

**ANNUAL REPORTS
OF THE
JUDICIAL SUPPORT AGENCIES,
BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS**



FISCAL YEAR 2010

Annual Reports of the Judicial Support Agencies, Boards and Commissions

for the Fiscal Year
Ended August 31, 2010



Photo courtesy of TexasCourthouses.com

Anderson County Courthouse - Palestine

Introduction to the Judicial Support Agencies, Boards and Commissions

The **Office of Court Administration** provides information and research, technology services, budgetary and legal support, and other administrative assistance to a variety of judicial branch entities and courts, under the supervision of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas and an Administrative Director reporting to the Chief Justice.

The **Texas Judicial Council** is the primary policy-making body responsible for studying and recommending changes to improve the administration of justice.

The **Task Force on Indigent Defense** is a standing committee of the Texas Judicial Council that oversees the distribution of funds to counties to provide indigent defense services, and promulgates policies and standards for services to indigent defendants.

The **Judicial Committee on Information Technology** establishes standards and guidelines for the systematic implementation and integration of information technology into the state's trial and appellate courts.

The **Court Reporters Certification Board** performs licensing and regulatory functions for the court reporting profession.

The **Process Server Review Board** performs regulatory functions for persons authorized to serve process.

The **Guardianship Certification Board** performs regulatory functions for individuals (other than attorneys and corporate sureties) who act as private professional guardians, individuals (other than volunteers) who provide guardianship services to wards of guardianship programs, and individuals who provide guardianship services to wards of the Department of Aging and Disability Services.

The **Judicial Compensation Commission** is responsible for making a report to the Texas Legislature each even-numbered year recommending the proper salaries to be paid by the state for all justices and judges of the Supreme Court of Texas, the Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas, the courts of appeals and the district courts. The Office of Court Administration provides administrative support for the JCC.



Office of Court Administration

2010 Activities of OCA by Division

Executive Operations - The Office of Court Administration (OCA) is led by an Administrative Director, Mr. Carl Reynolds, who is also the Executive Director of the Texas Judicial Council, and is supported by an Executive Assistant. The Director provides leadership and strategic direction, represents the agency to the Legislature, other agencies and interest groups, and is responsible for the agency's performance.

In the summer of 2009, the Director was elected to the board of directors of the Conference of State Court Administrators, leading to additional national activity during FY 2010. In October 2009, the Director helped the Supreme Court's Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families to host the Third National Judicial Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children. This remarkably successful program triggered collaborative efforts around the country, specifically to improve educational outcomes for children in foster care and to address racial dispropor-

tionality. During the fiscal year, the Director assisted the Department of Criminal Justice with the implementation of a Reentry Task Force, participated in another task force on continuity of mental health care at the request of the Department of State Health Services, and chaired a subcommittee of the State Bar Committee on Legal Services to the Poor in Criminal Matters. Also in FY 2010, the Director's blog has been in existence for a full year, with 55 posts on a variety of court administration topics; see www.courtex.blogspot.com.

The Director's Assistant continued service as clerk to the Process Server Review Board and is assisted by a full-time employee dedicated to this entity.

Research and Court Services Division - During FY 2010, the division's activities included the development or continuation of programs and projects designed to increase the collection of court costs, fees, and fines; to improve reporting accuracy and compliance; and to improve the administrative operation of the courts. Highlights of these programs and projects are noted below.

Collection Improvement Program. OCA's Collection Improvement Program is a set of principles and processes for managing cases when defendants are not prepared to pay all court costs, fees, and fines at the point of assessment and when time to pay is requested. In 2005, the Texas Legislature enacted S.B. 1863 (Code of Criminal Procedure, article 103.0033), which requires cities with a population of 100,000 or more, and counties with a population of 50,000 or more, to implement collection improvement programs based on OCA's model Court Collection Improvement Program.

As of August 31, 2010, 77 of the 78 counties and cities required to implement a program had either fully or partially implemented the model. One county, Harris County, previously received a waiver. In addition, nine voluntary programs were at least partially implemented in the cities of Bishop, De Kalb, Denton, Lewisville, McKinney, Nacogdoches, North Richland Hills, Sinton, and Van during FY 2010.

In FY 2010, the primary focus of division staff was to work with the counties and cities required to implement a program, as well as with audit staff at the state's Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) office, to ensure compliance with the critical components of the model program. To that end, division staff continued to provide technical assistance; assist with obtaining the case populations from which the CPA auditors select their samples to conduct compliance audits of mandatory programs; and conduct simulated compliance audits of mandatory programs to identify any deficiencies and assist counties or cities with correcting any deficiencies found before the CPA auditors conduct the official compliance audit. Division staff also began providing regional training on the compliance audit process.

Additionally, division staff continued to assist or offer assistance to local voluntary collection improvement program efforts; conduct regional collections training workshops for mandatory and voluntary programs, as well as cities, counties or courts interested in improving court collections; and assist programs with the use of the web-based collection reporting system to track collection activity and results. In cooperation with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, division staff also developed and distributed standardized guidelines for withdrawing funds from inmate trust accounts.

Judicial Information Program. The Judicial Information Program collects, analyzes, provides and publishes information about the judicial branch and supports the Judicial Compensation Commission.

Judicial Data Project. Acting on a mandate of the 81st Texas Legislature (under OCA Rider 7, S.B. 1, 2009) and a request of the Texas Judicial Council Committee on Judicial Data Management, division staff continued working on the Judicial Data Project, in which OCA created workgroups of judges, clerks and others to review the data elements currently used by trial courts in reporting case activity and to recommend to the Judicial Council changes to the monthly case activity reports so they more accurately reflect the workload of those courts.

The district and county-level court phase of the project was completed in spring 2008, with the Judicial Council approving changes to the district and county-level court monthly case activity reports and instructions, which took effect September 1, 2010. During FY 2010, division staff engaged in numerous activities to facilitate the implementation of the new reports, including making presentations on the upcoming monthly report changes at district and county clerk conferences and regional meetings; conducting seven regional training sessions (attended by more than 500 individuals); and providing frequent technical assistance to clerks and case management software providers.

In fall 2008, the Judicial Council approved three model case information sheets developed as part of the Judicial Data Project, which would be submitted by an attorney or pro se litigant when filing a civil or family law case in a district or county-level court. A case information sheet is intended to take the burden off clerks in categorizing cases and make the attorney or pro se litigant indicate what type of case is filed, thereby resulting in increased accuracy of the identification of case types.

During FY 2009, at the suggestion of the Supreme Court Advisory Committee (SCAC), OCA staff developed a proposed consolidated civil case information sheet for consideration by the Judicial Council. After posting it for comment on its website and considering proposed revisions based on the comments received, the Judicial Council, in April 2010, adopted the proposed consolidated civil case information sheet, as revised, and the instructions for its completion.

Also, division staff continued to provide information to the SCAC to assist the Committee as they studied and developed their recommendation to the Supreme Court for a Rule of Civil Procedure that requires a party to submit a civil case information sheet when a civil case or post-judgment petition for modification or motion for enforcement in a family law is filed in a district or county-level court. On August 16, 2010, the Supreme Court adopted the final version of Rule of Civil Procedure 78a requiring the submission of a civil case information sheet and the civil case information sheet that the rule requires (i.e., the civil case information sheet previously approved by the Judicial Council). The final version of the rule took effect September 1, 2010.

Throughout FY 2010, division staff provided periodic updates on the civil case information sheet and Rule of Civil Procedure 78a to the district and county clerks, as well as district and county-level judges. Division staff also prepared responses to frequently asked questions, which were included in the updates, and provided training and technical assistance to the clerks to assist them with the implementation of the civil case information sheet. Further, OCA legal staff prepared a glossary for pro se litigants to help them in completing the civil case information sheet, which was approved by the Judicial Council on August 27, 2010.

At its December 11, 2009 meeting, the Judicial Council approved the proposed new monthly case activity reports and instructions for the justice and municipal courts, which were previously posted on the Judicial Council's website for comment. The new reports will take effect September 1, 2011. During FY 2010, division staff engaged in numerous activities to facilitate the implementation of the new reports including hosting a meeting with case management software providers to discuss the monthly report changes; making numerous presentations to municipal and justice court clerks; and providing frequent technical assistance to clerks and case management software providers.

During FY 2010, OCA began to work on updating information systems to implement the revised reporting categories in September 2010. OCA staff worked closely with the selected vendor to design, review, and test the new database and system functionality and provide guidance and clarification on expected functionality and business processes.

H.B. 3352 and the NICS Improvement Act. OCA is the representative for the Texas judicial branch for the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Improvement Act, which amended the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 to provide information about mental health adjudications, commitments and other factors that would prohibit a person from receiving or possessing a firearm under state or federal law. Division staff completed the annual estimate of court records (due each May) related to provisions of the NICS Improvement Act. Division staff also participated in meetings with representatives of the County and District Clerks' Association concerning implementation issues surrounding H.B. 3352, passed last session, which requires clerks to report information to the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) through the Department of Public Safety on individuals who have been found incompetent to handle their own affairs and are therefore not eligible to purchase a handgun. As a result of these meetings, division staff developed a Frequently Asked Questions document to assist clerks in reporting these cases and implementing the provisions of the bill that require the clerks to report cases from September 1989 to the present; made presentations on H.B. 3352 at seven regional training sessions; conducted a survey to obtain information on the number of cases that need to be reported and what issues or challenges the clerks are facing in implementing the bill; and provided frequent assistance to clerks by answering questions.

Judicial Compensation Commission. The division provided staff support for the Judicial Compensation Commission, supporting all Commission meetings, updating data for the Commission's review and producing the Commission's report for 2010.

Surveys. Over the year, division staff also conducted a number of surveys concerning topics such as court expenses,

judicial compensation, trial and appellate court records preservation (for the Supreme Court Task Force on Court Records Preservation), and customer service (for OCA and for the Certified Shorthand Reporter Exam).

Court Services Program. The Court Services Program provides assistance and services to courts to improve their case management and other administrative programs, increase their accessibility to the public, enhance the quality of justice, and support continuity of their operations in the event of an emergency.

Technical Assistance on Caseload Management. During FY 2010, division staff provided on-site training on case management, calendar management, and other administrative matters to a court coordinator in Liberty County, as well as indigent case management training to a court coordinator and the county indigent defense coordinator in Burnet County.

Division staff continued working with a committee comprised of court coordinators and court managers on the development of a handbook for court coordinators in district, statutory county, and specialty courts.

Also, pursuant to an offer by the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project (CCTAP) at American University to provide training and technical assistance to improve caseload management and case scheduling to state court administrative offices and state and local courts, OCA requested a workshop for judges and judicial system personnel regarding effective caseload management strategies and follow-up technical assistance for a select number of counties attending the training. The BJA's CCTAP conducted a session on "Fundamentals of Effective Caseload Management" at the Texas Indigent Defense Workshop held in October 2009. The 82 participants included judges and court administrators and represented 23 counties. The CCTAP later conducted a review of the criminal caseload process in the district courts and county courts at law in Lubbock County (at the county's request) to provide recommendations to reduce delay.

Improving Rural Courts Seminar. OCA hosted a seminar on strengthening the ability of state court systems and rural court leaders to improve court operations in rural areas, which was conducted by the Justice Management Institute and sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The seminar was held on August 2-5, 2010, in Austin. Teams from Arizona, Arkansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Texas participated in the seminar.

Domestic Violence Resource Attorney (DVRA). OCA obtained a \$96,286 S.T.O.P Violence Against Women Act Fund grant to hire a full-time attorney who serves as a single point of contact to support court efforts to combat domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The DVRA joined OCA in January 2010 and is developing a judges' bench book on legal and other issues in domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking cases. OCA is partnering with the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) on this project. OCA agreed to provide a cash match of \$1,552 and TCFV agreed to provide an in-kind match of \$50,500, resulting in a total project cost of \$148,338. The grant period is September 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010. During FY 2010, the DVRA also provided technical assistance to the courts on domestic violence cases.

Interpreter Services in Domestic Violence Cases. In FY 2010, OCA applied for grant funding to establish a remote-site call center staffed by licensed Spanish court interpreters who will provide interpretation services for court hearings in civil domestic violence cases. Funding for the project was awarded in fall 2010.

Emergency Preparedness. H.B. 1861, which was passed during the last legislative session, provides for the inclusion of the judiciary in emergency preparedness under state law. In October 2009, OCA staff and the Presiding Judge of the Second Administrative Judicial Region attended an orientation meeting at the State Operations Center so they may assist the state and the judiciary in ensuring that essential court functions continue during an emergency. Division staff attended basic emergency management and planning workshops sponsored by the Texas Division of Emergency Management, reviewed materials on emergency preparedness, and met with the Chair of the Supreme Court's Task Force to Ensure Judicial Readiness and others to become familiar with the subject matter area. During Hurricane Alex, division staff worked with the Presiding Judges of the Second and Fifth Administrative Judicial Regions, State Bar, and affected counties on emergency-related matters, including obtaining and posting information on court closures.

Information Services Division - The Information Services Division works to improve information technology (IT) at all judicial levels in Texas. In addition to providing information technologies for OCA and for the various boards

it supports, the division provides IT directly for the Supreme Court of Texas, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the 14 intermediate courts of appeals, the State Law Library, the State Prosecuting Attorney, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct (SCJC), and the Office of Capital Writs (OCW). These bodies use computers, desktop software, line-of-business software applications, Internet access, wide area and local area networks, server databases and resources, and websites provided and maintained by OCA. The line-of-business software applications that Information Services maintains include certification management for OCA's regulatory boards, case management for the child-protection and child-support specialty courts, case management for SCJC, court case management for appellate courts, automated registry for trial courts, and court activity reporting for trial courts. Additionally, the Information Services Division supports the meetings and activities of the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT). Accomplishments for FY 2010 are discussed in the report for JCIT.

In 2010, Information Services completed the statewide biennial equipment refresh project. The division was also responsible for setting up the entire IT infrastructure for the new OCW site.

The Information Services Division worked on the following ongoing projects:

- The initial release of the Texas Appeals Management and e-filing System (TAMES) continued development and will be implemented in the appellate courts in 2011.
- The Texas Data-Enabled Courts for Kids (TexDECK) system and the Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS) are undergoing enhancements, including the addition of outcome measure reports (promulgated by the U.S. Department of Justice. Information Services is also rewriting the Child Support Case Management System (CSCMS), which will be completed in 2011.
- The division is working to replace the Judicial Data Management System (JDMS) with the new Court Activity Reporting and Directory (CARD) system. The CARD system will collect court activity data in a format that meets the new reporting requirements adopted by the Texas Judicial Council in 2008.
- The Automated Registry (AR) system is in production, and the Information Services Division continues to market and provide interested courts with access to the system. AR allows authorized individuals to search state agency databases for information on a person appearing before the court.
- Information Services has deployed a replication repository in Austin as part of the Judicial Emergency Data Infrastructure (JEDI) project. JEDI was funded by the 81st Texas Legislature, to provide data redundancy for courts located in disaster prone areas. The division is currently evaluating sites for a back-up repository outside of the Austin area for additional redundancy. The new back-up site will become operational in 2011.

Indigent Defense Division - The division supports the Task Force on Indigent Defense by administering the distribution of funds to counties for indigent defense services; developing policies and standards for legal representation and other defense services for indigent defendants; promoting local compliance with the core requirements of the Fair Defense Act (FDA) through evidence-based practices; providing technical support to counties with respect to indigent defense; and establishing a statewide county reporting plan for indigent defense information. Accomplishments for FY 2010 are discussed in the report for the Task Force.

Legal Division - The Legal Division continued to provide legal support for numerous entities within the judiciary and to oversee the administration of the specialty courts programs on behalf of the presiding judges of the nine administrative judicial regions. Legal staff served as liaisons to or provided legal support to the Texas Judicial Council; the Conference of Regional Presiding Judges; the Council of Chief Justices; the Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families; the Task Force to Ensure Judicial Readiness in Times of Emergency; the Judicial Districts Board; the Task Force on Indigent Defense; the Judicial Compensation Commission; the Guardianship Certification Board (GCB); and the Court Reporters Certification Board (CRCB). Division attorneys drafted new rules and amendments for the GCB and the CRCB. The division updated the district clerk civil filing fees report and the district court suits and actions chart. A division attorney worked with others on a statewide effort to help Texas courts deal with the increasing numbers of self-represented litigants in the state. A division attorney also made presentations throughout the year to judges and clerks on issues including the Texas court system, probable cause for search warrants, the Confrontation Clause, judicial readiness in time of emergency, filing and docketing civil cases, researching the law, the court technology and court security funds, resources for clerks, and the Texas

Judicial Council's Legislative proposals.

Specialty Courts Program. The specialty courts program includes the child protection courts and the child support courts programs. Throughout the year division staff supported the efforts of the presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions in administering the specialty courts program. An attorney funded through a federal grant from the Children's Justice Act worked with the child protection courts and the Information Services Division to develop reports for the case management system and survey court practices in an effort to identify best practices. The specialty courts program director worked with the Information Services Division and a child support courts advisory committee to finalize a new case management system for the child support courts. The program director also facilitated the annual Child Protection Court Conference in Austin attended by the associate judges and coordinators.

Finance and Operations Division - The Finance and Operations Division manages the fiscal and operational support activities of OCA, including purchasing, accounting, payroll, budgeting, financial reporting, human resources, property inventory, and facilities management. Division staff members consult with OCA program managers on a variety of financial and contractual issues, and answer questions from the Legislature, the public, and other interested parties on judicial funding and state appropriations to the courts and judicial agencies. The division coordinates preparation of the agency's strategic plan, legislative appropriations request, and quarterly performance measures. Finance and Operations staff work with the clerks of the appellate courts on issues related to accounting, purchasing, financial reporting, and human resources. In addition, the division provides support to the appellate courts and the Presiding Judges of the administrative judicial regions regarding legislative, budgetary, and human resources issues.

In FY 2010, OCA's accounting and payroll processes, as well as the system of internal controls, were audited by the agency's contracted internal auditor. The audit concluded that OCA has adequate internal controls and an effective management reporting system for its accounting and payroll processes. In June 2010, the division conducted its annual strategic planning and staff development retreat. The staff identified areas where process improvements can be made and made assignments to various staff to begin working on projects identified as priority.

During this fiscal year, OCA (along with the appellate courts and all other agencies in Texas government) was asked to reduce its appropriated budget by five percent. The Finance and Operations Division staff identified where cuts could be made with minimal impact on the agency's staffing and services. The division also assisted the courts of appeals with a coordinated response on the impact of budget cuts on the intermediate appellate courts. As a result of these efforts, OCA and the courts of appeals received relief from a portion of the cuts. OCA's specialty courts and indigent defense programs received exemptions from the five percent reductions and the courts of appeals' budgets were reduced by only two percent, rather than the full five percent required for most agencies.

Division staff also worked on a survey for the Committee on Court Resources. The committee, appointed by Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson, gathered information about local baseline court expenses, the extent to which local budget cuts affected the courts, and innovative ideas implemented by local governments that could be shared with others to achieve greater efficiencies in the court system across the state. Those counties that responded to the survey represented 65 percent of the state's population. Based on their responses, it is estimated that local governments across Texas spend almost \$800 million on the judicial system. This amount does not include costs for district attorneys and other local departments related to the operation of the courts.

In FY 2010, the Finance and Operations Division was instrumental in establishing operations for the new Office of Capital Writs. The office was created by SB 1091, 81st Legislature, R.S., with an implementation date of September 1, 2010. Because the appropriations for the new office were included in OCA's appropriation pattern, OCA worked with the State Comptroller's Office, the Texas Facilities Commission, the Department of Information Resources, and other agencies to set up accounting systems, office space, internet connectivity, phone service, and numerous other administrative and operational functions. The division also assisted with developing and posting job notices for the new agency's nine employees.

Court Reporters Certification Division - The division serves as staff to the Court Reporters Certification Board (CRCB), the governing body that oversees the licensing and regulation of the court reporting profession in Texas. Primary responsibilities include administration of the court reporters exam, certification of court reporters, registration of court reporting firms, and the conduct of disciplinary hearings on complaints filed against court reporters and court reporting firms. Accomplishments for FY 2010 are discussed under the report for the CRCB.

Guardianship Certification Program - The division serves as staff to the Guardianship Certification Board (GCB), the entity that certifies certain individuals who provide guardianship services in Texas. Its primary responsibility is to carry out the daily business of the GCB and perform the necessary administrative functions to implement and enforce statutory requirements. These functions include processing applications for certification, provisional certification and re-certification in accordance with GCB guidelines; developing procedures and forms; maintaining program and GCB records; and disseminating information on the GCB's rules, minimum standards and policies. Accomplishments for FY 2010 are discussed under the report for the GCB.



Texas Judicial Council

Legislation. During FY 2010 the Judicial Council developed and adopted approximately 30 legislative proposals, with more expected as the 82nd Legislative Session approached.

Committees. Often the Council appoints committees to study issues affecting the administration of justice. The active committees in FY 2010 were the Committee on Court Resources, the Committee on Judicial Selection, and the Committee on Judicial Data Management.

Committee on Court Resources. Formed in January 2010, the Committee on Court Resources had several goals. One goal was to better understand local expenditures on the court system and current budgetary situations at the local level. In 2008, the Office of Court Administration (OCA) surveyed county auditors about local expenditures on court operations in 2007. Response levels were low, but the results could be roughly extrapolated to determine that aggregate local court expenditures were almost three times the amount that the state spent on the judicial branch for local court operations (i.e., district courts, county-level courts, and justice courts) — \$731,327 versus \$262,691 in 2007.

In spring 2010, OCA revised the survey, tested it on two county auditors, and sent out a request from Chief Justice Jefferson to the President of the Texas Association of County Auditors to spread the word about the survey and drive greater response levels. “Usable” surveys were received from 64 counties, which represented 65 percent of the state’s population. The results of the survey, again requiring extrapolation to formulate a statewide figure, showed local and state expenditures for 2009 that were remarkably close to the 2007 figures.

**State and Local Expenditures for
District, County-level and Justice Court Operations, 2007 & 2009**

	2007	2009
Local Expenditures	\$731,327	\$783,052
State Expenditures	\$262,691	\$299,129
State Share of Total	26.4%	27.6%

The committee also aspires to identify and promote the use of promising practices at the local level. In that vein, Rick Figueroa and many OCA staff members attended a Travis County Court Day on May 7, hosted by Judge Naranjo from the Committee. The Committee began planning in earnest for the first annual Texas Judicial Council workshop for local leaders in justice administration to share promising practices, plan local strategies, and chart a collaborative and economical course for Texas courts in November of 2011. The summit will be open to twenty local teams of four to six participants, including a county judge or commissioner, a district or county court at law judge, and a district or county clerk. Other participants, depending on the local focus for action, could include a district or county attorney, county chief information officer or administrator, court administrator or coordinator, chief probation officer or pretrial services officer, or domestic relations or child welfare or other court-related staff. Prior to the summit, each team will respond to a survey, identifying an area of focus and developing further information for use in planning.

Committee on Judicial Selection. The Committee on Judicial Selection is charged with examining potential changes related to the judicial selection process in light of *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, 130 S. Ct. 876 (2010), and *Caperton v. A.T. Massey Coal Co.*, 129 S. Ct. 2252 (2009). The committee report draft from August of the reporting period addresses several topics:

- the Judicial Campaign Fairness Act;
- recusal standards;
- frequency of campaigns;
- straight-ticket voting; and
- criteria for judicial qualifications.

Committee on Judicial Data Management. Section 71.035 of the Texas Government Code provides that “the council shall gather judicial statistics and other pertinent information from the several state judges and other court officials of this state.” In an effort to improve the accuracy and usefulness of the data reported to OCA each month for publication in the *Annual Report for the Texas Judiciary*, the Committee on Judicial Data Management asked OCA to:

“...assemble a workgroup of clerks and other interested persons or entities to make recommendations regarding: 1) the elimination of one or more of the current data elements; 2) the addition of one or more data elements; 3) the revision of one or more of the current data elements; 4) the clear and concise definition for each data element; 5) the development of a civil cover sheet; and 6) the improvement of the quality and accuracy of the annual report of the Texas judicial system.”

The review of the trial court data elements, known as the Judicial Data Project, began in 2004. Because the number of data elements reported by the trial courts is extensive, OCA decided to create a workgroup for each level of trial court (i.e., district, county, and justice/municipal) and to further divide the workgroup for the district courts, and the workgroup for the county-level courts, into sub-workgroups. During the past few years, the workgroups and sub-workgroups have met and developed recommendations regarding changes to the monthly case activity reports and instructions. The district and county-level court phase of the project was completed in spring 2008, with the Council approving changes to the monthly case activity reports and instructions for those courts.

The municipal and justice court phase of the Judicial Data Project was completed in FY 2010. On September 18, 2009, the Council’s intention to amend its reporting rules by adding new reporting requirements for the justice and municipal courts was published in the *Texas Register*, with a 30-day comment period. Additionally, the Council posted the proposed monthly reporting forms and instructions for the municipal and justice courts on its website for comment. At its meeting on December 11, 2009, the Council considered the comments regarding the proposed monthly reporting forms and instructions that were received. No comments regarding the proposed amendments to its reporting rules were received. The Council adopted the proposed amendments to its reporting rules, without changes, and approved, without changes, the proposed monthly case activity forms and instructions for the justice and municipal courts. The adopted amendments to the reporting rules were published in the *Texas Register* on January 1, 2010.

As part of the Judicial Data Project, the OCA data workgroups were asked to develop a civil case information sheet (formerly referred to as a “cover sheet”). In fall 2008, the Judicial Council approved three model case information sheets, which are discussed in the report of the OCA on page 63. During FY 2009, at the suggestion of the Supreme Court Advisory Committee, OCA staff developed a proposed consolidated civil case information sheet for consideration by the Council. At its meeting on August 28, 2009, the Council considered the proposed consolidated civil case information sheet and approved the posting of it on its website for comment. At its meeting on March 19, 2010, the Council considered proposed revisions to the civil case information sheet based on the comments received. In April 2010, the Council adopted the proposed consolidated civil case information sheet, as revised, and the instructions for its completion.

Task Force on Indigent Defense

FY 2010 marks the ninth fiscal year of a statewide indigent defense program in Texas. In January 2002, the Texas Fair Defense Act (FDA) became effective after its passage by the Texas Legislature in 2001. The legislation established the Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense (Task Force) to oversee the provision of indigent defense services in Texas. The Task Force is a permanent standing committee of the Texas Judicial Council, staffed as a component of the Office of Court Administration (OCA). The Task Force has authority to set statewide policies and standards for the provision and improvement of indigent defense, to grant state funds to counties for that purpose, and to monitor counties' compliance with policies and standards. The mission of the Task Force is to promote justice and fairness to all indigent persons accused of criminal conduct. The Task Force assists counties in providing quality, cost-effective representation that meets the needs of local communities and the requirements of state and constitutional laws.

In FY 2010, the Task Force and its committees held ten public meetings. The Task Force and staff also converged for a strategic planning session in March to take stock of the progress of indigent defense policies in Texas and to chart a strategic vision to guide further improvements in the following areas:

Improve Indigent Defense through the Development of Policies and Standards. This area involves promulgating guidelines and model forms; developing proposals for the Legislature to improve the delivery of indigent defense services; and preparing papers on proficient practices.

Promote Local Compliance and Accountability with the Requirements of the Fair Defense Act through Evidence-Based Practices. The Task Force promotes local compliance, proficiency, and accountability in meeting statutory and constitutional indigent defense requirements guided by evidence-based practices; collects, publishes and monitors county expenditure data, county indigent defense plans and state-funded Innocence Project reports; and facilitates research and evaluation to support policy and program development.

Develop Effective Funding Strategies. The Task Force works to allocate and account for the effective distribution of state funds; develop specific program and communication strategies to provide information that demonstrates how to spend state resources in a more effective manner; and assist local governments in developing and promoting local programs to enhance the delivery of indigent defense services.

Formula and Discretionary Grant Program. Formula grants provide money to counties for increased indigent defense costs that arise from improved indigent defense services using a standard allocation formula. Funds are distributed to all counties who apply, document their increased expenditures, and maintain a countywide indigent defense plan that complies with statutes and standards requirements set by the Task Force.

The discretionary grant program offers multi- and single-year grants that provide funding to improve the indigent defense system. Multi-year grants are offered to fund direct client service projects, while single-year grants are available to fund programs dedicated to technology and process improvements.

\$7.1 million in discretionary grants were awarded to the following counties in FY 2010: Harris County to establish a new pilot public defender program; Montgomery County to create a managed assigned counsel program; Dickens County to create the Caprock Regional Public Defender Office; Lubbock County to expand the West Texas Regional Public Defender Office; Bell County to create a web-based core solution that tracks county compliance with the Fair Defense Act; Taylor County to establish a multi-county video teleconferencing system with Callahan and Jones counties; and Dallas County to implement video teleconferencing improvements.

Fiscal Monitoring. The Task Force is required by Texas Government Code §71.062(a)(3) to monitor counties that receive grant funds and to enforce compliance by the county with the conditions of the grant. Fiscal concerns are related to the adequacy and type of financial management system, overall percentage of administrative expenses, value of grants awarded, and baseline adjustments and corrections.

Policy Monitoring. The Task Force is given a directive under Texas Government Code §71.062(b) to monitor local jurisdictions' compliance with the FDA. Counties are selected for monitoring through a risk assessment. The focus of the monitoring review is based on the core requirements of the FDA. A major review of the Bexar County indigent defense system was conducted this year.

Technical Assistance. The Task Force places a high priority on communication and educating all stakeholders in the indigent defense process. The Task Force provides technical assistance through training and site visits related to program improvements, grant funding, and expenditure reporting.

Clearinghouse of Indigent Defense Information. To promote best practices and accountability, the Task Force serves as a clearinghouse of indigent defense information via its website at www.txcourts.gov/tfid. The website provides public access to all county plans, expenditures, guides, model forms, rules, publications, e-newsletters and press releases.

Significant Accomplishments of FY 2010

- The Task Force published *Representing the Mentally Ill Offender: An Evaluation of Advocacy Alternatives*, a two-year study that examined mental health courts and mental health public defender offices in Tarrant, Dallas and Travis Counties. The study found that criminal offenders with mental impairments who are treated for their illness instead of being jailed are less likely to commit crimes again for up to 18 months.
- Last session, the Texas Legislature passed H.B. 498 establishing the Timothy Cole Advisory Panel on Wrongful Convictions, which was named after Timothy Cole, the first Texan to be posthumously exonerated of a crime through DNA testing. This legislation went into effect September 1, 2009. The Panel was directed to advise the Task Force in the preparation of a study regarding the causes of wrongful convictions and make recommendations to prevent future wrongful convictions. The Panel met formally on four occasions and also held a number of subcommittee meetings throughout the year. In August, the Panel submitted its report and research to the Task Force for publication and distribution. The Panel specifically addressed eyewitness identification procedures, the recording of custodial interrogations, open discovery policies, post-conviction procedures, and the feasibility of creating an innocence commission to investigate wrongful convictions. In total, the Panel made 11 specific recommendations for reform. Pursuant to H.B. 498, the report and recommendations were presented to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and standing committees with members on the Panel. The report is available online at the Task Force website: <http://www.txcourts.gov/tfid/pdf/FINALTCAReport.pdf>.
- The Task Force Director presented “State Collaborations for Systemic Reform—Learning from Setbacks” at the U.S. Department of Justice National Symposium on Indigent Defense.
- County, state and federal stakeholders attended the 7th Annual Indigent Defense Workshop to discover methods, processes, ideas and tools to increase the proficiencies of indigent defense systems, the quality of representation for the poor, caseload management practices, management of jail populations and other issues related to the overall criminal justice system in Texas. Video downloads of the presentations are available at <http://www.txcourts.gov/tfid/videos2.htm>.

Grantee Accomplishments

- The Travis County Mental Health Public Defender Office created a documentary film entitled “A Different Kind of Law: Holistic Justice for the Mentally Ill.” Visit www.txcourts.gov/tfid to view the film.
- The Harris County Veterans Court was featured on PBS. To view the program, go to: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/need-to-know/culture/uniform-justice/2135/>.

FY 2010 Annual and Expenditure Report for the Task Force. The Task Force is statutorily required to submit an Annual and Expenditure Report. The full report for FY 2010 may be viewed and downloaded at www.txcourts.gov/tfid.

Judicial Committee on Information Technology

Electronic Court Filing. The 75th Texas Legislature created the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT) and gave it a 12-point mission, including establishing an electronic court filing system (e-filing) pursuant to Government Code §77.031(5). To fulfill this mandate, JCIT continues to encourage adoption of electronic filing for trial courts. As of November 2010, 72 district and county clerks in 47 counties have implemented electronic filing. These cover 254 district courts, 76 county courts at law, 18 probate courts, and 26 justice courts using electronic filing. These jurisdictions cover approximately 75 percent of the state's population.

E-filing enables filers and courts to connect electronically through the state's e-government portal, Texas.gov (www.texas.gov). The e-filing architecture is designed to allow parties to file electronically to any participating court from any one of the several certified front-end service providers.

Work continued in FY 2010 on the design and development of an appellate court case management system that will include e-filing into Texas appellate courts. The Legislature funded \$2.3M to the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to begin the Texas Appeals Management and e-filing System (TAMES) project in the FY 2008-2009 biennium. An additional \$1,488,023 was appropriated in FY 2010 for completion of the project. JCIT participates with the TAMES project steering committee and assists with developing rules of appellate procedure required to implement the project.

JCIT is working on standards for document filing types so that Texas.gov may efficiently implement e-filing in courts and provide a familiar set of document types to attorneys, regardless of the court in which they are filing. Soon this work will encompass indigent e-filing and criminal case e-filing.

Judicial Information Technology Standards. OCA devotes part of its information technology appropriation to court technology standards development, and JCIT provides guidance in the selection of efforts supported. In the past, JCIT has supported the Texas Path to NIEM (National Information Exchange Model) project within the judiciary. The Path to NIEM project provided 28 model data exchanges for use by courts and their business partners throughout Texas.

Support to OCA Projects. JCIT is working with OCA for broad-based, diverse advice on how to construct and implement OCA projects in a way that best supports the activities of a variety of trial courts throughout the state. This includes OCA projects such as TAMES and Automated Registry.



Llano County Courthouse - Llano

Photo courtesy of TexasCourthouses.com

Court Reporters Certification Board

The Court Reporters Certification Board (CRCB) was created in 1977 to certify and regulate court reporters in the state of Texas. CRCB functions include certification of individual court reporters, registration of court reporting firms, assessment and collection of fees, approval of court reporting program curriculums submitted by public and private institutions, approval of continuing education courses, and enforcement of the rules and regulations governing the court reporting profession. The Board operates under the provisions of Chapter 52 of the Texas Government Code, and the Supreme Court of Texas serves as the Board's rulemaking authority. In 2003, the 78th Legislature administratively attached the CRCB to the Office of Court Administration (OCA). The program is funded from certification fees collected by the CRCB and deposited to the General Revenue Fund.

Mission Statement. The mission of the CRCB is to certify, to the Supreme Court of Texas, qualified court reporters to meet the growing needs and expectations of the public through statewide certification and accountability.

Organization. The Board, as the governing body, consists of 13 members appointed by the Supreme Court of Texas: one active district judge who serves as chair, two attorneys, two official court reporters, two freelance court reporters, two representatives from court reporting firms (one court-reporter owned and one non-court-reporter owned), and four public members. Appointments reflect a diverse geographical representation throughout the state. Board members are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with state rules and regulations and serve six-year terms.

The Board has five standing committees with members appointed by the Chair: 1) Rules, Standards, and Policies Committee; 2) Certification/Uniform Format Manual Committee; 3) Continuing Education Committee; 4) Legislative Committee; and 5) Review Committee. The Review Committee is comprised of three Board members who serve on a rotating basis to consider applicants who have criminal convictions.

Board and Committee Meetings. A total of 17 meetings were held in Austin during FY 2010: four Board meetings, four Review Committee meetings, one Continuing Education Committee meeting, four Certification/Uniform Format Manual Committee meetings, and four Rules Committee meetings, including a meeting of the subcommittee on contracting issues.

Complaints. The Board received a total of 30 complaints filed in FY 2010—26 complaints filed against court reporters and four complaints filed against court reporting firms. The Board held 13 formal hearings, which resulted in disciplinary actions assessed against five court reporters and two court reporting firms with six matters dismissed.

Certification of Individuals. The Texas Court Reporters Association (TCRA), selected as the contracted vendor to administer the court reporters exam effective September 1, 2008, continues to provide that service in FY 2010. TCRA administered four exams to 283 applicants in Austin, Houston, and Dallas, resulting in 46 new certifications issued—five in oral stenography and 41 in machine shorthand. The exam consists of an oral skills test and a written test. Applicants must pass both parts of the exam to be eligible for certification. This exam is offered throughout the state for the convenience of examinees.

The Board renewed 1,073 individual certifications out of a licensee base of 2,617 licensees with approximately 59 percent renewing online through the Texas.gov portal. Renewals are based on a two-year cycle. In order to renew their certifications, individuals must complete 1.0 continuing education units (10 hours) within the two-year period immediately preceding the certification expiration date of January 1st.

Continuing Education (CE) Course Approvals. The Board processed 90 course approvals during the fiscal year to ensure that CE courses completed as a requirement for renewal are relevant to the court reporting profession. The Board approves CE courses submitted by sponsors and individual court reporters.

Registration of Firms. The Board processed 17 new registrations for court reporting firms and renewed 175 firm registrations. Renewals are based on a two-year cycle with a January 1st expiration date.

Curriculum Approval for Court Reporting Firms. The Board approves court reporting curriculums for public community colleges, technical institutes and proprietary schools. There are currently 12 court reporting schools in Texas.

Public Information Requests – Rule 12. Staff processed 24 open record requests.

Iron Data Licensing System. Future projects proposed and pending approval at fiscal year-end include 1) extending the online renewal window by six months for court reporters to renew online from September 1st to June 30th; 2) adding online registration renewal capabilities for court reporting firms based on a September 1st to June 30th renewal window; and 3) working on a fix for the system to recognize that all three legs of Part A of the exam must be passed in one sitting to assign a passing grade to that portion of the exam.

Rules Governing the Court Reporting Profession. The Board and staff initiated a comprehensive review of its rules. Proposed revisions were completed on the Standards and Rules including, but not limited to, changes in the processing of complaints filed against court reporters and court reporting firms and the method by which an applicant's criminal history is obtained. Criminal history is currently self-reported by the applicant. The proposed rules set out a process for the Board to obtain criminal histories directly from DPS and the FBI via fingerprint submissions by the applicant. At fiscal year-end, revisions to the Standards and Rules were pending at the Supreme Court of Texas.

The revised Uniform Format Manual (UFM) was submitted to the Supreme Court and adopted July 1, 2010. Section 8 was added to the UFM relating to the electronic submission of court reporters' records to the Courts of Appeals as part of the Texas Appeals Management and e-filing System (TAMES) project. The "Figures" section of the UFM provides guidelines on the formatting of records and is currently under review by the Certification/UFM Committee.

The Board also continues to study through its Rules, Standards, and Policies Committee the issues related to contracting by firms and how they may impact rules and laws governing the profession.

The Board will continue the comprehensive review of its rules in FY 2011, beginning with the Continuing Education Rules.

Policies. A comprehensive review of the Board's policies was also conducted in FY 2010 and will continue into FY 2011. Policies that were incorporated into the proposed Standards and Rules pending before the Supreme Court include defaulted student loans and the Ex Parte Policy that prohibits a party to a complaint from contacting a member of the Board in regard to a complaint except in the course of official proceedings before the Board.

Website. The Board maintains a website at www.crcb.state.tx.us to provide information to the public on CRCB functions, including certification, complaints, forms, disciplinary actions, lists of licensees, new legislation, and related links.



Photo courtesy of TexasCourthouses.com

Concho County Courthouse - Paint Rock

Process Server Review Board

In June 2005, the Supreme Court of Texas approved amendments to Rules 103 and 536(a) of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure governing statewide certification of process servers. The Court also issued a companion order (Misc. Docket No. 05-9122) to establish the framework for certification of those approved to serve process under the revised rules, to approve of certain existing civil process server courses, and to establish the framework for the Process Server Review Board (PSRB) to approve additional courses. This order also required the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to provide clerical support to the PSRB. The Supreme Court also approved a companion order (Misc. Docket No. 05-9123) that establishes the membership of the PSRB, and an order (Misc. Docket No. 05-9137) appointing a Chair. In FY 2007, the Supreme Court promulgated Rule 14 of the Rules of Judicial Administration (RJA), which governs Statewide Certification to Serve Civil Process; it may be found on the Court's website at <http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/MiscDocket/07/07903600.pdf>.

Mission Statement. The mission of the PSRB is to improve the standards for persons authorized to serve process and to reduce the disparity among Texas civil courts for approving persons to serve process by making recommendations to the Supreme Court of Texas on the certification of individuals and the approval of courses.

Organization. The Board consists of nine members and is a geographical representation of judges, attorneys, law enforcement, and process servers throughout the state. Board members are not compensated for their services and do not receive reimbursement for actual travel and other expenses incurred while in the performance of their official duties.

Board Meetings Held. The PRSB held four meetings in Austin during the fiscal year.

Complaints. There were 20 complaints against process servers on the Supreme Court of Texas Statewide List of Certified Process Servers that were reviewed by the Board. Five process servers' authorizations to serve were suspended. One process server's certification was revoked. As of August 31, 2010, nine complaints were pending investigation.

Approval of Applications. The Board approved 1,722 new applicants and 182 renewal applicants. A total of 439 process servers had their certification expire and, of those, 123 persons reapplied and were reinstated.

When the orders were adopted by the Supreme Court, effective July 1, 2005, 1,265 process servers were "grandfathered in" by virtue of meeting pre-existing requirements in Harris, Dallas, and Denton counties. As of August 31, 2010, the total number of certified process servers had reached 5,448.

Curriculum Approval for Process Server Training Schools. No new courses were approved during the fiscal year.

Website. The Board maintains a website at <http://www.txcourts.gov/psrb/> to provide information such as the Supreme Court orders establishing the membership of the Process Server Review Board and the appointment of its Chair; various forms, processes and procedures; and the Supreme Court of Texas Statewide List of Certified Process Servers.



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Medina County Courthouse - Hondo

Guardianship Certification Board

The Guardianship Certification Board (GCB) was created by the 79th Texas Legislature with the passage of Senate Bill 6, effective September 1, 2005. The bill established a certification requirement, effective September 1, 2007, for certain individuals who provide guardianship services. The GCB certifies and regulates individuals (other than attorneys and corporate sureties) who act as private professional guardians, individuals (other than volunteers) who provide guardianship services to wards of guardianship programs, and individuals who provide guardianship services to wards of the Department of Aging and Disability Services.

Organization. The GCB is administratively attached to the Office of Court Administration (OCA). The GCB's primary staff, the guardianship certification program director, is an OCA employee; administrative support is also provided by the OCA.

The GCB is comprised of 11 members appointed by the Texas Supreme Court and four public members appointed by the Supreme Court from a list of nominees submitted by the Governor's Office. The original GCB members were appointed in early 2006. Two public members were appointed during FY 2010 to replace members who had resigned: one resigned during the fiscal year and one had resigned in FY 2009.

The GCB has two permanent committees, the Rules Committee and the Minimum Standards Committee, each comprised of a committee chair and three other GCB members. The GCB also has three review committees: the Application Review Committee, the Denial of Certification Review Committee, and the Disciplinary Review Committee. The review committees are each comprised of a chair and two other GCB members, who serve on the committees for six-month terms. All committee members are appointed by the GCB's chair.

Certification of Individuals. During FY 2010, 69 guardians were granted certification, 39 were granted provisional certification, and 46 individuals moved from provisional to "full" certification. (The 46 individuals who went from provisional to "full" guardianship are included in the total number of guardians.) Four provisionally certified guardians voluntarily surrendered their respective certifications. A total of 332 guardians were certified and provisionally certified at the close of the fiscal year.

Certifications are valid for two years, and are renewable if the requirements for re-certification, including completion of continuing education hours, are met. Fifty-three certified guardians successfully re-certified during FY 2010, for a total of 160 re-certified guardians at the close of the fiscal year. The Rules governing Guardianship Certification allow certified guardians to apply for re-certification up to 90 days past their certification expiration date. Twelve certified guardians passed the 90-day mark during the fiscal year, rendering them ineligible for re-certification; their certifications are expired.

Provisional certifications are valid for only one two-year period, unless a waiver is sought from and granted by the GCB. Five provisionally certified guardians made requests for waivers; one withdrew her request before the GCB considered it. The four requests considered by the GCB were granted. One individual who was granted an extension did not comply with GCB instructions and requests for information; her provisional certification expired at the end of the extension. The other three were granted extensions until the end of calendar year 2010 (FY 2011). A total of 12 provisional certifications expired during the fiscal year.

Complaints. Three complaints were filed in FY 2010. On two complaints, the provisionally certified guardians voluntarily surrendered their provisional certifications before the GCB took action. Board staff was unable to locate the subject of the third complaint, and therefore no action was taken during the fiscal year. The subject's provisional certification will expire in FY 2011.

One certified and one provisionally certified guardian were suspended by the GCB in FY 2009 pending compliance with the relevant Rules. Neither individual complied, and each of their certifications expired in FY 2010.

Board and Committee Meetings Held. The full GCB met four times in FY 2010 for its regular quarterly meetings. The GCB also held two special called meetings. The first was to consider the application for certification by a non-certified individual who had been providing guardianship services; his application was granted. The second special

called meeting was held to consider three requests for waivers by provisionally certified guardians; all three requests were granted. The Minimum Standards Committee met three times, the Rules Committee met four times, and the Application Review Committee met seven times. The Denial of Certification Review Committee and the Disciplinary Review Committee did not meet during FY 2010.

Rules Governing Guardianship Certification. Two sets of proposed amendments to the Rules were submitted for public comment during the preceding fiscal year. The first was approved by the Board for submission to the Supreme Court of Texas in FY 2009, and the second was approved during FY 2010. Both sets of proposed amendments to Rules III, V, VI, VII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, and XVI were submitted to and approved by the Supreme Court. A proposed amendment to Rule XII regarding recusal of a GCB member during the disciplinary process was not adopted, but the other proposed amendments to Rule XII were approved. Highlights of the amended Rules include the addition of a timeframe in which an application for certification or provisional certification must be completed; changes to the continuing education requirements; revised reporting requirements to reflect statutory changes; and restrictions for a provisionally certified guardian's designated certified guardian supervisor. New Rule XVI was added to provide guidelines for the GCB to use in considering the criminal history of an application for certification, provisional certification, or re-certification.

Additional proposed amendments to the Rules Governing Guardianship Certification had been submitted for public comment and were pending Board approval for submission to the Supreme Court at the close of the fiscal year.

Minimum Standards for Guardianship Services. As noted above, the Minimum Standards Committee met three times during the fiscal year. The Committee reviewed all standards, which were initially adopted in FY 2007. The Minimum Standards Committee presented recommended changes to several standards, including the addition of language regarding conflicts of interest, to the GCB. The GCB referred the issues back to the Committee for further study. The Committee will re-present its recommendations to the GCB at the first full board meeting in the coming fiscal year.

Policies. The GCB amended its Access to Board Records policy to reflect statutory changes regarding an applicant's criminal history record information, passed during the 81st Legislative Session. The GCB is now authorized to share with a court the criminal history record information obtained by the GCB when issuing or renewing an individual's certification, eliminating the need for county clerks to obtain separate criminal history reports on those individuals. The Public Meetings Policy was revised to allow applicants and others with business before the GCB to address the Board in closed session under certain circumstances. The Attendance at Board Meetings Policy, adopted last fiscal year, went into effect during FY 2010.



Photo courtesy of TexasCourthouses.com

Stephens County Courthouse - Breckenridge

Judicial Compensation Commission

The Judicial Compensation Commission (JCC) was created by the 80th Legislature with the passage of H.B. 3199, effective September 1, 2007. It is responsible for making a report to the Texas Legislature no later than December 1st of each even-numbered year recommending the proper salaries to be paid by the state for all justices and judges of the Supreme Court of Texas, the Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas, the courts of appeals and the district courts. The Office of Court Administration (OCA) provides administrative support for the JCC.

Organization. The Commission is composed of nine members who are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate to serve six-year terms. No more than three members serving on the Commission may be licensed to practice law. Board members are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with state rules and regulations. A new chair was appointed in 2009.

Commission and Committee Meetings. For the 2009-2010 biennium, the Commission held its first meeting on January 20, 2010, in Austin. At this meeting, the Commission decided to continue using the committee structure established during the previous biennium.

The Public Comment Committee took comment on issues related to judicial compensation at a meeting on April 15, 2010 at the Texas State Bar.

The Data Gathering Committee worked with staff of the OCA to compile and analyze data concerning the factors that must be considered by the Commission. The chair of the Data Gathering Committee and the Judicial Information Manager for the OCA presented a summary of the Committee's findings to the Commission at its meeting on July 16, 2010.

The Commission held an additional meeting on October 8, 2010 to finalize and approve its report.

Website. Additional information regarding the Commission and its report to the Legislature is available on the Commission's website at www.txcourts.gov/oca/jcc/jcc.asp.



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Caldwell County Courthouse - Lockhart

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