

Texas Commission on Jail Standards



2024 Annual Report February 1, 2025

Empowering local government to provide safe, secure and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas.

Brandon Wood
Executive Director

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This report is made pursuant to Chapter 511, Section 511.015 Government Code and covers activities of calendar year 2024.

I. **Mission Statement**

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 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 demonstrated a strong commitment to improving conditions in the jails by granting the Commission 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 and Title 37 of the Texas Administrative Code which serve as Minimum Jail Standards.

The Commission serves the citizens of Texas with programs and services for the custody, care, treatment, and supervision of adult inmates in county jails. Although we retain the responsibility to regulate privately operated municipal facilities, most of our activities are oriented toward county functions. 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 complaints, and various other activities relating to policy development and enforcement. Contrary to popular belief, the Commission does not have authority over the state prison system, or juvenile detention facilities. The commission does regulate facilities that house inmates from other states on a contract basis, but we do not have authority to inspect facilities housing only federal inmates, regardless of who operates it.

We work closely with city, county, and state government officials in our duties to enforce jail standards. Our primary relationships are with county judges, commissioners, sheriffs and private management companies to provide consultation and technical assistance; review and comment on plans for construction, modification, and renovation of jails; and conduct regular jail inspections to ensure compliance with state law. Our secondary relationships extend to architectural and criminal justice professional associations and to regulatory agencies concerned with fire safety, legal issues, civil liberties, health, and mental health. Jail inmates awaiting criminal trial or administrative hearings, serving misdemeanor sentences, or awaiting transfer to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice after felony convictions benefit from our efforts by being housed in safe and sanitary environments. The agency also engages with the inmates that are confined in our county jails, their families and advocacy groups that deal with inmates and their conditions of confinement. We provide a service to the citizens of Texas through our Standards, which mandate secure jail design and operation, effective inmate management, use of accepted correctional methods, and programming based on available resources.

II. Organization

The Commission on Jail Standards is headquartered in Austin, Texas. Our policy-making body consists of nine Commission members appointed by the governor to staggered six-year terms expiring on January 31 of odd-numbered years. The Commission consists of a sheriff from a county with a population of more than 35,000, a sheriff from a county with a population of 35,000 or less, a county judge, a county commissioner, a practitioner of medicine, and four private citizens at least one of whom is from a county with a population of 35,000 or less. The chairperson is designated by the governor, with the vice-chairperson elected by the membership. Our Commission holds quarterly meetings as required. Special meetings are held as needed. Responsibilities of the Commissioners include promulgation, adoption, revision, amendment, and repeal of rules; enforcement of rules through remedial action or action in district court; and consideration of applications for variances from minimum standards. Members are not compensated for their work except for allowable travel and per diem expenses.

Commission members as of December 31, 2024, were as follows:

Member	City	Term Expires
Judge Bill Stoudt, Chair	Longview	2025
Dr. Esmaeil Porsa, M.D., Vice-Chair	Houston	2029
Mr. Ross Reyes	Melissa	2027
Sheriff Pinky Gonzales	Refugio	2027*
Sheriff Kelly Rowe	Lubbock	2027
Mr. Duane Lock	Southlake	2029
Commissioner Ben Perry	Waco	2029
Patricia Anthony	Garland	2025
Monica McBride	Alpine	2025

*Sheriff Gonzales retired effective 12/31/2024 and is no longer eligible to serve after this date

During 2024, the Commission had 28 allotted positions. Staff consisted of the following 27 positions. We ended 2024 with one (1) vacancy. Positions were as follows:

Executive Director	E-086
Systems Analyst VII	B28
Manager II	B23
Compliance Analyst III (Critical Inc.)	B23
Purchaser V	B21
Accountant IV	B20
Program Specialist IV (3 positions)	B20
Staff Services Officer III	B19
Inspector V (9 positions)	B19
Program Specialist III (1 position)	B19
Program Specialist II (7 positions)	B18
Program Specialist I (MH Trainer)	B17

III. Agency Objectives & Funding

The Commission fulfills its mission by allocating its resources and carrying out its statutorily-mandated duties through five distinct but related strategies. Although inspection of jail facilities and enforcement of Minimum Jail Standards is our most critical and visible strategy, the Commission's remaining four strategies are vital as well and assist counties in achieving and maintaining constitutional standards—the primary goal of the agency.

National research, statewide input, and case law are among the resources considered when developing or revising the Standards. The Commission reviews, creates, and amends minimum standards for the purpose of building and maintaining safe, secure, and efficient jail operations. The Commission approves proposed revisions to the Standards and publishes them in the Texas Register for public comment. The Commission considers the public comments to determine whether the proposed standards need further amendment. The Commission then reviews the final version for adoption and, if adopted, publishes it again in the Texas Register.

In 2023, the Commission began the process of reviewing all jail standards and rules on a 4-year rotating schedule.

In addition to the appropriated funds, the agency charges inspection fees to cover the cost of inspecting facilities housing 30% or more non-Texas sentenced inmates or for conducting a re-inspection if the areas of non-compliance have not been corrected.

To meet agency objectives, each strategy is allocated a specific number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions.

A. Inspection & Enforcement

(15 full-time positions) Inspection activities consist of fair and impartial monitoring and enforcing compliance of adopted rules and procedures. Of these 15 positions, 2 are dedicated to Border Security as part of Operation Lone Star and related activities. This objective includes the development and implementation of a uniform inspection process. Uniform inspection reports and procedures for inspecting jail facilities are developed under the provision of Chapters 351 and 361 of the Local Government Code and Chapter 511 of the Government Code.

As a result of this agency's Sunset Review, the agency has moved from an annual inspection schedule to a "Risk Based" inspection process. The agency has presented at the Sheriffs Association conference and Texas Jail Association Conferences explaining the new risk-based inspection process. The agency has also sent TA memos to all counties in regard to the risk-based inspection process. Inspectors have also presented at the Correctional management institute of Texas Jail Administrators Management and Operations class.

The frequency and extent to which facilities under Commission jurisdiction are inspected will be determined by the risk level of each facility. Commission staff shall perform at least one comprehensive inspection of each facility under Commission jurisdiction every twenty-four months. Limited compliance inspections and special inspections shall be used when deemed appropriate by the risk level of the jail.

The comprehensive inspection will determine compliance with minimum jail standards. The inspectors review the jail's security, control, and general conditions, and they look at not only the operation of the facility, but also its physical plant. Special inspections are conducted on facilities that have either been identified as high-risk or found to be in non-compliance. These unannounced inspections may also be performed when county officials indicate that the non-compliant items have been corrected, in which case the inspector will personally examine the areas that require correction or review documentation that demonstrates compliance. This will prove crucial when the issues involve safety and/or security issues.

The Executive Director reviewed all inspection reports, and, if the facility was found to be in compliance, a certificate of compliance was mailed to the facility. However, if the inspector noted deficiencies, a notice of non-compliance was issued, which specified the standards with which the facility had failed to comply and included detailed steps the jail was required to take to correct the deficiencies. The notice of non-compliance was sent via certified mail.

B. Construction Plan Review

(2 full-time positions) The construction facility planning staff provides consultation and technical assistance to local governments for jail construction that meet Standards. There is extensive consultation and interaction with state and local officials, design professionals and consultants. Staff review plan documents at three phases: schematic design, design development, and construction documents. At each phase, staff note items requiring resolution and satisfaction prior to proceeding to the next phase. This process assists in ensuring that counties understand jail requirements and helps to provide more efficient, effective, and economic jails that comply with Minimum Standards. On-site consultations are desirable when possible and are often a more productive method of consultation with designers, architects, construction contractors, sheriffs, and other county officials once construction has begun. Upon a county's request, the facility planning staff also analyze facility needs using population projections and other pertinent data to help counties determine their future incarceration needs.

C. Management Consultation

(5 full-time positions and 1 part-time 80%) Commission staff also provide needed jail management training and consultation to county representatives in person in our Austin office and by phone, written correspondence, regional training classes, and on-site visits. Staff provide on-going technical assistance on matters such as structural issues, life safety, and overall jail operation. Staff also analyze jail staffing needs

to assist counties in operating safe and secure facilities and in developing and implementing operational plans that meet Minimum Standards. Operational plans include procedures for classification of inmates, health services, discipline and grievance, inmate services and activities, and seven additional areas. This strategy is important because it focuses on assisting counties to achieve and maintain compliance with Standards, which transmits to county jails the knowledge and tools required to run a safe and secure jail and thereby reduces county liability. Staff also provides Mental Health training for jailers in response to mandated training required by SB 1849, to include required annual Suicide Prevention training.

D. Auditing Population & Costs

(1 part-time position 20%) This strategy requires collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data concerning inmate populations, felony backlog, immigration, licensed jailer turnover, and jail operational costs. Commission staff assist counties with completing their jail population reports and provides technical assistance. Commission staff continues to collect, analyze, and provide statistical data to agencies that help them predict and prepare for incarceration trends at the state and local levels. They also receive audits of the commissary and general operations of the county jails. Staff analyze these audits to assess jail program costs and to develop Average Daily Cost estimates—information that is often requested by other state agencies and counties as well as members of the Legislature.

In addition, effective September 1, 2022, The Commission transitioned to an online portal, which allows counties to submit their population data online. Throughout 2023, The Commission has continued to improve and work on its portal system so counties can directly import their data and forms into the portal and review their historical submissions. However, work on the portal is still ongoing, and The Commission anticipates that all work on the portal will be done by August 2024.

E. Indirect Administration

(4 full-time positions and 1 part-time position) Indirect administration strategy accounts for functions such as finance, human resources, and IT, which had previously been allocated among the five existing strategies. This not only allows for a more accurate representation of the funds and resources utilized for each of the five primary strategies but also allows the agency to properly budget and plan for activities not directly tied to a particular strategy, such as IT needs, which would support employees assigned to several different strategies.

IV. 2024 Operational Performance in Review

A. Changes to Standards

1. § 255.6(c) Advisory Committees

House Bill 2831 required The Commission to establish an advisory committee to advise the commission and make recommendations on matters related to the

confinement in a county jail of persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and provided requirements for membership, and to submit a legislative report on December 1 of each even-numbered year. The rule was proposed and adopted as follows:

(c) **Intellectual or Developmental Disability Advisory Committee.** As required by Government Code 511.022, the commission establishes an Intellectual or Developmental Disability Advisory Committee to advise the commission and make recommendations on matters related to the confinement in county jail of persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The Committee consists of a minimum of thirteen members as follows:

- (1) one representative of the commission;
- (2) one representative of the Department of State Health Services;
- (3) one representative of the Health and Human Services Commission with expertise in intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- (4) one representative of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement;
- (5) one representative of the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments;
- (6) one sheriff of a county with a population of 80,000 or more;
- (7) one sheriff of a county with a population of fewer than 80,000;
- (8) two representatives of statewide organizations that advocate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- (9) one representative who is a mental health professional with a focus on trauma and intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- (10) one representative from a state supported living center;
- (11) one member who has an intellectual or developmental disability or whose family member has an intellectual or developmental disability; and
- (12) one member who represents the public.

No public comment was received.

2. § 259.135 Dormitories

The Commission proposed a rule to increase the congregation levels allowed in dormitories operated under the direct supervision model. This change supports the growing number of county jails implementing the direct supervision model, and reduces the number of variances needed by county jails. The rule was adopted as follows:

§ 259.135 Dormitories

Dormitories shall contain 9 to 48 bunks. Dormitories operated as direct supervision may accommodate more than 48 inmates but shall not exceed more than 72 inmates. Dormitories shall contain not less than 40 square feet of clear floor space for the first bunk plus 18 square feet of clear floor space for each additional bunk. Each dormitory shall have adequate toilets, lavatories, and may include showers. Dormitories with contiguous day rooms in direct supervision facilities may exceed 40% of the facility capacity.

3. § 259.136 Day Rooms

The Commission proposed a rule to increase the congregation levels allowed in dayrooms operated under the direct supervision model. This change supports the growing number of county jails implementing the direct supervision model, and reduces the number of variances needed by county jails. The rule was adopted as follows:

§ 259.136 Day Rooms

All single cells, multiple occupancy cells, and dormitories shall be provided with day room space. Separation cells, violent cells, holding cells, detoxification cells, and medical cells are exempt from this requirement. Day rooms shall accommodate no more than 48 inmates. Dayrooms operated as direct supervision may accommodate more than 48 inmates but shall not exceed more than 72 inmates. Based on the design capacity of the cells served, the day rooms shall contain: not less than 40 square feet of clear floor space for the first inmate plus 18 square feet of clear floor space for each additional inmate; a sufficient number of toilets, lavatories, and showers as approved by the Commission; and mirrors, seating, and tables. A utility sink should be provided. Convenient electrical receptacles circuited with ground fault protection shall be provided. Power to receptacles should be individually controlled outside of the day room.

B. Jail Inspections

During Calendar Year 2024, the agency completed the shift to the risk-based inspection process. A total of 113 comprehensive jail inspections were performed by inspectors. During the year 2023, staff conducted 62 special inspections of high-risk and/or non-compliant jails. During the year 2024 inspectors conducted 144 Limited Compliance Inspections. In addition, 86 jails were found to be out of compliance during a Comprehensive or special inspection. Of the non-compliant jails, 51 received an administrative reinspection. In total, 370 inspections were conducted, all of which were unannounced. Legislation has exempted certain private jails from regulation since September 1, 2003, which may impact the number of inspections during the year.

1. Compliant Counties

At the beginning of 2024, 227 jails (93.03%) complied with Minimum Jail Standards. As of December 31, 2024, we have 225 certified jails, (comprising 93.00 %) of the county and private facilities under our regulatory review

Staff conducted eighteen (18) occupancy inspections on completed construction projects during 2023.

2. Noncompliant Counties

On December 31, 2024, 17 jails were in a status of noncompliance, representing 7.00% of the facilities on the inspection list. We issue notices of non-compliance in three categories: Life Safety, Management, and Construction. In most instances, the counties receiving the notices have taken positive and responsible action toward eliminating cited deficiencies to meet the requirements of state law. We requested counties to appear before the Commission to address the corrective action necessary by the Commission if the Commission believed the counties were not acting expeditiously to resolve their deficiencies. As a result of these meetings, the Commission issued a remedial order to four (4) counties/facilities (Falls, Harris, Runnels, and Shelby). Commission staff conducts monthly progress reviews of noncompliant counties to assess the status of these facilities as they move toward compliance with Minimum Jail Standards.

3. Closed Jails

Presently, 20 counties have closed jails. Rather than maintaining their own facility, the following counties opted to board their few inmates in an adjacent:

Glasscock	Cottle	Jeff Davis	McMullen
Borden	Floyd	Kenedy	Motley
Briscoe	Foard	Kent	Throckmorton
Coke	Hartley	King	Sterling
Concho	Irion	Loving	Armstrong

Additionally, during calendar year 2024, one private facility (Garza P) closed.

A. Construction Plan Review

The Commission reviewed 30 construction/renovation documents. Several counties are embarking upon renovations of aging facilities while others are planning new facilities to replace well-worn facilities or to add additional beds to meet local needs.

1. Construction Completed

The following four (4) counties opened a new facility during the year. These projects represented a total of zero beds:

List of completed projects	# of beds
Bell County Jail Infirmary	0
Harris County Criminal Justice Center	0-(8 Remote Holding Cells)

Hidalgo County Courthouse	0-(81 Remote Holding Cells)
Potter County Courthouse	0-(8 Remote Holding Cells)

2. Major Renovations/Additions Completed

The following eight (8) counties completed major renovations or additions during the year.

List of Renovations/ Additions	# of beds
Brazoria County Courthouse	0-(15Remote Holding Cells)
Camp County Jail Addition	23
Coryell County Jail Addition	47
Johnson County Law Enforcement Center – Building C4 Security Upgrade	0 (97 beds)
San Jacinto County Jail Renovation	0 (144 beds)
Tarrant County Correctional Center – BAS Replacement Phases 1-4	0
Willacy (P) County Regional Facility	568
Williamson County Jail – Magistrate Court	0

All construction and renovation/additions projects totaled 638 beds.

3. Jails under Construction or Planning

At the end of 2024, 34 counties were involved in planning or construction projects that will result in 1,551 beds. This figure is an estimate based on projects identified on January 1, 2024, and scheduled for completion by December 31, 2025; other projects identified during the year may cause this number to be adjusted further. In addition to plan reviews, the Planning Department completed thirteen (13) Facility Needs Analyses, which assisted counties in determining their future jail needs.

B. Management Consultation

The Commission provided technical assistance to county officials throughout the year on jail matters, such as alternative programs, population control, structural issues, life safety, and overall operations. Although the Commission does not log telephone calls, it estimates that it received several thousand telephone calls during the year for technical assistance regarding jail management and operations. In addition, the Commission conducted three (3) in-house management consultations at the Austin office; as in previous years, a majority of meetings are being conducted remotely. It also conducted 260 management consultations on-site with County Judges, Commissioner’s Courts, and Sheriffs concerning the most economical and

feasible ways to achieve compliance with state law, and, in some cases, with federal court orders. One (1) county received assistance with analysis of jail staffing needs, and 1,466 operational plans were reviewed by staff during the year. Lastly, the Commission issued six (6) Technical Assistance memorandums statewide:

January 2024 – Regarding the use of BOX to transmit documents

April 2024 – Regarding the Texas Uniform Health Status Update Form and transferring inmates to other facilities including TDCJ

April 2024 – Regarding the updated Offense Severity Scale

June 2024 – Regarding LMHA/LBHA and County Jails

November 2024 – Regarding 5th Circuit opinion of public access to pretrial hearings

December 2024 – Regarding Complaint levels

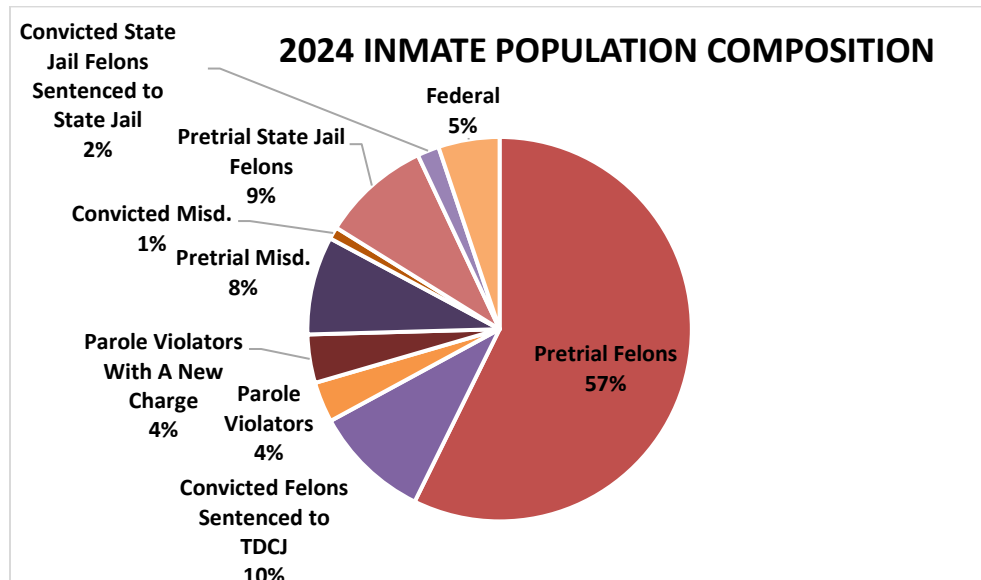
Municipalities continued to request information and assistance on jail construction or renovation. Although municipal jails that are not operated privately under authority of Local Government Code Chapter 351 are not required to conform to Texas Minimum Jail Standards, municipalities continue to show confidence in the Commission to provide them unbiased information and guidance upon which to base decisions concerning construction or operation.

C. Auditing

1. Population

Per Government Code Section 511.0101, each county is required to report the number of inmates housed in their facility jail and other facilities if they are housing inmates elsewhere on the first day of the month. Thus, based on the information reported to The Commission, it was determined that, on average, in 2024, Texas county jails collectively operated at 73% capacity and had approximately 71,235 inmates at a given time.

The following is an approximate breakdown of the composition of the inmates housed in Texas County Jails in 2024:



**This representation does not include all offense categories so totals may not equal 100%.*

Approximately 11% of the inmates housed in Texas County jails in 2024 were held on a contract basis for either another county jail in Texas, a federal agency such as the US Marshals Service, or another state. In 2024, the only county that housed out-of-state contract inmates was Hudspeth County. On average, Hudspeth County housed approximately three inmates at a given time for New Mexico.

2. Immigration

Senate Bill (SB) 1698, 82nd Legislature, requires each county to report the number of inmates with immigration detainers and the associated cost each month. From January 2024 to October 2024, county jails and Operation Lonestar Units reported approximately 18,885 inmates with immigration detainers in their facilities. The total cost to house these inmates with immigration detainers during this period was \$129,756,209.03. Below is a monthly breakdown of these totals:

JANUARY 2024 - OCTOBER 2024 MONTHLY IMMIGRATION TOTALS				
REPORTING PERIOD	NUMBER OF INMATES	NUMBER OF INMATE DAYS	AVERAGE COST PER DAY	TOTAL MONTHLY COST
Jan-24	6154	146845	\$85.19	\$12,510,254.16
Feb-24	6437	139987	\$87.96	\$12,312,832.24
Mar-24	6720	152947	\$88.16	\$13,483,689.69
Apr-24	6183	139636	\$88.25	\$12,323,510.44
May-24	7076	163243	\$86.21	\$14,073,781.83
Jun-24	6295	137790	\$87.55	\$12,063,226.84
Jul-24	6071	143049	\$89.53	\$12,806,685.87
Aug-24	6427	145516	\$89.17	\$12,975,389.46
Sep-24	6633	146160	\$90.10	\$13,168,694.63
Oct-24	6857	155673	\$90.18	\$14,038,143.87

**If you add/combine the total number of inmates each month from the chart above, it will not equal the total number of inmates with immigration detainees in Texas's county jails this year. This is because counties report the same inmate each month until they are released; thus, if an inmate was held for three months, they would be counted on three different monthly reports.*

In terms of the number of inmates with immigration detainees and the associated cost for the months of November 2024 – December 2024, the Commission is currently unable to provide an exact number at this time due to technological issues with its monthly reports portal. However, using statistical forecasting methods and historical immigration data from the past two years, the Commission estimates that there were approximately 7,355 inmates with immigration detainees housed in county jails and OLS facilities from November 2024 - December 2024. It is estimated to have cost approximately \$29,323,826.35 to house these inmates from November 2024 - December 2024. Below is a monthly breakdown of these projected totals. Once more accurate information is available, The Commission will post the updated data to its website.

NOVEMBER 2024 - DECEMBER 2024 PROJECTED IMMIGRATION TOTALS		
REPORTING PERIOD	NUMBER OF INMATES	MONTHLY COST
Nov-2024	7135	\$ 14,522,564.39
Dec-2024	7208	\$ 14,801,261.97

3. Licensed Jailer Turnover

Senate Bill (SB) 1687, 82nd Legislature, requires county jails to report the number of licensed jailers that leave county jail employment. During 2024, county jails reported that approximately 4,762 licensed jailers left employment, resulting in an annual licensed jailer turnover rate of 34.17%. On average in 2024, approximately 397 jailers left employment each month, resulting in a monthly jailer turnover rate of 2.85%. This is a slight decrease from the 2023 annual jailer turnover rate of 37.46% and the average monthly turnover rate of 3.12%.

D. Operation Lone Star

The Commission on Jail Standards was named a member of the Governor’s Task Force on Border and Homeland Security upon its formation on June 10, 2021. The primary task the Commission and its staff have taken part in is supporting Operation Lone Star which is the state effort to secure the border. Since its inception, commission staff has provided technical assistance and assisted with the establishment of two temporary processing facilities and the re-purposing of three units of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) units to serve as temporary housing for county jail inmates. This has required agency staff to assist the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in all aspects of county jail operations to ensure compliance. Agency staff traveled and

provided onsite technical support, which included inspections for the approved temporary processing facilities (Val Verde and Jim Hogg) and three repurposed TDCJ facilities housing inmates arrested as part of Operation Lone Star. These efforts proved worthwhile when conditions of confinement and authority to hold county inmates in these re-purposed facilities were challenged in court and dismissed, allowing the operation to continue. With funding provided by Operation Lone Star, the agency has allocated two full-time equivalents to the program to carry out our inspections, resolve complaints and provide technical assistance.

E. Critical Incident Inspection

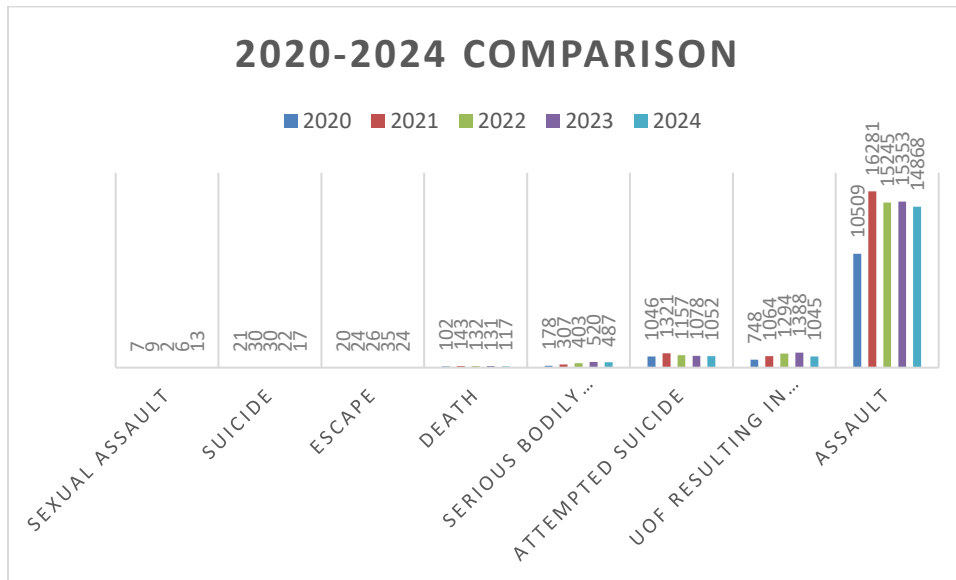
In addition to conducting administrative reviews on reported Escapes from custody and Deaths in Custody, the Commission also receives, on or before the fifth day of each month, reports on the occurrence of any serious incidents involving an inmate in the county jail during the preceding month.

January	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
February	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
March	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
April	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
May	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
June	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
July	244 reports received	all facilities reporting
August	244 reports received	all facilities reporting
September	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
October	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
November	243 reports received	all facilities reporting
December	243 reports received	all facilities reporting

243 Jails included Willacy (P) opening and Garza (P) closing.

Critical Incident Issue	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Sexual Assault	7	9	2	6	13
Suicide	21	30	30	22	17
Escape	20	24	26	35	24
Death	102	143	132	131	117
Serious Bodily Injury	178	307	403	520	487
Attempted Suicide	1046	1321	1157	1078	1052
UOF Resulting in Bodily Injury	748	1064	1294	1388	1045
Assault	10509	16281	15245	15353	14868

Total 2024 Serious Incident Reports received: 2,930. The total number of reported incidents are outlined below by order of frequency:



F. Jail Administrator Examination

SB 1849 amended Government Code 511 and requires that an individual appointed to the position of Jail Administrator after March 1, 2018, must satisfy the requirements of a Jail Administrator Examination created by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) and approved by the Commission within 180 days of his/her appointment. In an effort to ensure our stakeholders would be able to locate this requirement more easily, a new standard, §275.8 was adopted.

As of December 31, 2024, 28 individuals were appointed as a jail administrator since January 1, 2024. Of those 28 individuals, 25 successfully passed the Jail Administrator Examination, and the three remaining Jail Administrators have not surpassed the 180 days allowed to pass the exam and meet the requirement.

G. Additional Services

1. Research

In 2024, the Commission received approximately 523 public information requests. This is an increase from the 407 public information requests the Commission received in 2023. The most frequently requested information was death in custody reports (43%), inspection reports (30%), and copies of complaints regarding county jails (10%).

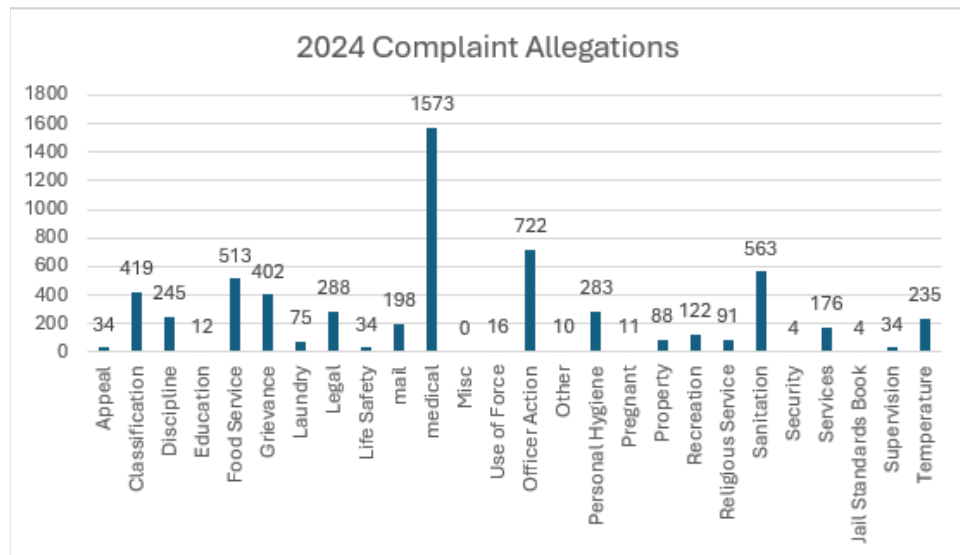
In 2024, The Commission requested 116 Attorney General rulings regarding the release of this information. This is approximately five times the number of Attorney General rulings The Commission requested in 2023. The most common reason TCJS requested to withhold information was that the release of the information would interfere with the status of an ongoing criminal investigation, prosecution, or pending/anticipated litigation.

2. Inmate Complaints

The Commission received 4,307 written requests for inmate assistance or complaint review. This is a decrease of approximately 1.93% from 2023. Of these complaints, 3,108 required a written response by county officials and possible action by Commission staff. The Commission determined that 29 (0.67%) of complaints requiring a response were founded. Medical services constituted 36.5% of complaints received, making this category the most frequently cited complaint requiring a formal reply.

The following graph illustrates the frequencies of complaints received for 26 categories. In cases where more than one complaint category is addressed in a letter, the three most significant complaints are reported in their respective categories.

Of the 4307 complaints received, 1,199 did not require a response from county officials, were beyond the purview of the Commission or were returned to the sender with instructions to utilize the facility's established jail grievance system. Inquiry into the remainder of the requests either alleviated conditions in need of correction or established the lack of truth in the allegations and thus helped eliminate frivolous litigation.



3. Variances

The Commission approved five (5) new variances and sixteen (16) extensions of a previously granted variance. Additionally, a Variance Sub-Committee was created by the Commission at the May 2022, meeting for a period not to exceed one year unless extended by the Commission. The variance requests, under the Variance Sub-Committee, are applicable to any county experiencing overcrowding which requests a variance from minimum jail standards after the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission. Each request is individually reviewed and acted upon by the Commission during the

four quarterly meetings. (The Commission may grant reasonable variances, except that no variance may be granted to permit unhealthy, unsanitary, or unsafe conditions). Based upon the recommendation of the Variance Subcommittee, the Commission approved three (3) variances.

V. Administrative Activity in Review

A. Staff Changes

3 new hires joined the Commission.

B. Staff Turnover

3 staff members left the Commission.

C. Training Initiatives

Commission staff has continued to select timely topics and develop a solid curriculum for the training programs first developed in 2001, as evidenced by the positive response all training sessions have received.

Although we have received interest in “Current Trends and High-Impact Areas of Jail Operations” it was not provided during 2024, due to inability to confirm dates with the counties. Practitioners who are widely regarded as experts in their field of jail management served as instructors for this training alongside Commission staff using materials prepared by the agency. This program not only educates those attending the training but also develops the presentation and leadership skills of the instructors themselves.

Since creating and maintaining a validated classification system remains an essential part of county jail management, Objective Jail Classification training by Commission staff continues to be offered to the counties, both on-site and at headquarters. In addition, Commission staff continue to offer training on-site and at headquarters for Population and Paper-Ready Reports and the “What to Expect during an Inspection” course for any county that requests assistance.

In addition to these training classes, the Commission conducted training sessions at the annual Texas Jail Association (TJA) Conference in San Marcos, Texas, at the National Jail Leadership Command Academy at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, at the Sheriff’s Association Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, at the Jail Management issues Conference in Galveston, Texas, at the CMIT Mental Health Conference in Austin, Texas and at the Jail Administration Management and Operations classes at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.

Throughout 2024, the agency continued to provide Suicide Prevention Training for Jailers, TCOLE class #4901, which it developed in 2019. The objective of this class is to help jailers identify inmates who are a suicide risk and provide them with the

questions and actions necessary to help prevent suicide attempts. This class is also intended to help counties satisfy annual training requirements.

HB 2831, 87th Legislature, amended the Occupations Code, 1701.269 to require the Commission and TCOLE, by December 31, 2021, to develop a four (4) hour training (TCOLE Course 2831) for county jail personnel on interactions with persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities who is confined to a county jail. The training program was developed for both classroom instruction and online training. The classroom version is being offered as regional trainings by the Commission throughout the state.

The Mental Health Trainer conducted 51 training classes with a total of 499 participants in attendance.

The agency collaborated with the Correctional Management Institute of Texas (CMIT) to revitalize the Jail Mental Health Officer (JMHO) TCOLE 5900 course. This course was developed in 2017 as a mental health and de-escalation certification course for jailers. The objective is to provide certification in accordance with Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 1701.404.

The Mental Health Trainer assisted in presenting five (5) JMHO classes.

D. Legislative Actions

No legislative session affecting the Jail Commission was held in 2024.

VI. Summary & Forecast

In addition to the agency's traditional duties, this past year saw the agency continuing to support Operation Lone Star and assist counties and partner state agencies involved in the operation. It is unknown what impact the recent shift in Federal immigration policy will have on Texas county jails, but staff has been directed to explore several different scenarios and appropriate responses. The issue of paper-ready inmates continues to be a point of friction between the state and counties. During the last legislative session, HB2620 mandated that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice would certify or reject pen packets within five business days of receipt. Upon certification, the state is required to accept the inmate within 45 days. For each day above any beyond the first 45 that a paper ready inmates remains at a county jail, the state is liable for reimbursement. Continued confusion as to when an inmates is technically paper-ready, communication issues and a lack of capacity at state prisons has resulted in the wait time increasing to an average of 30 days. The December 2024 paper -ready report also identified over 200 inmates that counties claimed were over the 45-day mark which is indicative of a growing problem. When this segment of the inmate population is combined with the waitlist for admission to a state hospital for competency restoration, our county jails will face a difficult year in 2025 and most likely for years to come.

Staff turnover has stabilized, and management believes it will remain not only below the state agency average, but below Article V agencies as well. Our employees remain highly sought after with no less than 8 former employees serving as Jail Administrators across the state. While the utilization of flex and work-from-home schedules was seen as a benefit when first introduced, it has lost much of its retention value because it is commonplace and expected. The other issue with flex and work from home approach is the lack of in-person interaction, which hinders teamwork as well as individual effectiveness. Although there are some duties and functions that can be carried out remotely, this does not apply to all functions. This is especially noticeable when it comes to mentoring the next generation of leaders. There truly is no substitute to working side by side and ensuring less-senior staff members are exposed to all the different functions the agency performs and what it actually takes to run a state agency. We will pay a very high price in the next five years if we do not manage this properly, and it will be incumbent upon management to do so.

One of the issues that the agency continues to deal with is the requirements regarding the investigation of deaths in custody. There are interpretations of the various statutes and codes governing the definition of a death in custody. If an inmate is released through the issuance of a personal recognizance bond, they are no longer in custody, but the bond must be signed. We have experienced on several occasions a county not reporting a death because, in the jail's opinion, the individual had been released, even though the inmate had not signed the bond. Absent such notification, the agency has had to rely upon secondary sources to inform it of these deaths. The issue was brought up in the Self Evaluation Report prior to our Sunset Review but was not addressed by Sunset staff. The final report issued by the Sunset Commission did amend the report to address the issue surrounding the appointment of an outside law enforcement agency to conduct the investigation but did not go any further. A bill was introduced during the 2023 Legislative Session that instead of providing clear direction, it further clouded and confused the issue. In discussions with the various stakeholders, it was determined that additional work in this area is needed, and the bill did not pass into law. Until this issue can be resolved, the possibility remains that a county will release an inmate in the hospital so that it may avoid reporting to the Commission the inmate's anticipated death. The agency has also had to contend with outside agencies assigned to conduct the investigations simply conducting a review of the investigation conducted by the county jail in which the death took place. This does not meet the intent or the letter of the law and results in a situation that we are unable to initiate enforcement action as there is no provision in the statute to do so.

The agency intends to build upon the success of 2024 moving into the new year. Having been provided the resources necessary to address long-standing needs in regard to the number of professional staff members, staff is finally able to implement long neglected programs such as trend analysis, professional development and organizational review. Ensuring that all staff members fully understand their role and the importance of their duties while reflecting the culture of the agency and its mission is just as vital as actually having the staff members on board. This will require management to continue its efforts

to demonstrate to staff, through their actions, that opportunities and professional development will continue to be provided. While we understand this makes them more attractive to other entities, it also proves to them that we see value in them and want them to succeed and reach their professional goals hand in hand with the agency reaching its goals. It is a balancing act, but one we are committed to and truly believe it will benefit the agency as we align short-term tactical demands with long term, strategic planning.