



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

February 2018



Texas Judicial Council

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TECHNOLOGY & DATA

Judicial Access to Court Records (Re:SearchTX)



As part of the eFiling contract, Tyler Technologies is contracted to provide document access (called Re:SearchTX). The tool is in use by Texas judges and allows judges to filter eFiled documents down by county, court, case, party or a combination of those criteria. As of January 1st, the system allows access to judges, clerks and attorneys of record.

Clerks can now manually perform functions such as replacing documents, securing documents and expunging cases. Tyler is also working on a mechanism to allow clerks to integrate with Re:SearchTX to perform these functions via their case management system.

The Judicial Committee on Information Technology is working with clerks and attorneys to adopt additional recommendations to the Supreme Court that would expand access to registered users.

Criminal e-Filing

Last summer, the Court of Criminal Appeals ordered that criminal eFiling be mandatory for attorneys in district and county courts following a similar schedule to the Supreme Court's mandate for civil cases. Criminal eFiling is currently mandatory in counties with a population over 200,000. The next group of counties to go mandatory, counties over 100,000 is on July 1st. All but one of the counties in this group are already allowing criminal eFiling on a permissive basis.

Almost 100 counties are currently on the criminal eFiling system in a permissive state. This allows clerks to adjust their business processes to an electronic environment, including implementing any lessons learned from the civil implementation.

Pre-Trial Risk Assessment Tool

OCA is working with a small group of stakeholders to implement a pre-trial risk assessment tool for judges. The tool has been developed, tested by internal staff and a small group of external stakeholders. OCA is currently recruiting jurisdictions to conduct a real-world pilot with the tool.

Price of Justice Grant

Texas was one of five states awarded grant money to increase the amount of information that a judge sees when determining a person's ability to pay fines and fees assessed. OCA Information Services had a

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 900 users. The division also provides staff to coordinate and facilitate the work of the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT).

Request for Offer to the vendor community; however none of the responses were viable based on the functionality presented and the budget of the project.

OCA is considering other options for the grant including staff-augmentation (contract developers) and/or additional in-house staff to accomplish the goals of the grant.

Guardianship Compliance Tool

The contract development team is continuing work on the guardianship compliance tool. The team is currently in the user acceptance test cycle for the tools, targeting June for production delivery. The goal of the project is to use technology to enable guardians to provide reports to the court electronically and in a timely manner. OCA has been developing the site and have been receiving feedback from the existing compliance auditors.

Other Information Services Projects

RPDO Upgrades – working with TIDC, Lubbock County, and the Regional Public Defender Office for Capital Cases (RPDO), OCA Information Services completed the refresh and upgrades of technology employed at the RPDO. Users are now enjoying additional efficiency by using Office365 including OneDrive and Skype for Business.

Court of Appeals PC Refresh – OCA Information Services is contracting with a vendor to setup images and associated software to enable the mass imaging of computers. The physical machines have been procured and are at OCA. This is part of the planned refresh cycle that replaces PCs and Laptops every four years. In addition to new equipment, all OCA supported users will be upgraded from Windows 7 and various versions of Office and Adobe Acrobat to the current version of all three (Windows 10, Office 16 and Adobe Acrobat DC Pro).

COURT SERVICES

The Court Services Section includes the agency's consulting, language access, research, collection improvement technical support, and grant-funded programs. Since the last Judicial Council meeting:

- Texas Court Remote Interpreter Service staff provided interpreting services in 286 hearings in 45 counties;
- The Domestic Violence Training Attorney trained a total of 589 people at 12 training events;
- Work began on reports required by [HB 1204](#), [SB 47](#), and [SB 1326](#) from the 85th Legislature;
- Court Services staff met with Forensics Science Commission staff to discuss collaborating on the report required by [HB 34](#) from the 85th Legislature;
- Work continued on the Judicial Council's Centers of Excellence program, which assists courts in assessing and improving their performance and compliance with select reporting and other requirements relating to the administration of justice;
- Technical assistance to judges and collection program staff in jurisdictions throughout the state continued to be provided;

- Court Services staff continued to collaborate with OCA’s Information Services Division on the development and rollout of the Pretrial Risk Assessment Information System (PRAISTX); and
- Data collection was completed for a Pretrial Data Summary project using PRAISTX in Dallas County.

Court Security

[SB 42](#) from the 85th Legislature established a Court Security Division at OCA and provided for the hiring of a Court Security Director. Known as the “Judge Julie Kocurek Judicial and Courthouse Security Act of 2017,” the Act is designed to improve the security of judges at all levels, both in their courthouses and at their homes.

Specifically, the bill:

- Provides for the suppression of the residence address of a judge and judge’s spouse in records maintained by the Texas Ethics Commission, a county registrar, and a county appraisal district. The law also allows a judge and judge’s spouse to replace their home address on their driver’s license with the address of the courthouse in which the judge serves;
- Requires county clerks, upon the written request of a judge, to omit or redact personal information from an online database that is made public;
- Requires that a courthouse security committee be established by the presiding judge of a municipality or the local administrative district judge in each county, respectively;
- Establishes a \$5.00 filing fee on any civil action or proceeding requiring a filing fee to generate revenue to support judicial and court personnel training;
- Transfers responsibility for reporting security incidents to OCA from the local administrative judge to the law enforcement official responsible for providing court security;
- Requires any person providing security to hold a court security certification issued by a training program approved by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement; and
- Authorizes any commissioned peace officer in the state to provide personal security to a judge, regardless of the location of the law enforcement agency that employs or commissions the peace officer.

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 residence address of a judge or judge’s spouse; and
- Serve as a clearinghouse of information regarding judicial and court security best practices.

Hector Gomez, OCA’s first-ever Court Security Director, started work in December. Since assuming the position, Mr. Gomez has:

- Met with representatives from all of the judicial training entities about the bill and scheduled speaking engagements;

- Provided training at organized training events and participated in meetings of local courthouse security committees;
- Provided individualized outreach regarding court and personal security issues to judges from around the state; and
- Collaborated with Court Services staff on creating a court security [webpage](#) on OCA's website and in conducting outreach to judges regarding the bill's privacy provisions.

Judicial Information

OCA's Judicial Information section is the repository for an array of information regarding courts in Texas. The section collects and maintains information from courts at all levels, analyzes court data, and produces comprehensive reports regarding the state's courts and the officials who work in them. A significant portion of Judicial Information staff time is devoted to providing support to the trial courts and clerks and their information technology staff or case management vendors on reporting issues for ensuring data quality and reliability.

During the last period, Judicial Information was involved in the following activities:

- Implementing the reporting requirements established by the following bills from the 85th legislature:
 - [SB 1326](#) – Providing for reporting on mental illness/intellectual disability assessments and competency evaluation reports;
 - [SB 1893](#) – Providing for monthly reports from the presiding judges of the state's 11 administrative judicial regions; and
 - [SB 1913](#) – Providing for reporting to capture show cause hearings held prior to the issuance of a *caus pro fine*.
- Completed the 2017 Annual Report on [Disposition of Judicial Bypass Cases by Trial Courts](#).
- Updated the municipal court and justice court reporting instructions with suggestions for improvement in terminology from the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center.
- Presented on reporting requirements at the Municipal Courts Education Center's seminar for new clerks and at three regional meetings of county and district clerks.
- Supported the work of the Judicial Council's Data Committee.
- Completed a substantial portion of the 2017 Annual Statistical Report.

The Judicial Information Program collects, reports and analyzes court activity statistics, judicial directory information, and other information from the approximately 2,700 courts in the state; produces the Annual Statistical Report for the Texas Judiciary, the Texas Judicial System Directory, and other publications; and provides statistical and other information about the judicial branch to the legislature, state and federal agencies, local governments, private associations and public interest groups, and others. More than 450,000 statistical and other reports were received in FY2017.

COLLECTION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AUDIT

Since the inception of the CIP Audit department at the OCA in 2012, CIP Audit has issued 65 Compliance Audit reports, of which ten were follow-up audits.

In Fiscal Year 2018, two Compliance Audit reports have been issued, both were residual FY2016 projects. One report was for an initial audit that acknowledge compliance with TAC rules, and one report was for a follow-up audit that revealed a second occurrence of non-compliance with old TAC rules.

In addition, since 2012, CIP Audit has completed and issued 53 Rate Review reports, thirteen of which were pre-implementation rate reviews and 40 post-implementation rate reviews.

In Fiscal Year 2018, four Post-Implementation Rate Review reports have been issued, all projects were FY2017 projects. To comply with Article 103.0033(f), beginning in Fiscal Year 2018 the OCA's Court Services staff will calculate the collection rate(s) for jurisdictions based on a calculation methodology intergraded in the OCA's reporting software.

The Fiscal Year 2018 Audit Plan included four compliance audits and one scheduled pilot test audit to observe a jurisdiction's implementation of the new TAC rules that went into effect January 1, 2018.

Audit Platform Change

In Fiscal Year 2017 a major change in auditing the collection improvement programs was adopted. Implementation of the new audit process began in Fiscal Year 2018, collection improvement audits will be conducted under a new audit platform following the Generally Accepted Government Audit Standards. The new audit platform is more suited for collection programs that fall under the direction of several elected judges or county officials. Under the old audit platform, one county official was asked to affirm that the collection activities for all programs within the jurisdiction were in compliance with all applicable laws and rules. This however created a hesitancy from some officials to affirm the collection activities under the direction of other county officials or judges.

Data Verification Audit Program Model

The Audit section is in the process of solidifying an audit platform for the Data Verification process to be implemented as directed by Article 103.0033(j) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. In concert with senior management and the OCA's Court Services division, the Audit section has developed a testing platform for testing components identified in TAC 175.4(c)(1) and (2). There are six selected components to be tested that reflect a program's annual reporting of program expenditure, and two components that reflect the program's monthly reported dollar amount assessed and dollar amount collected of court costs, fees, and fines.

SPECIALTY COURTS

Children's Courts Program

Child Protection Courts

The 2017 Child Welfare Judicial Conference hosted by the Texas Center for the Judiciary and the Children's Commission of the Supreme Court, was held November 13 – 15, 2017, at Lost Pines Resort and Spa in Bastrop, Texas. The Child Protection Court Judges and Coordinators Annual Meeting and Training was held Monday, November 13th as a pre-conference session. Training for the coordinators continued through Tuesday morning, November 14th.

The Child Protection Court (CPC) Advisory Group met September 29, 2017, to discuss the Child Protection Court Case Management System (CPCMS) performance measure reports. Ms. Johnson and Tim Kennedy, Information Services, have identified seven reports relating to permanency to be reviewed and analyzed, on a semi-annual basis, to gauge each child protection court's adherence to statutory time frames. The group will meet again in February 2018.

The House Bill 7 Task Force completed and submitted its final report to the Supreme Court and the Legislature prior to the December 31, 2017, deadline. Phase 2 of the Task Force will pick up in 2018. The first meeting was held on January 26, 2018.

Child Support Courts

The Child Support Case Management System (CSCMS) Advisory Group met October 17, 2017, to discuss the present status of CSCMS and future direction of the advisory group. The meeting was very productive. Plans are underway for the implementation of system enhancements to address issues identified by committee members. Additionally, Ms. Johnson has coordinated with OCA's Domestic Violence Resource Attorney and the Office of Attorney General to present a domestic violence training to the child support court associate judges and staff in March 2018. The training will be presented via webinar.

Problem-Solving Courts

Since the last quarterly report, OCA's Specialty Courts Program Manager, Anissa Johnson, and Research and Court Services Division Director, Scott Griffith, have continued to meet with representatives from the Governor's Criminal Justice Division (CJD) to discuss ongoing collaboration between OCA and CJD on drug court and other problem-solving court programs.

Ms. Johnson and Mr. Griffith attended the Governor's Specialty Courts Advisory Council's November 9th meeting to present on continued efforts regarding the exploration of a statewide specialty court case management system. An update was also provided on the Specialty Court Ombudsman pilot project which will position OCA staff as a resource liaison for specialty court program team members and participants. After a six-month period, the project will roll over to the newly formed Specialty Court Resource Center, a training and technical assistance provider for specialty courts and a CJD grantee.

Mr. Griffith and Casey Kennedy, OCA Information Services director, met with staff from CJD on December 21, 2017, to discuss next steps regarding a Request for Information for specialty court case management vendors.

The Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services reinstated its workgroups, two of which Ms. Johnson is a member – the Criminal Justice Work Group and the Mental Health Work Group. Meetings were held September 13th and December 6th. The next meeting date for both groups is March 7, 2018. The purpose of the work groups is to focus on actions taken by the 85th Texas Legislature and to suggest and discuss new topics for consideration by the full Council.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC)

Profession	Number of Certifications, Registrations, Licenses
Court Reporters	2,220 individuals and 328 firms
Guardians	450 individuals
Process Servers	3,434 individuals
Court Interpreters	474 individuals
TOTAL	6,906 individuals and firms

Recent Meeting of the JBCC and Advisory Boards

- The most recent meeting of the full commission was February 2, 2018. During the meeting the commission approved the recently revised JBCC rules to be forwarded to the Supreme Court for review and adoption.
- The next meeting of the full commission is scheduled for May 4, 2018.
- The Court Reporters Certification Advisory Board met on October 19, 2017. The next meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2018.
- The Licensed Court Interpreter Advisory Board met on September 15, 2017.
- The Process Server Certification Advisory Board met on September 28, 2017.
- The Guardianship Certification Advisory Board met on October 9, 2017, October 20, 2017, November 28, 2017, and December 11, 2017.

The agendas for all JBCC meetings can be found at <http://www.txcourts.gov/jbcc/meetings-agendas/>

JBCC Compliance Section Complaint Investigation and Resolution

In FY 2017, the JBCC compliance team opened 94 complaints that were filed with the Commission with 10 complaints pending. In FY 2018, 33 complaints have been opened year-to-date in various stages of the complaint process: 14 court reporters, 17 process servers and 2 guardian complaints.

- Process Server Certification Complaint Review Committee meeting was held on November 9, 2017. The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2018.
- Court Reporter Certification Complaint Review Committee meeting was held on September 8, 2017. The next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2018.
- Guardianship Certification Complaint Review Committee meeting was held scheduled on October 11, 2017.
- Licensed Court Interpreters Complaint Review Committee meeting was held on December 14, 2017.

Development of the new Codes of Ethics and Standards by the JBCC

- The Commission approved the Code of Ethics for Certified Shorthand Reporters and Court Reporting Firms which was submitted to the Supreme Court for review and adoption.
- The Licensed Court Interpreters Advisory Board completed revisions to the Best Practices for Licensed Court Interpreters which was approved by the JBCC and placed on the LCI webpage.

Examinations for the JBCC

The JBCC certification staff administers the examinations for the Guardianship Certification written examination and the Licensed Court Interpreter written and oral examinations. A vendor administers the written and skills examination for the Court Reporters Certification.

- The next court interpreter written and oral examinations are scheduled for the week of February 14, 2018. JBCC staff administered 32 oral and 40 written examinations.
- The guardian written examination was administered on January 24, 2018, to 17 candidates for certification.
- In FY2017, JBCC staff administered 189 written exams and 126 court interpreter's oral exams. 14 were in languages other than Spanish.

Additional Projects for the JBCC

On September 18, 2017, the JBCC went live with our newly developed online certification, licensing and compliance system. The new system will allow applicants to apply and pay for new and renewal certifications, registrations, or licenses, apply for continuing education approval, update contact information, search for individuals or entities that are certified, licensed, or registered with the JBCC as well as other features.

Guardianship Compliance Project (GCP)

The Office of Court Administration (OCA) manages the Guardianship Compliance Project (GCP) to provide additional resources to courts handling guardianship cases. Through this program, Guardianship Compliance Specialists (GCS) will be available to review guardianship cases to identify reporting deficiencies by the guardian, review annual reports and accountings, and report findings to the court. The GCS's will work with the courts to implement best practices in managing guardianship cases, identify active and closed cases, and assist with additional services. Assistance is available to courts with probate jurisdiction to provide oversight of guardianships. The GCP services are provided at no cost to the county. The mission of the Guardianship Compliance Program is to assist the courts in protecting our most vulnerable citizens and their assets.

Since the project began in November 2015, Guardianship Compliance staff have worked with 41 courts in 27 counties.

- 25,746 guardianship cases reviewed
- 16,881 guardianship cases recommended for closure
 - 3,053 deceased persons under guardianship

- 8,865 active guardianship cases were identified
- 1,955 guardianship cases were found to be out of compliance
 - 32 percent of cases were found to be missing reports of the person
 - 41 percent of cases were found to be missing initial inventories
 - 44 percent of cases were found to be missing annual accountings

Note: These statistics are reported for the 23 counties in which the initial review process has been completed. The number of active guardianships in those 23 counties totaled 4949. With 1,955 cases out of compliance with required reporting, the percentage of cases out of compliance is 40%.

Conservatorship Accountability Project (CAP)

Texas has also received an implementation award to receive technical assistance to implement the Conservatorship Accountability Project (CAP). Indiana, Iowa, and Texas were selected to receive implementation awards; New Mexico and Nevada were provided planning awards. This project will use the extensive expertise and experience of the National Center for State Courts to support Texas' efforts in adapting the Minnesota "MyMNConservator" software, which allows conservators (known as guardians of the estate in Texas) to file their inventory and annual accountings electronically, integrating the software with our statewide electronic filing system. The red flag validation and implementation, standardized reports and alerts, and judicial response protocols in the system will greatly improve Texas judges' ability to protect assets and modernize and improve guardianship accounting with limited resources. This project coincides with the Office of Court Administration's [Guardianship Compliance Pilot Project](#).

- This system will provide an automated method to notify courts when required reports are delinquent. It will also provide an automated method to review annual accounting reports for potential fraudulent activities.
- The OCA IT staff is currently developing an on-line reporting application for guardians. The goal will be to work with the courts to safeguard the assets of protected persons through the oversight of guardians by conducting professional compliance audits.
- OCA expects that this online tool will be piloted in several counties prior to the end of the year.
- The Office of Court Administration has received a grant for the development of a Texas guardianship training application. We have started meeting and will use a selected advisory council to assist in the development of this training and implementation of the captive training module project with the NCSC.

Recent and Upcoming Guardianship Compliance Training

- February 7, 2018, Jeff Rinard spoke to a group of clerks for their winter conference in San Marcos. Jeff provided an update on the GCP, new JBCC rules and the guardianship registration.
- March 8-9, 2018, Texas College of Probate Judges in Austin, Texas.
- April 11, 2018, TAC Court Assistants Training Conference in Frisco, Texas.
- May 3-4, 2018, Texas College of Probate Judges in Galveston, Texas
- May 6-9, 2018, CLAC Conference in Austin, Texas
- May 7- 11, 2018, Texas Guardianship Association in Houston, Texas.
- May 10, 2018, TAC Probate Academy for County Judges and Clerks in Galveston, Texas.

- September 7, 2017, Jeff Rinard attended the Texas Guardianship Symposium, in Lubbock, and spoke to a group of attorneys, court staff and clerk staff on the GCP, SB 1096 and SB 36.
- August 25, 2017, Jeff Rinard attended the Texas College of Probate Judges, in San Antonio, and spoke to a group of attorneys, court staff and clerk staff on the GCP, SB 1096 and SB 36.
- December and January 2017, GCP and JBCC staff attended HHSC guardianship training.
- May 26 and 27, 2016, Guardianship Compliance team attended the Guardianship and Elder Law CLE in Austin.
- April 26, 2017, Texas Guardianship Association (TGA) conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Guardianship Compliance Participating Counties

Hays, Guadalupe, Webb, Comal, Anderson, Montgomery, Orange, Tom Green, Kaufman, Lubbock, Bexar, Washington, Jefferson, Hale, Potter, Hale, Hill, Grimes, Waller, Lynn, Cameron and Williamson, El Paso and Bell counties.

- Met with Judges, court staff, and county clerks on details of project.
- They have all be cooperative with the project, except one county court at law judge.
- Conducted an Initial Assessment and Program Survey.
- Conducted Review and audit of guardianship files for overall reporting compliance.
 - Reviewing files for missing inventories, missing annual report of the persons, and missing annual accountings.
 - Completing audit sheet for each active case file.
 - Compiling our findings on a spreadsheet to report.
- Conducting financial audit of estates using Initial Inventories and Annual Accountings.
- Maintaining a list to recommend best practices for the courts.

Registration of Guardianships S.B. 1096 (June 1, 2018)

SB 1096 requires that a statewide guardianship registration and database system be established, that all guardians (including family guardians) complete an online training course before being appointed, and that criminal background checks be run on all individual guardians. Once implemented, the mandatory training course will “educate proposed guardians about their responsibilities as guardians, alternatives to guardianships, supports and services available to the proposed ward, and a ward’s bill of rights.”

- S.B. 1096 implements two recommendations from the Texas Judicial Council (TJC):
 - Prior to Appointment as Guardian:
 - Requires all guardianships to be registered with the Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC)
 - Directs JBCC to ensure that these guardians obtain proper training and criminal history checks.
 - No fee for the registration or training
 - Effective June 1,2018
- Application Form: JBCC Contact Information, Guardian and Contact Information, Ward and Contact Info, Attorney and Contact Information, jbccguardianshipregistration@txcourts.gov
- Prior to being appointed Guardian, you must register online with the Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC) at <https://jbcctexas.txcourts.gov>.

- To register the Guardianship, please select Guardians from the tab, and then select To Register a Guardianship: [Click Here](#).
 - After completing and submitting the online registration, the guardian must also complete the Guardian Training Module.
 - A background check will be performed by the JBCC if the liquid estate value of the guardianship is less than \$50,000. If the liquid estate value is more than \$50,000, a digital fingerprint background check must be completed and is the responsibility of the guardian.
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- ALIS (New Certification, Registration and Licensing System):
 - Currently Developing on line licensing, certification and registration system (September 18, 2017).
 - This system will provide an on-line method for registering of guardianships in the state. (Registrations implemented June 1, 2018)
 - Guardian information, Protected Person Information, Attorney Information, County, county, Estate Value, type of guardian, qualification date
 - A guardianship application is filed. An automated email is sent using the filer's name and email address, provided nightly. The email has the instructions and link to the registration and training that takes them to ALIS.
 - In addition to the name and email address, we are creating an admin search in ALIS to place the additional information on the case captured from the filed application.
 - January 11, 2018, Coordinating with E-file Texas for us to use the filer's name and email address to send email to guardianship application filer with instructions to implement the registration.
 - January 11, 2018, set up email addresses to be copied on all notices to register the guardianship. Also, working on collecting xml file from Tyler with data from the application filing.
 - January 11, 2018, Also, set up email address to coordinate the qualification, registration and termination, removal, transfer and closure of a guardianship, with the county clerks and courts with probate jurisdiction.
 - Working with DPS-process to supply CHRI securely to the Courts.
 - During the meeting, we discussed the new JBCC rules, GCP and limits on the number of wards per guardian.
 - July 27, 2017, met with DPS criminal history staff on implementation, name and date of birth search, fingerprint ORI requested and providing CH to the clerks
 - August 11, 2017, met with DPS technical staff about interface with TLETS and registry.
 - Provide DPS with the guardian contact information from the registry (July 1, 2018)
 - October 9, 2017, Held the Guardianship Certification Advisory Board meeting set with additional interested stakeholders invited: Rosa Berumen and Alex Jones from Health and Human Services Commission; Judge Susan Redford, Texas Association of Counties; Cathy Horvath, Guadalupe County Clerk; and Terry Hammond, Texas Guardianship Association.
 - JBCC Rules were developed with advisory boards and interested stakeholders. JBCC rules were put out for public comment on December 19, 2017 through January 30, 2018.

The Office of Court Administration received an SJI grant for the development of a Texas guardianship training module. Selected advisory council to assist in the development of this training and implementation of the project with the NCSC.

- August 10, 2017, contract sent to NCSC to be signed.
- August 18, 2017, continued meetings with NCSC on development.
- Developed outline and course content.
- Completing pre-production course outline and course content phase.
- Expected completion date of April 2018

Program Registrations S.B. 36 (September 1, 2018)

- JBCC with authority to register and monitor guardianship programs like the way that JBCC oversees court reporting firms.
- This would allow JBCC to ensure that guardianship programs adhere to minimum standards that further the welfare of those under a program's care and would increase transparency.
- SCOT rules (JBCC advisory board, commission)
- October 9, 2017, Guardianship Certification Advisory Board meeting set to review.
- Update Minimum Standards with HHSC
- Will add registered programs in ALIS on-line system-go live September 18, 2017
- JBCC Rules were developed with advisory boards and interested stakeholders. JBCC rules were put out for public comment on December 19, 2017 through January 30, 2018.
- February 2, 2018, JBCC rules approved to forward to the Supreme Court for review and adoption.

TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION (TFSC)

The Texas Legislature created the Texas Forensic Science Commission (“TFSC”) during the 79th Legislative Session by passing House Bill 1068 (the “Act”). The Act amended the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure to add Article 38.01, which describes the composition and authority of the TFSC. During subsequent legislative sessions, the Legislature further amended the Code of Criminal Procedure to clarify and expand the TFSC’s jurisdictional responsibilities and authority.

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 has four main areas of responsibility:

- accreditation of crime laboratories and other entities that perform forensic analysis;
- designation of forensic disciplines for accreditation or exemption;
- investigation of allegations regarding professional negligence and misconduct; and
- the licensing of forensic analysts (beginning January 1, 2019).

The Legislature moved the TFSC’s administrative attachment to the Office of Court Administration during the 85th Legislative Session.

The TFSC's most recent quarterly meeting was held on February 2, 2018. Commissioners considered a variety of matters including complaints and laboratory self-disclosures, the development of rulemaking to support the forensic analyst licensing program, and whether the forensic discipline of blood stain pattern analysis should be subject to accreditation requirements. All Commission quarterly meetings are open to the public and livestreamed with the support of OCA's IT division.