

Community Supervision

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF
CRIMINAL JUSTICE



COMMUNITY JUSTICE
ASSISTANCE DIVISION



Community Justice Assistance Division

What is Community Supervision?

Until 1989 community supervision was known as adult probation. Offenders who are sentenced to community supervision serve time in the community instead of going to prison or a county jail. More than 434,000 offenders are on community supervision in Texas. Of that number more than 238,000 are felons, and more than 196,000 are misdemeanants.

The Community Justice Assistance Division (CJAD), a division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), administers community supervision in Texas.

What We Do TDCJ-CJAD distributes state funds to the community supervision and corrections departments (CSCDs, formerly adult probation departments) of Texas. The division tracks the performance of the departments' programs and monitors and reviews their budgets. CJAD determines the primary services that CSCDs will provide and develops minimum standards for those services with the approval of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice. Besides providing CSCDs administrative and technical help, CJAD trains and certifies the state's community supervision officers (CSOs). On matters of interest to the judiciary, the division director of CJAD seeks advice from a 12-member group of judges and citizens; this group is the Judicial Advisory Council (JAC).

Those We Serve The division's employees do not work directly with offenders. Rather, CJAD staff works with the staffs of CSCDs. Texas has 121 CSCDs serving 254 counties. Although the CSCDs receive funding through CJAD, they are not part of the division. The CSCDs are organized within local judicial districts, and their personnel are employees of judicial districts. CJAD's staff members are state employees.

How We Transmit State Funds

The Texas Legislature allocates money for the annual budgets of CSCDs. CJAD is responsible for the distribution of that state money to the 121 departments. The departments received approximately \$219 million in fiscal year 2003. Although state funding makes up about 65 percent of departments' operating budgets, CSCDs obtain additional funds by collecting court-ordered fees from offenders, and the departments receive office space, equipment and support from their respective county governments. Each department applies for funding by submitting a Community Justice Plan to TDCJ-CJAD for approval. The plan outlines the department's existing programs and services, and it may propose funding for new programs. The plan is mandated by the Texas Legislature and is approved by each department's state district judges and community justice council. To decide what programs to fund, TDCJ-CJAD considers how well the program will meet offenders' needs, the utilization of evidence-based practices, and what other funding the department receives.

The Role of the CSCDs

Community supervision and corrections departments protect the public by supervising and rehabilitating offenders who are sentenced to community supervision by local courts. Community supervision officers assess each offender's level of risk and need by using a standard assessment tool. The results of the assessment enable the officer to design an appropriate supervision plan. The plan includes the conditions stipulated by the courts when the offender was sentenced.

The types of supervision include a basic level and specialized supervision for offenders according to risk and need. While some offenders are confined temporarily in residential facilities, others are not but must report to their CSOs at intervals determined by the courts and based on the offender's risk and needs assessment. Departments use the following means to protect the public:

How Does Community Supervision Differ from Parole?

Although both systems supervise convicted offenders and offer similar sanctions and rehabilitation programs, their functions differ. Offenders on community supervision serve their sentences in the community. They are sentenced by local county courts at law and district judges.

An offender who is on parole has been released from prison.

@ Special Equipment - for urinalysis and electronic monitoring

@ Special Facilities - such as court residential treatment centers, intermediate sanctions facilities, restitution centers, and day reporting centers

@ Stricter Levels of Supervision - such as intensive and surveillance supervision; specialized caseloads that target sex offenders, substance abusers, or offenders with special needs (the mentally or physically disabled)

@ Rehabilitation Programs - such as continuing education to help offenders earn GED certificates; vocational/life skills training to help unemployed offenders get and keep jobs; cognitive skills training to alter the values of offenders and the way they interact with the world; substance abuse treatment for those with drug/alcohol problems; restitution whereby offenders are ordered by a court to repay their victims or society by making payments or working for free in the community; and drug courts, a form of intensive supervision that consists of judicially led treatment programs for offenders with histories or assessments that indicate an offender may benefit from this option

@ Victim Notification Program - a source of information and support for victims of offenders on community supervision; the program offers victims the opportunity to be informed about the offender's status, and the offender is held accountable to pay restitution to the victim and to perform community service as restitution and as part of rehabilitation.

Organization of TDCJ-CJAD

The following sections comprise CJAD.

@ **Executive Administration** supports the director who manages the division. The section ensures implementation of legislation affecting community supervision and represents the division's interests in matters before the Texas Legislature, the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, the CSCDs, the judiciary and other major stakeholders.

@ **Administrative Services** provides administrative support to the division and acts as a major conduit between CJAD and the CSCDs. The section maintains all contact information for CJAD, CSCDs, and the JAC. Publications representing community supervision are created through the section's graphic design services. The victim services coordinator provides victim service program development and training, and the ombudsman responds to concerns about departments from offenders and the public.

@ **Information Systems** designs computer systems for the division and maintains databases, including data on each offender.

@ **Research and Evaluation** conducts program evaluations, compiles statistics and composes reports for the agency and external entities with an interest in community supervision issues.

@ **Field Services** reviews and approves the community supervision departments' services and programs, including the residential programs. The section helps departments comply with all state and federal standards and laws and reviews the departments' Community Justice Plans. The section oversees the placement of offenders in Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facilities (SAFPFs) and develops special treatment programs for sex offenders and offenders with special needs (e.g., mental or physical disabilities).

@ **Fiscal Management** monitors budgets and expenditures of CSCDs to ensure integrity. Also, it monitors TDCJ-CJAD's operating budget and distributes state funds and grants to community supervision departments. The section ensures that departments spend the funds responsibly through reviews of the CSCDs' work and the work of CSCD vendors contracted for services. Independent certified public accounts perform annual audits of CSCDs and their vendors. Through examining these audits, the section is able to ascertain program efficiency.

@ **The Treatment Alternative to Incarceration Program (TAIP)** provides oversight of funds for the Treatment Alternative to Incarceration Program. This funding, distributed to 31 administrative CSCDs, supports substance abuse screening assessment/evaluation and referral services for probationers.

@ **Training and Staff Development** trains and certifies community supervision officers to work in Texas and offers training and professional development to all community supervision departments and TDCJ employees. The section sponsors an annual statewide conference for community supervision.

Need More Information?

Visit the website at www.tdcj.state.tx.us or call 512-305-9300 for a copy of the agency's annual report and fact sheets on community supervision programs and services.

The History of Community Supervision in Texas

In 1913 Texas began to permit those offenders convicted of less serious crimes to serve their sentences in the community rather than in prison. Local judges and community officials managed this probation process until the Texas Legislature created the Texas Adult Probation Commission (TAPC) in 1977. This agency's job was to apply common standards across the state and to distribute state funds to the local probation offices.

In 1989 the Texas Legislature brought about a more cohesive criminal justice system by consolidating three agencies into one, now known as the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The TAPC became the Community Justice Assistance Division, and the official terminology changed from adult probation to community supervision; the Department of Corrections became the prison (incarceration) system, and a section of the Board of Pardons and Paroles became the Pardons and Paroles Division.

The Legislature took two further actions. It created the Judicial Advisory Council, a group of judges and interested citizens who advise the TDCJ-CJAD director and the Texas Board of Criminal Justice on matters of interest to the judiciary. And, the Legislature required the state's local judicial districts to create community justice councils and community justice plans.



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