLennan	129,144	123,500	5,644	4.4	75%
Evins/Hidalgo	380,365	355,121	25,244	6.6	84%

Most recent available data used for all fields. Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data Feb. 2024 and TJJD data May 2024.

BLS data retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/lau/tables.htm#mstate>

### Pay parity for Office of Inspector General peace officers

During the most recent legislative session, TJJD included in its Legislative Appropriations Request a \$5.2M exceptional item to receive Schedule C pay for OIG peace officers. This item was not adopted and remains a priority for TJJD looking toward the 89th regular session. OIG ensures safety for the entire juvenile justice system and is an integral part of TJJD’s accountability continuum. OIG staff investigate reports of criminal and administrative misconduct within TJJD facilities, including allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; they also screen all persons and materials entering TJJD secure facilities. OIG salaries are not competitive with other Texas law enforcement entities, resulting in positions remaining vacant for extended periods of time and significant staffing, recruiting, and retention challenges. Staffing issues have resulted in the inability to maintain adequate 24/7 hotline coverage without longer shifts, overtime, and call wait times for reports of potentially unsafe conditions. Pay parity with comparable positions in Texas would greatly enhance OIG’s ability to recruit and retain essential public safety personnel.

### Gap Analysis

#### Anticipated surplus or shortage in staffing levels

Retaining JCOs is currently the most pressing challenge for TJJD. As of May 1, 2024, TJJD was operating at approximately 70% staffing needed to provide basic supervision to youth in secure facilities. Critically, TJJD had 112 JCOs in pre-service training as of the same date. Enhancing retention of this cohort is a top priority for TJJD leadership.



Secure Facilities	Estimated JCOs Needed for Current Population	Total Available JCO Staff	Percent of Needed Positions Filled with Available Staff	Percent Over Capacity
Evins	189	159	84%	119%
Gainesville	144	92	64%	157%
Giddings	148	87	58%	171%
Mart	198	148	75%	134%
Ron Jackson	110	67	61%	164%
<b>Secure Total</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>143%</b>
As of May 1, 2024				

As discussed elsewhere in this report, during the 88th regular session, the Legislature appropriated additional funds for TJJD to construct new state facilities near population centers. The agency anticipates the new facilities will improve TJJD’s overall staffing strength because they will be located near workforce resources. However, site selection, design, and construction will take years to complete and therefore will not have an immediate impact on system outcomes.

TJJD does not anticipate any areas of staffing level surplus in the next biennium.

#### Anticipated surplus or shortage of skills

A JCO’s work is incredibly demanding and requires the ability to remain regulated and ready to perform crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques at all times. As TJJD moves forward with the Texas Model and our youth population continues to enter our custody with more acute needs, a high competency of fundamental behavior management skills will be critical for JCOs. Proper structure, accountability, behavior modification, and intervention require staff to have active and appropriate engagement with youth. Once staff develop an adequate level of mastery with these concepts, efficacy in their role will also increase, which improves retention outcomes.

During the ongoing implementation of the Texas Model, TJJD is proactively addressing potential implementation barriers related to the shortage of skills, particularly focusing on direct-care staff skill development. Current skill shortages that the agency is proactively working to address include:

- Ensuring a structured environment that promotes safety.
- Ability to co-regulate TJJD’s aggressive youth before incidents escalate/
- Basic behavior shaping principles.
- Reinforcing skills learned during DBT skills groups to target behaviors identified in behavior chain analyses and in each youth’s case plan.
- Continuing to reinforce the structure needed to deliver effective programming.

Additionally, beginning May 2024, TJJJ is conducting weekly training for JCOs on Texas Model principles. This training aims to provide additional tools and resources for our JCOs to fulfill their roles in the Texas Model, and will serve as ongoing training for staff to maintain training compliance and for specific areas of focus identified by facility leadership.

TJJJ does not anticipate any areas of skill surplus in the next biennium.

## Section III: Workforce Gap Elimination Strategies

### Organizational Change – Roles and Responsibilities

TJJJ leadership staff were tasked with developing transformative initiatives that will reshape the agency into an unrecognizable entity with the utmost focus on public safety. Part of these initiatives includes a focus on developing staff leadership capabilities and building a robust pipeline of capable leaders who are ready to take on key roles within the organization as part of succession planning efforts. Direct efforts toward leadership development involve modeling high-level cross-collaboration, implementing significant and asynchronous training programs for all staff members, and fostering a culture of transparency among leaders and staff alike. The focus ensures staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in their roles and an understanding of each employee’s contribution to the agency’s mission and success. By enhancing agency culture, improving operations, and implementing innovative programs like the Texas Model, TJJJ will become a more attractive employer, aligning with recruitment plans to invest in the talent of individuals who want to pursue a career in public safety.

These initiatives are currently underway and are explained in more detail below. The direct reports of each director listed manage unique tasks that support their divisional leaders, and so on throughout the organizational chart. The goal is that each employee in the agency be able to articulate and act upon their “vital few” or key priorities, all of which support the Executive Director’s goals.

#### **The Executive Director will:**

- Develop a plan and implementation strategy for the Texas Model that focuses on safety, accountability, and transparency.
- Implement strategies to drive agency culture change to achieve “unrecognizable” status.

#### **The Deputy Executive Director will:**

- Directly assist the Executive Director in leading the agency and county partners towards a single unified juvenile justice system.
- Lead direct reports and divisions in modeling high-level cross-collaboration to effectively implement new programs, and to monitor and improve secure facility operations.
- Bring the agency vision to secure facilities and work closely with directors and facility leadership to ensure we improve the culture, coordination, and outcomes at secure facilities.

**The Deputy Executive Director of Probation, Reentry, and Community Services will:**

- Assist in strengthening a single unified juvenile justice system.
- Build a Probation, Reentry, and Community Services Division with a shared vision and goals.
- Implement, provide assistance, and report on the performance of the additional funding provided to probation departments this biennium.
- Provide needed support to our state secure facilities, being present and engaged.

**The Deputy Executive Director for Support Operations and Finance will:**

- Ensure respective departments are functioning efficiently and meeting agency expectations.
- Develop relationships with probation chiefs to gain greater understanding of grant programs and local funding needs.
- Provide greater efficiency and effective grant management for the system.
- Develop risk-based funding model for system, and educate stakeholders on details of funding model.

**The General Counsel will:**

- Evaluate and assess the OGC personnel's skills, talents, and contribution to the OGC and TJJD, resulting in informed decisions regarding staffing needs, staffing assignments, and staffing salaries.
- Revise the existing ANE processes and officer discipline procedures, prioritizing safety, accountability, and transparency while also emphasizing due process and communication.
- Examine and evaluate the current laws, policies, and practices regarding processes which the OGC supervises, conducts, or reviews, and make recommendations for changes and improvements in light of TJJD's changing youth profile.

**The Chief of Staff will:**

- Monitor and assist with implementation of Sunset recommendations and other directives from state leadership.
- Perform strategic alignment to the extent possible so executive teammates have greater capacity to focus on big picture change efforts.
- Maintain strong, accountable, and transparent relationships with the probation field, the Legislature, and other stakeholders so all groups have an accurate view of our work, successes, and challenges.
- Refine and develop support structures for the board to facilitate members' engagement, active oversight, and positive impact.

**The Senior Director of Integrated Treatment and Intervention Service will:**

- Develop and implement strategies for safe and rehabilitative secure facilities.
- Ensure the agency delivers respected and effective treatment programming.
- Ensure education and connection with stakeholders.

### The Director of Structured Programming and Accountability will:

- Serve ambassador and co-developer of the Texas Model.
- Conduct ongoing Behavior Chain Analysis training for direct-care staff.
- Lead establishment of DBT skills training groups for all secure facilities.

## Recruitment and Retention

### Employee Wellness Program

Last session, TJJJ included \$6M in its Legislative Appropriations Request for staff retention initiatives. Of these requests, \$450,000 (or 7.5%) was appropriated; these funds were allocated for employee wellness counselors. The program's three licensed counselors provide a variety of services, including the following:

- Providing support for managing occupational stress, well-being, work/life balance life, transition periods, and opportunities for staff to process and receive needed help. *Services are confidential and voluntary.*
- Providing immediate support following work-related injuries, including during the worker's compensation protocol or documentation of serious incidents.
- Accepting and following up on referrals from campus leadership or colleagues.
- Providing support during tragic events, such as the loss of a fellow staff member.
- Hosting workshops and experiential activities to manage stress.
- Hosting monthly training sessions for sharing information, tools, and resources across agency teams.
- Recognizing and celebrating employees at secure facilities to improve morale and facility culture.

### Retention-related Exceptional Items not Funded

The remainder of the exceptional item requests were developed to help TJJJ recruit and retain staff, increase morale, and invest in the professional development. Each initiative was designed to serve as a multiplier for staffing stability, alongside salary increases. These items were:

- \$400,000 for tuition assistance for 25 employees each year;
- \$200,000 for tuition for the UT leadership training for facility staff (classes for 36 employees each year);
- \$4.5M for annual \$1,500 retention incentive for direct care staff; and
- \$500,000 for 0.5% contribution to the Law Enforcement and Custodial Officer Supplemental (LECOS) Retirement Fund for JCOs.

The agency did not receive funding for these initiatives. TJJJ plans to include retention-related initiatives in its next Legislative Appropriations Request to implement strategies for which the agency does not have dedicated funding.

## Recruitment Initiatives

TJJD is currently implementing the following recruitment initiatives and evaluating other opportunities:

- Outreach to local universities and colleges with criminal justice programs to attract students interested in juvenile justice careers.
- Hosting career fairs or information sessions at colleges and military installations to engage with possible candidates considering a career in law enforcement or social work.
- Utilizing social media platforms to advertise job openings and highlight the department's mission and values.
- Partnering with community organizations and nonprofits that focus on youth populations to reach potential candidates.
- Offering internships or volunteer opportunities to students interested in gaining experience in juvenile justice.
- Providing incentives, such as signing bonuses, for candidates who commit to working in juvenile justice roles.
- Collaborating with local law enforcement agencies to help promote career opportunities within local spheres.
- Participating in career fairs and events specifically tailored to criminal justice professionals.
- Providing comprehensive training and professional development opportunities to attract and retain talented individuals in juvenile justice careers.
- Streamlining the hiring process to increase the timeliness of employment offers.

## Retention Initiatives

TJJD is currently implementing the following retention initiatives and evaluating other opportunities:

- Expanding initiatives developed directly from employee survey findings, including the executive director's "Bonus for Proposals to be Unrecognizable" initiative, location-specific town halls, increased support presence in secure facilities to communicate and align vision, and the development of staff to maintain structure.
- Evaluating salaries to ensure they are competitive with similar roles in other sectors to attract and retain talented staff.
- Fostering a positive workplace culture where staff feel valued, respected, and supported by their supervisors and colleagues.
- Pairing new staff with experienced mentors to provide guidance, support, and encouragement as they navigate their roles, including the buddy system for JCOs.
- Offering ongoing training programs for career advancement in the form of role-specific and generalized training opportunities, including:
  - Full implementation of DBT skills training groups for key staff across the agency to ensure staff have the tools necessary to operate safe and accountable dorm environments.
  - Full implementation of targeted, routinized training programs on behavior chain analysis.

- Developing a leadership academy focused on identifying and investing in budding leaders across the agency.
- Providing in-house continuing education credits for licensed mental health professionals and expanding to other licensed professionals where appropriate.
- Providing clear pathways for career advancement within the organization, including opportunities for promotion through the JCO career ladder and other leadership roles for talented employees.
- Strengthening programs to recognize and reward outstanding staff performance, including bonuses, incentives, awards, or public acknowledgment.
- Evaluating methods to include employees working non-traditional shifts (e.g., overnight, weekend, and holidays) in recognition initiatives.
- Promoting employee wellness through policies and initiatives that support healthy work-life balance, including the employee wellness program, encouraging regular appointments with medical and mental health professionals, leveraging schedule within the context of 24/7 operations to ensure maximum flexibility and the ability to use paid leave and compensatory time, and evaluating critical incident debriefings to ensure Critical Incident Stress Management techniques are included.
- Providing team-building opportunities to reduce interpersonal conflict at work and increase morale by improving working environment.
- Enhancing internal communications to ensure staff feel informed about agency changes and initiatives.
- Regularly and consistently soliciting feedback from staff through surveys, supervision sessions, or one-on-one meetings to understand concerns and identify areas for improvement.
- Advertising comprehensive state benefits, including health insurance, retirement plans, and other Employee Assistance Program opportunities that contribute to overall job satisfaction.

#### Leadership Development and Succession Planning Initiatives

Eliminating workforce gaps requires not only a robust labor pool from which to recruit employees but also strong supervisors to lead, retain, and support those employees. Together, supervisors at TJJJ are tasked with:

- Improving vertical and horizontal communication throughout TJJJ's organizational chart;
- Providing line staff with the resources and role clarification they need to fulfill their job duties;
- Shaping agency culture to align with TJJJ's core values of safety, accountability, and transparency; and
- Building lines of succession as employees leave the agency or change positions.

TJJJ has implemented various strategies to accomplish the tasks listed above including but not limited to the following:

- **Regular training opportunities.** Staff receive regular training to ensure the agency is responsive to the dynamic needs of committed youth and best equipped to implement agency initiatives. For example, JCOs and case managers engage in weekly trainings to learn about, discuss, and practice

DBT skills that are critical to the Texas Model. Trainings include information on roles in facility operations that prioritize a rehabilitative milieu in which youth are held accountable for their behavior.

- **Strengthening Supervision.** In recent years, staff surveys showed a clear need for more effective, communicative, and attentive supervisors across the agency. Staff reported they were promoted because they were particularly effective at their previous role, only to find they needed an expanded — or even entirely new — skillset to serve as a supervisor. In response, TJJJ partnered with workforce development experts to create the agency’s Strengthening Supervision training. Through a two-day intensive session, one-day follow-up, and sustainability program, supervisors at TJJJ learn best practices covering a variety of topics, including navigating team conflict, addressing employee burnout, solving cross-divisional problems, and supporting skill development among direct reports.
- **Mentorships.** Beyond day-to-day supervisors, employees in leadership roles have also communicated a need for assistance with and attention on professional development. TJJJ’s mentorship program uses feedback from supervisors to identify areas of growth for specific employees and match them with other staff who can provide additional support. The program aims to improve cross-agency communication, demonstrate clear investment in employee needs, and promote a collaborative leadership model that aligns with TJJJ’s values.

While these initiatives have played key roles in TJJJ’s long-term culture shift, additional investment in leadership development is necessary to improve retention and proactively plan for the agency’s future. Over the next biennium, the agency intends to expand Strengthening Supervision’s sustainability program to ensure staff across all secure facilities implement the training with fidelity. Further, TJJJ’s training department is currently developing curricula for a leadership academy that will follow Strengthening Supervision. Through this academy, TJJJ will focus on building the skillsets of effective supervisors so they are best positioned to take on leadership roles moving forward. Finally, TJJJ is partnering with other state agencies to formalize and expand its mentorship program so more staff can benefit from existing support structures.

### Information Technology solutions

In navigating technological advancements, TJJJ faces dual concerns: optimizing new technology to streamline staff workflows and safeguarding data from cyber threats. Priority lies in securing data integrity to inform policy and legislative decisions effectively. Continuous adaptation is crucial to fortify firewalls, encryption, and data security measures against evolving cyber risks. Identifying systems ripe for modernization, such as transitioning to digital incident reporting and compliant audio-to-text conversions, enhances operational efficiency. Key goals include fostering an IT service culture, aligning departmental strategies with employee needs, ensuring data reliability for informed decision making, and outlining a comprehensive enterprise architecture to guide long-term system modernization efforts within TJJJ. Current and upcoming projects aligned with these goals include:

- Deploying a new youth case management system this calendar year and retiring TJJJ’s current antiquated system.

- Enhancing and protecting the network to safeguard agency information, including expanding youth and JCO access to computers and tablets within facilities and providing reliable Wi-Fi in all secure locations.
- Organizing and leading efforts to expand data-sharing capabilities between county probation departments to further the state’s goal of unifying the juvenile justice system.



