



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

TJJD to Place a Temporary Hold on New Admissions From Harris County

March 26, 2020

AUSTIN—The Texas Juvenile Justice Department announced today that it would place a temporary hold on new admissions from the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center after a youth there tested positive for COVID-19.

The hold will remain in place pending the results of an investigation by Harris County.

Louis Serrano, TJJD's Deputy Executive Director for Probation Services, informed Harris County of the decision earlier today in a letter, which read in part:

I wanted to thank you for the notification provided this morning regarding a youth at the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) having tested positive for COVID-19. Dealing with this will bring many new challenges to our juvenile justice system, but we feel working together we can tackle some of these tough issues and all work together to keep our staff and youth safe.

With that said, we are asking for a temporary hold on new admissions to TJJD pending the results of any investigation or report regarding those that may have come in contact with the identified youth. We feel moving population prior to the conclusion of that report could place others at risk.

Harris County has been a great partner with our agency in many areas, including the recent successes under your leadership to reduce new admissions to TJJD to historic lows. We can't tell you enough how much we appreciate these efforts.

At state juvenile facilities, staff have worked hard to protect youth by implementing enhanced cleaning procedures and social distancing, temporarily limiting access to facilities to only essential personnel, and requiring health screenings prior to entry. At this time, no TJJD staff or youth have tested positive for COVID-19.

For additional information, contact Brian Sweany at brian.sweany@tjtd.texas.gov or 512-490-7028.