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## Technology

OCA’s Information Services Division (ISD) is instructed by the Legislature to directly provide staff and information technology equipment and services to the two high courts, the 14 intermediate appellate courts and six judicial branch state agencies – more than 1000 users. The division also provides staff to coordinate and facilitate the work of the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT).

### E-FILING

Current E-Filing statistics:

- 665,000 users handling about 43,000 filings each day across all district, county, justice, and appellate courts.
- Mandatory for attorneys in all criminal, civil, family, and probate cases at the district/county level and above. Highly encouraged for all other filers.
- 190 JPs across 49 counties accept eFilings on a permissive basis. Six additional precincts are pending.

Since the last meeting, the following eFiling initiatives have been completed:

- Use of the enhanced proposed order process.

Over the next few months, eFile will push ECF5 into production with enhancements and will start requiring two-factor authentication for all users.

## TECH REFRESH

FY22-23 computer refresh project was completed since the last meeting. As old desktops and laptops are returned to OCA, they are wiped of all data and reformatted with a clean install of Windows 10 and then donated to counties and municipalities requesting computers.

Planning is already underway for the FY24-25 refresh that includes computers for new FTEs in the judicial branch.

## Court Services

*The Court Services Division includes the agency's court security, children's courts, specialty courts oversight, consulting, language access, judicial information, and research programs.*

### Court Consulting:

- Legislative assistance with review of Courts and Clerk perspective.
- Attend and present to JP and County Judges, courts, and clerk staff on various subject matter including NICS reporting, monthly reporting, bail Initiative (SB 6), registry of the Court, OCA updates, and Managing Court Dockets.
- Continued service to clerks related to Mental Health Reporting maintenance, guide, and assistance with questions related to NICS, Juvenile Mental Health, and changes based on federal law.
- Continue providing best practices information to assist courts as they continue working on backlog.
- Assist in review and/or analysis of Polk, Dallas, Galveston, Gillespie, and Kaufman Counties.

### Projects:

- Continued work on eFileTexas 2.0.
- Civil Justice Initiative Expedited Actions Rules with Review and published [Report](#) with National Center for State Courts and the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System.
- Judicial Workload Assessment Study.
- Public Engagement Pilot Project.
- Uniform Case Management System: Implementation of systems to support courts under 20,000 in population.
- Case Level Data Reporting w/ NODS implementation and Data Governance.
- Court Reminder: Development and implementation.
- Development of Training/Material for assisting Court Coordinators/Administrators.
- Centers of Excellence:
  - Program is recommending JP2 court in Waller County and JP 3 court in Rockwall County for nomination.
  - The following courts are going through the process:
    - Williamson County JP Precinct 3
    - McLennan County Court at Law 3
    - Dallas County JP Precinct 1, Place 2
    - Travis County JP Precinct 3
    - Lee County JP Precinct 2
    - Temple Municipal Court

## Problem Solving Courts

*The Children's Courts program is comprised of 30 child protection and 43 child support courts (CPC and CSC, respectively). Each court has an associate judge appointed by the Presiding Judges of the Administrative Judicial Regions (AJR) and a court coordinator. The judge and court coordinator are employed by the OCA.*

The Children's Courts Program Manager has been involved in the planning of the 2023 Child Protection Court Convening with the Children's Commission. The Convening will take place July 27-28, 2023 in Bastrop, Texas.

### CHILDREN'S COURTS

Early Intervention Court Liaison Project (EICL)

**Galveston County** –Partnered with the Children's Welfare Board of Galveston County to facilitate a free Resource Fair for child welfare stakeholders.

**Lubbock County** - Presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Child Abuse Conference.

**Bell County** - The EICL resigned effective May 3, 2023. The position will be refilled.

Departures and Arrivals:

Title IV-D No. 24 - A new judge was hired 2/1/23 and a new court coordinator was hired 3/1/23.

Title IV-D No. 40 - A new court coordinator was hired 3/1/23.

Title IV-D No. 26 – A new court coordinator was hired 5/1/23.

2nd Region Child Protection Court No. 2 - A new court coordinator was hired 3/1/23.

Child Protection Court Rio Grande East - Associate Judge retired. Interviews were held in May 2023.

### SPECIALTY COURTS

The Statewide Specialty Courts Coordinator attended the National Drug Court Institute (NDCI) 2023 Equity and Inclusion Training: Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standard II in Huntsville, Texas April 26-27, 2023. Two Specialty Court teams attended the training - Potter and Randall County Adult Drug Court and Brazoria County DWI Court. The training focused on addressing equivalent access and retention, discussing the impact of implicit bias, creating a marketing and recruitment plan, and facilitating the teams in the development of an action plan to help improve their program outcomes.

## COURT SECURITY

The purpose of the Court Security Division is to support the establishment of court security committees through training and technical assistance; assist courts with conducting and reviewing security and emergency preparedness assessments and developing improvement plans; support the implementation of privacy protections for judges by facilitating the restriction of public access to the residential address of a judge or judge's spouse; and serve as a clearinghouse of information regarding judicial and court security best practices.

### The Court Security Division:

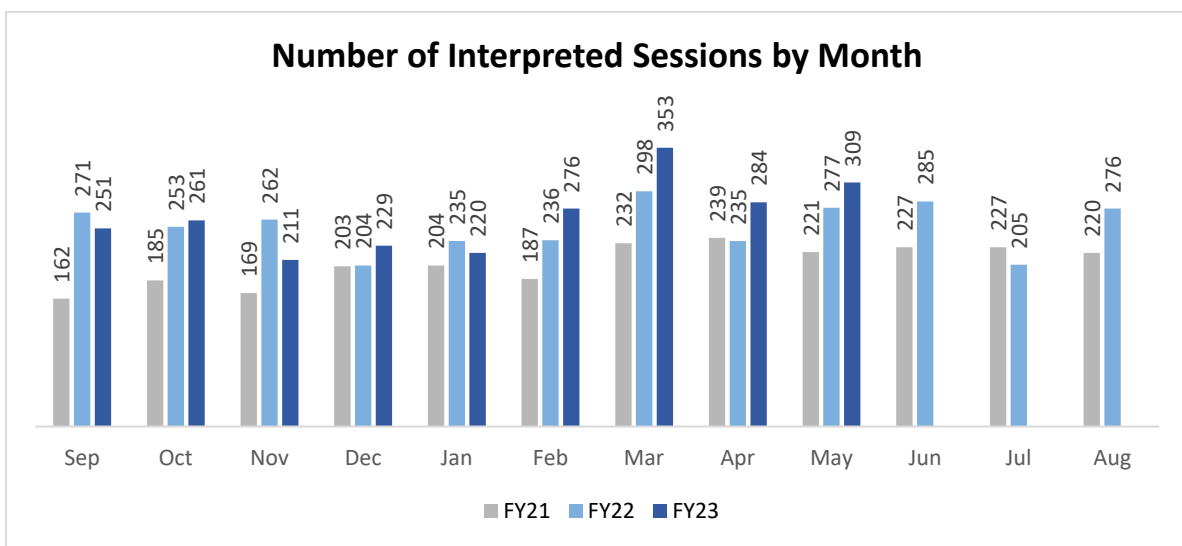
The Division assists courts in facilitating assessments and recommending best practices to enhance their security environment.

- Conducted 137 courthouse assessments in multiple counties. Some of the assessments were in the following counties: Maverick, Dallas, Kendall, Washington, Bailey, and Parmer.
- Processed 1,663 judicial officers' requests to date, to redact personal information from public view.
- Administratively reported judicial threats to DPS for appropriate follow-up.
- Participated in judicial and staff training conferences.
  - Regional Judicial Conferences
  - Staff and court support presentations throughout the State.
- Conducted safety presentations on courthouse violence, de-escalation, and pre-attack indicators. Some presentations took place in the following locations: Denton and Tarrant County; City of Irving and Corpus Christi.
- Reporting of judicial threats and inappropriate communication to [www.iwatchtx.com](http://www.iwatchtx.com), a DPS managed, reporting system designed to capture suspicious activities or behaviors indicative of criminal, or terroristic related threats towards the judiciary or courthouses.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS

OCA's licensed court interpreters provide interpreting services via telephone and videoconference through the Texas Court Remote Interpreter Service (TCRIS). These services are available to our Texas Courts in all case types, for short, non-contested hearings that involve limited or no evidence. The Language Access Program staff also provides translation services as well as training and support to other interpreters who are contracted to interpret in magistration proceedings under Operation Lone Star.

From February 1, 2023, through May 31, 2023, TCRIS staff provided interpreting services in 1,222 hearings in 83 counties. The chart below shows the consistent demand for OCA's Remote Interpreter Services.

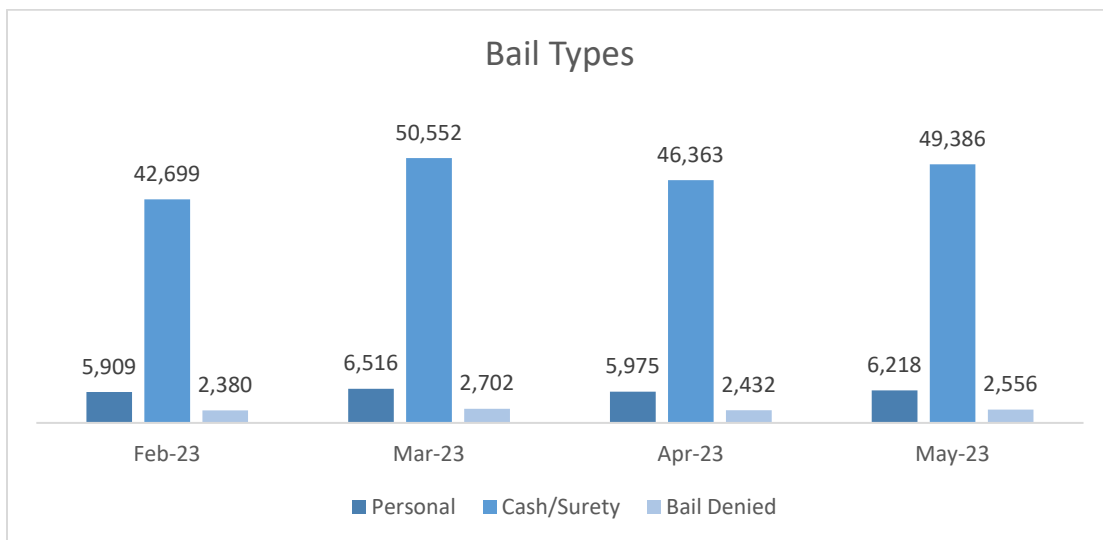


In addition, the staff provided document translation services for the Supreme Court of Texas for forms in response to legislative directives under SB 179, 2017 (cyberbullying form) and SB 512, 2015 (probate will forms). Both bills directed the Supreme Court to translate the forms into Spanish. Staff also presented at the College for New Professionals on Language Access and Accessibility.

## PRETRIAL AND BAIL

Pretrial became part of the Research and Court Services Division in March 2022. OCA was tasked with implementing bail reform as a result of Senate Bill 6 from the 2nd called Special Session of the 87th Legislature.

The [Public Safety Report System](#) has been operational since April 1, 2022. There are currently 6,861 active users and 233 counties that have completed magistrations in the system. A total of 174,270 bail forms have been completed from February 1 through May 31, 2023. Bail types are detailed in the chart below. Note that multiple offenses may be included on one bail form.



Multiple updates of the system have been released including an API for integration to local case management systems. Additional enhancements are being planned in response to user requests and system improvements. In May, OCA partnered with the Texas Center to host a webinar entitled, *SB 6 Refresh* for all District and County Judges. In addition, the bail team, along with other division staff presented at the Texas Association of Pretrial Services Conference on *The Damon Allen Act, One Year Later*.

The Pretrial and Bail Section continues to provide technical assistance to users through our website, the pretrial inbox at [bail@txcourts.gov](mailto:bail@txcourts.gov), Q&A sessions, conference attendance, the PSRS help center, and the vendor's technical support at [support@automon.com](mailto:support@automon.com).

Pursuant to Section 9, Article 17.071, four counties have provided charitable bail reports to OCA this year - Bexar, Harris, Hays, and Travis. One organization, The Bail Project, is responsible for all the bails posted in Harris, Hays, and Travis counties. Texas Organizing Project is responsible for the bails reported in Bexar County. These counties submitted reports indicating bail bonds were made for 100 offenders from February through May 2023.

## JUDICIAL INFORMATION

OCA's Judicial Information program collects and maintains information from courts at all levels, analyzes court data, produces reports, and provides data support to various internal and external entities.

### Reports Produced

- [2022 Annual Statistical Report](#)
- [Judicial Bypass Report](#)
- [Appointments and Fees](#)
- [Hate Crimes](#)
- [Performance Measures](#)
- [Pandemic Backlog Data](#)

### Data Requests and Analysis

- Hundreds of queries for statistics and other information for internal and external stakeholders.
- Regular updates and analyses for evaluating and monitoring pandemic-related backlog.
- Data analyses, and recommendations for legislative matters.
- Forty-three analyses for new district and county courts at law.
- Data support for weighted caseload study.
- Submission of 2022 Texas data to National Center for State Courts'.
- Two proposals for transfer of cases among the Courts of Appeals for Supreme Court's [docket equalization program](#).
- Data inquiries related to CPCMS and DFPS data.

### Presentations

- Caseload trends and backlog: 4
- Trial Court Reporting: 2
- PSRS & Bail: 1

### Meetings and Trainings

- Executive Forum for Criminal Justice Planners
- Texas Association of Pretrial Services
- Conference of State Court Administrators' Court Statistics Committee
- National Center for State Courts Data Specialists quarterly meetings

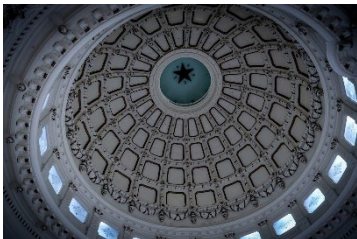
### Other Projects

- Case Level Data
- Bail data analyses
- DIR Open Database Portal
- Research and recommendations related to NICS reporting in light of new federal laws.
- E-filing Insights Program
- Children's Courts Annual Judge Evaluations

### Judicial Directory

- Annual update of judges, court staff, and court information

## Enterprise Planning & Regulatory Services



### JBCC

*The Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC) provides oversight of the certification, registration, and licensing of court reporters and court reporting firms, guardians and guardianship programs, process servers, and licensed court interpreters. The JBCC also registers all guardianships statewide, provides training, and provides criminal histories to the courts for the proposed guardians.*

The Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC) was established by the Texas Legislature during the 83rd Regular Session. The nine-member commission is appointed by the Supreme Court of Texas. The core responsibility of the JBCC is the oversight of the certification, registration, and licensing of approximately **6,504** court reporters and court reporting firms, guardians and guardianship programs and guardianship registrations, and licensed court interpreters. Hon. Sid Harle, Chair.

- FY2023, our JBCC licensing team processed 840 new certifications and renewed 1,817 certifications as of June 05, 2023.
- FY2023, 87 complaints were filed with the JBCC compliance team and are in process or resolved.
- FY2023, JBCC team administered 53 oral court interpreter examinations, 86 court interpreter written examinations, and 51 guardian written examinations. (This excludes the June LCI exams and August guardian exams.)

- Since June 1, 2019, our team has conducted 25,519 background checks, 32,558 guardianship trainings have been completed, with 54,382 guardianship registrations approved.
- May 5, 2023, Commission members adopted the new [Court Reporter’s Sanctions Matrix](#) and the revised [Criminal Conviction Guidelines](#) for the JBCC.
- Commission meetings are conducted quarterly throughout the year. The last meeting of the Commission was held on May 5, 2023 and the next meeting will be held on August 4, 2023.

## EPO PROJECT UPDATE

*The Enterprise Planning Office (EPO) manages agency projects within OCA. Our goal is to plan, execute, and deliver projects statewide. Our team oversees and the projects by collaborating with subject matter experts and project team members to develop requirements and implement projects. The EPO also manages the agency contract management process.*

- Our team is currently working on implementing the Uniform Case Management System, eFile 2.0, and the Guardian Online Reporting System and Audit Tool.
- The team is also developing the requirements for the Case Level Data Project and our Court Notification Project.
- Public Safety Report System (PSRS) Project and the TDCJ Judicial Training Project have been completed. Working on enhancements to the PSRS.

## Guardianship Abuse, Fraud & Exploitation Deterrence Program (GAFEDP)

*The GAFEDP provides resources to the courts relating to monitoring and compliance of guardianship matters.*

On September 1, 2019, the OCA implemented the GAFEDP to provide resources to the courts relating to monitoring and compliance of guardianship matters pursuant to SB 31 & HB 1286 (Zaffirini/Smithee). Our team of auditor’s review guardianship cases to identify reporting deficiencies by guardians, audit annual accountings, and report to the courts any concerns of potential abuse, fraud, or financial exploitation. *“Our mission is to assist the courts in protecting our most vulnerable citizens and their assets.”*

## GAFEDP Overall Numbers from September 1, 2019, through June 2, 2023

- Initial Compliance Reviews Conducted in 283 Courts and 226 Counties
- 46,567: Total Number of Guardianship Cases Reviewed
- 18,186: Total Number of Cases Recommended for Closure
- 24,328: Total Number of Active Guardianships Identified
  - 23% Percentage of Cases Missing Annual Reports
  - 41% Percentage of Cases Missing Annual Accountings
  - 39% Percentage of Cases Missing Inventories
  - 30% Percentage of Cases Out of Compliance
  - 12% Waived Bonds
- 4,010: Total Number of Deceased Wards Identified

### GAFEDP FY2023 Totals as of June 2, 2023

- Initial Compliance Reviews Conducted in 27 Courts and 26 Counties
- 8,009: Total Number of Guardianship Cases Reviewed
- 3,790: Total Number of Cases Recommended for Closure
- 1,000: Total Number of Active Guardianships Identified
  - 34% Percentage of Cases Missing Annual Reports
  - 50% Percentage of Cases Missing Annual Accountings
  - 47% Percentage of Cases Missing Inventories
  - 45% Percentage of Cases Out of Compliance
  - 26% Waived Bonds
  - 823: Total Number of Deceased Wards Identified

## Texas Forensic Science Commission (TFSC)



*The TFSC is responsible for accreditation of crime laboratories; designation of forensic disciplines for accreditation or exemption; investigation of allegations of professional negligence and misconduct; implementation of a Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Analysts and Management; and the licensing of forensic analysts.*

The TFSC has nine members appointed by the Governor of Texas. Seven of the nine commissioners are scientists and two are attorneys (one prosecutor and one defense attorney).

The TFSC held its most recent quarterly meeting on April 14, 2023, and meets again on July 21, 2023. Commissioners will consider a variety of matters including complaints against laboratories, laboratory self-disclosures of internal non-conformities, accreditation reports, and licenses issued pursuant to the forensic analyst licensing program.

The Commission currently has pending investigations in firearm/toolmark analysis and friction ridge analysis. During the months of April, May and June, Commission staff gave presentations at various forensic and criminal justice annual conferences, including the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors Symposium, the Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiner's Conference, and the Texas Division of the International Association for Identification's Conference.

To date, the Commission has licensed approximately 1,450 forensic analysts since the inception of its licensing program, January 1, 2019. The Commission is in the process of finalizing a program on DNA training for lawyers and judges in collaboration with the Court of Criminal Appeals. The Commission also plans to train laboratory managers across Texas by bringing the American Society of Crime Laboratory Director's Leadership Academy to Texas this Fall. The Commission will also host a meeting in November of the nation's first Association of State Forensic Boards with the common goal of improving integrity and reliability in state criminal courts. The Commission continues to work with representatives from the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and accredited crime laboratories on implementation of consensus standards in various forensic science disciplines.

### TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

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