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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:

- 633,864 users handling about 41,000 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.
- 185 JPs across 48 counties accept eFilings on a permissive basis.

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

- Availability of version 5 of the Electronic Case Filing standard (ECF5) in the production environment.
- Testing of the composable security model.
- Availability of an enhanced proposed order process.

Over the next few months, the remaining Phase 2 enhancements will be completed. Phase 3 enhancements that include additional tools for the clerk community are currently being programmed.

TECH REFRESH

With the exception of a few laptops, the FY22-23 computer refresh project is complete. 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.

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:

- Mental Health Reporting maintenance guide and assistance with questions related to NICS, Juvenile Mental Health, and changes based on Federal Law.
- Participated in presentations and meetings for SB 6, Local Rules, Forms and Standing Orders, Voluntary Remote Marriage Licenses, OCA updates, Legislative updates, and Managing Court Dockets.
- Assist courts in developing best practices to address backlogs as a result of the pandemic.
- Executed Voluntary Remote Marriage Licenses for County Clerks program.

Projects:

- eFileTexas 2.0.
- Judicial Workload Assessment Study.
- Uniform Case Management System: Implementation of systems to support courts under 20,000 in population.
- Case Level Data Reporting.
- Court Reminder: Development and implementation.
- Civil Justice Initiative Expedited Actions Rules.
- Development of Training/Material for assisting Court Coordinators/Administrators.
- Centers of Excellence:
 - The Program is currently working with the Temple Municipal Court, Travis County Justice of the Peace 3, and McLennan CCL III to set up initial court reviews and begin the process to work the program.
 - Rockwall County Justice of the Peace 3, and Waller County Justice of the Peace 2, are currently working their way through the program.

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.

Problem Solving Courts

Children's Court and Specialty Courts comprise the Problem-Solving Courts program. 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. Effective September 2019, OCA was given oversight authority of Texas Specialty Courts. Specialty Courts are required to register with the OCA prior to operating by submitting required documentation for official acknowledgement. The Statewide Specialty Court Coordinator (SSCC) accepts, reviews, and processes registration documents.

CHILDREN'S COURTS

The three Early Intervention Court Liaisons (EICL) presented as a panel moderated by the Children's Courts Program Manager to the Child Protection Court Coordinators at the 2022 Child Protection Court Coordinator Training. The EICLs continue to work on building and strengthening connections within the child welfare community amongst child welfare stakeholders, CPS, and the courts in their respective jurisdictions.

Departures and Arrivals:

- A Title IV-D CSC Associate Judge was hired for CSC No. 40 in the 9th AJR. Host county was moved from Childress to Lubbock County.
- One Title IV-D Court Coordinator was hired for CSC No. 3 in the 10th AJR.

SPECIALTY COURTS

The SSCC continued representing OCA and the State by attending and participating in Specialty Court-related meetings sponsored by a diverse body of state and federal governmental and non-profit agencies and other stakeholders. The SSCC attended the 3rd Treatment Courts Summit in Colorado.

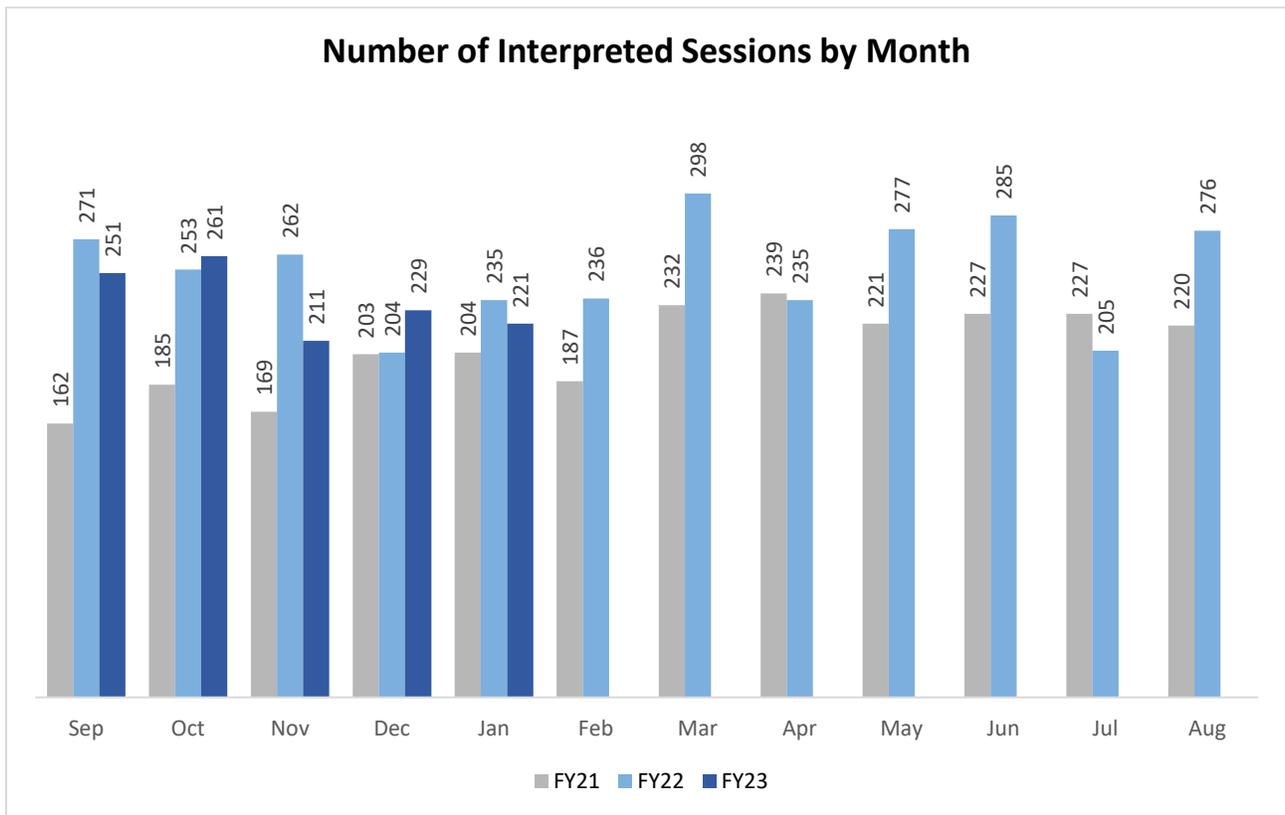
The SSCC added four new Specialty Courts to the Specialty Court Registry bringing the total to 210 registered Specialty Courts in Texas.

- Conducted 113 courthouse assessments to date.
- Processed 1,634 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.
 - College of New Judges
 - Judicial and Staff regional presentations throughout the State.
- Conducted in-person security presentations before a broad spectrum of county, district and municipal court stakeholders.
- Reporting of judicial threats and inappropriate communication to 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.

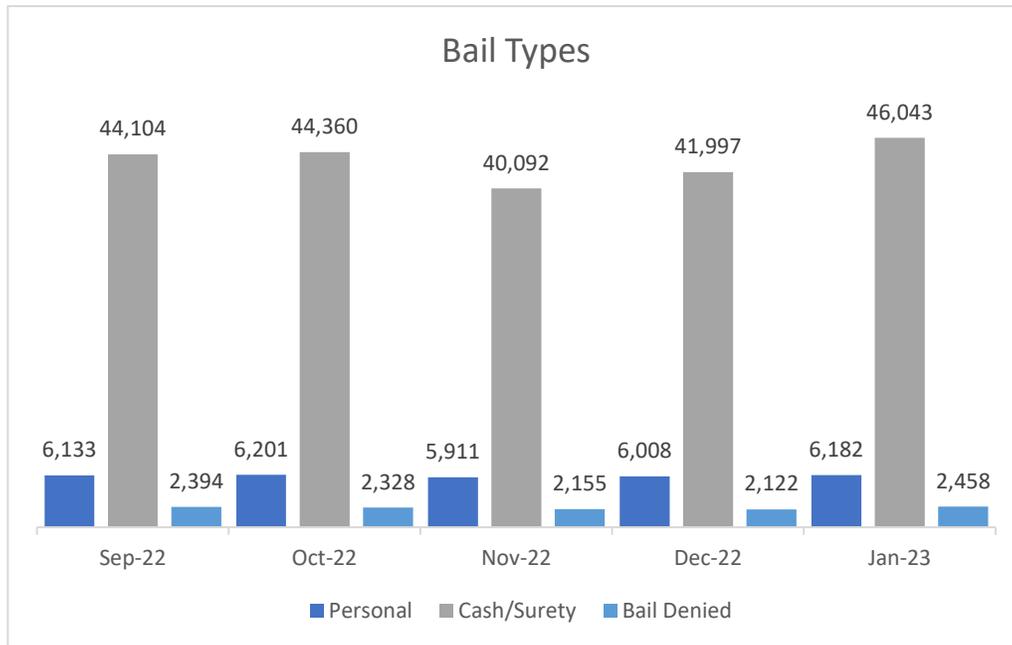
From September 1, 2022, through January 31, 2023, TCRIS staff provided interpreting services in 1,173 hearings in 84 counties. The chart below shows the consistent demand for OCA’s Remote Interpreter Services.



PRETRIAL AND BAIL

Pretrial is a new addition to the Research and Court Services Division. 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 6,546 active users and 232 counties have completed magistrations in the system. A total of 193,039 bail forms have been completed from September 1 through December 31, 2022. Bail types are detailed in the chart below. Note that multiple offenses may be included on one bail form.



Five updates to the original system have been released including an API for integration to local case management systems and additional enhancements are being planned in response to user requests and system improvements.

The Pretrial and Bail Section continues to provide technical assistance to users through our website, the pretrial inbox at bail@txcourts.gov, Q&A sessions, conference attendance, the PSRS help center, and the vendor's technical support at 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 209 offenders from September through January 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

- [Appointments and Fees](#)
- [Administrative Judicial Region Presiding Judges Report](#)
- [Judicial Salaries and Turnover – FYs 20 & 21](#)
- [Writs of Attachment](#)

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 and analyses for testimony in legislative and budget hearings.
- Nineteen analyses for new district and county courts at law.
- Data support for Judicial Compensation Commission, Council of Presiding Judges and Judicial Districts Board.
- Two proposals and additional special analyses for transfer of cases among the Courts of Appeals for Supreme Court's [docket equalization program](#).
- Address data inquires related to CPCMS and DFPS data.

Presentations

- Caseload trends and backlog: 3
- Judicial Council legislative recommendations: 1
- Trial Court Reporting: 2
- PSRS & Bail: 1

Meetings and Trainings

- Executive Forum for Criminal Justice Planners
- American Evaluation Association Annual Conference

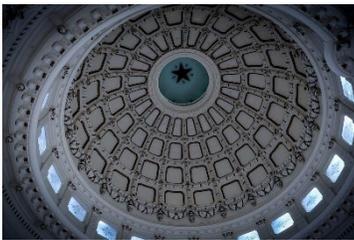
Other Projects

- Case Level Data
- Bail data analyses
- Research and recommendations related to NICS reporting in light of new federal laws. E-filing Insights Program

Judicial Directory

- Entered/analyzed election results.
- Updated court structure and jurisdiction [documents and maps](#).
- Updated judge demographic 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 **6,523** court reporters and court reporting firms, guardians and guardianship programs and guardianship registrations, and licensed court interpreters. Hon. Sid Harle, Chair.

- FY 2022, our JBCC licensing team processed 1,109 new certifications and renewed 3,293 certifications.
- FY 2022, 96 complaints were filed with the JBCC compliance team and are in process or resolved.
- Recently, the JBCC team administered 54 oral court interpreter examinations, 88 court interpreter written examinations, and 55 guardian written examinations.
- To date, our team has conducted 23,712 background checks, 30,406 guardianship trainings have been completed, with 49,412 guardianship registrations approved.
- Commission meetings are conducted quarterly throughout the year. The JBCC met on, February 4, 2022, May 6, 2022, August 5, 2022, and February 3, 2023. The next meeting of the Commission is May 5, 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.

- January 1, 2023, [the Local Rules, Forms, and Stand Orders project](#) public facing website went live.
- Our team is currently working on the Uniform Case Management System, eFile 2.0, Court Notification Project, Case Level Data Project, Guardian Online Reporting System, Court Case

Backlog Summit, Appellate Case Management System Project, Public Safety Report System, and the TDCJ Educational Training-OCA Judicial Training Project.

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. The GAFEDP recently published the [2022 annual report](#) issued to the Texas Legislature. *"Our mission is to assist the courts in protecting our most vulnerable citizens and their assets."*

- Initial Compliance Reviews Conducted in 302 Courts and 236 Counties
- 68,406: Total Number of Guardianship Cases Reviewed GCP/GAFEDP
- 32,594: Total Number of Cases Recommended for Closure
- 34,284: Total Number of Active Guardianships Identified
 - 26% Percentage of Cases Missing Annual Reports
 - 43% Percentage of Cases Missing Annual Accountings
 - 39% Percentage of Cases Missing Inventories
 - 33% Percentage of Cases Out of Compliance
- 6,739: 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 regarding professional negligence and misconduct; adoption 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 January 27, 2023. Commissioners considered 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 the following disciplines: forensic biology; firearm/toolmark analysis; and friction ridge analysis. During the week of February 13, 2023, members of the Commission, their staff and Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Judge Barbara Hervey attended the American Academy of Forensic Sciences annual meeting, where they gave various scientific and legal presentations to over 3,000 U.S. and international attendees.

To date, the Commission has licensed approximately 1,401 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. 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. The Commission also plans to sponsor Texas lab directors' participation in the National Forensic Leadership Academy later this fiscal year.

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