

## **Resolution Spotlight**

The Resolutions adopted by the members of the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas (CJCAT) at the Annual Conference originate among members of Commissioners Courts and serve as the CJCAT Legislative Platform.

### **Juvenile Probation, Commitment, and Detention Funding County Judge or Commissioner → CJCAT → Legislature**

County governments provided approximately **73 percent** of the total funding for juvenile probation departments in FY 2024, according to the 2025 Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) Rider Report to the Governor and Legislative Budget Board.

This percentage has historically been as high as 75 percent, confirmed Windy Johnson, program manager for the Conference of Urban Counties.

In Texas, individual counties provide services to all youth referred to the juvenile courts and prosecute juvenile cases, either through their district or county attorney's office, as explained by the TJJD, <https://bit.ly/juv-justice-tx>.

County juvenile probation departments handle most of the sanctions and therapeutic interventions the courts impose. In fact, counties deal with virtually all errant youth in their community at one point and manage some 98 percent of youth referrals, providing their communities with public safety and a myriad of intervention programs for youthful offenders.

The TJJD's latest data report, The State of Juvenile Probation Activity in Texas, is available at <https://bit.ly/juvenile-report>.

#### **Jefferson County**

The Mission of the Jefferson County Juvenile Probation Department, under the direction of the Juvenile Board, is to serve the Juvenile Court and be accountable:

- To direct the rehabilitation, education, care, and security of youthful offenders between the ages of 10 to 17;
- To protect the community;
- To be sensitive to victims' issues;
- To address elements in society that contribute to delinquency;
- To provide a better understanding of juvenile delinquency trends through community education; and,
- To continue to recognize the value of research as it relates to the causal factors and supervision methods.

In 2023-24, Jefferson County spent \$1,602,067 on juvenile probation and \$2,238,955 on its juvenile detention home. Commissioners Court budgeted additional funds for 2025-26: \$2,003,343 for juvenile probation and \$2,783,816 for the juvenile detention home.

In 2025, Jefferson County Family Court Judge Gordon Friesz launched the First-time Offenders Redirection Management (F.O.R.M.) program, an initiative aimed at diverting young, first-time nonviolent offenders from the traditional juvenile justice pipeline. The program focuses on adolescents between the ages of 13 and 16 who are on probation and seeks to address the root causes of delinquent behavior through early intervention.

On Jan. 20 of this year, Jefferson County passed a local resolution calling for more funding for juvenile probation, using language proposed by the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas.

“Unfortunately, violent juvenile offenders have been getting younger and younger, and we are faced with the responsibility and necessity for providing more and better interventions and rehabilitation modalities, such as counseling and psychiatric services,” said Jefferson County Judge Jeff Branick. “During a time when local government funding is under increasing pressure because of moves to reduce or eliminate property taxes, the partnership of the state in helping to provide better funding for our youth is imperative.”

Tarrant County Commissioner Manny R. Ramirez, chairman of the TJJD Governing Board, echoed Branick, saying that more resources are needed.

“From the TJJD’s perspective, we absolutely agree with the CJCAT that funding for juvenile justice is critical to ensure that we both protect Texas youth and prioritize public safety,” Ramirez stated. “We are looking forward to partnering with legislators in the upcoming session to make sure we can fund and deliver world-class services within the juvenile justice system.”

The CJCAT adopted the following on Oct. 8, 2025:

### **Juvenile Probation, Commitment, and Detention Funding**

**WHEREAS**, the supervision of juvenile offenders is a responsibility of the State of Texas; and

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Legislature has consistently failed to appropriate sufficient funding to meet this responsibility; and

**WHEREAS**, Texas counties have increasingly met this burden by funding juvenile probation services and facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, Texas counties and their local taxpayers are now providing over 75 percent of the costs of juvenile probation, commitment, and detention; and

**WHEREAS**, current state funding formulas will continue to shift additional costs to county taxpayers unless addressed by the State of Texas; and

**WHEREAS**, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department recently closed its facilities for additional juvenile offenders without any reimbursement of this cost to counties;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas does hereby request that the Texas Legislature fully fund the costs of supervision of juvenile offenders, including the costs for juvenile probation, commitment, and detention, and immediately reimburse counties for the costs incurred for offenders committed to state facilities.