

Chapter: Salary Actions	Effective Date: 7/1/15 Page: 1 of 4 Replaces: PRS.15.08, 12/1/11
Title: JCO Career Ladders	
ACA: 4-JCF-6C-12	
Statutes: Article V, General Appropriations Act	

(a) **Policy.**

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) establishes juvenile correctional officer (JCO) career ladders for the purpose of recruiting, employing, and retaining JCOs. A JCO must meet established service and performance criteria to receive career ladder salary adjustments. Once a JCO reaches the highest level of his/her career ladder, career ladder salary adjustments are no longer available.

(b) **Definitions.**

Except as noted below, see the PRS glossary for definitions of certain terms used in this policy.

- (1) **Career Ladder Salary Adjustment** – An increase in a JCO's salary rate after the JCO meets the eligibility criteria to advance to a higher pay level within the appropriate JCO career ladder. The salary adjustment may include a [promotion](#) to a higher salary group or an increase in pay within the same salary group.
- (2) **Current JCO Service Months** – Months of eligible service in a JCO I – VI position since the last hire date.

(c) **General Provisions.**

- (1) TJJD's two JCO career ladders are:
 - (A) the JCO I – IV career ladder, which consists of eight pay levels; and
 - (B) the JCO V career ladder, which consists of two pay levels. A JCO does not automatically move from the JCO I – IV career ladder to the JCO V career ladder. JCO V employees are selected through the competitive selection process.

- (2) [Appendix D](#) of this manual identifies:

- (A) the salary rate for each pay level of the JCO career ladders;
- (B) the range of current JCO service months corresponding with each pay level; and

Note: A JCO may be required to remain at a pay level longer than the number of months shown in Appendix D if he/she does not meet performance criteria established by this policy to advance to the next higher pay level. (See [\(e\)\(2\)](#) below.)

- (C) the types of education and experience that may be used to substitute for current JCO service months when a person is hired or moved into a JCO position.
 - (i) A substitution allows the JCO to be:
 - (I) placed on the career ladder at a higher pay level than he/she would otherwise be placed; and/or
 - (II) receive months of JCO service credit toward his/her next career ladder salary adjustment.
 - (ii) The JCO may benefit from only one substitution. If he/she qualifies for two or more substitutions, the substitution providing the greater benefit is used.

- (3) The salary rate for a JCO I – IV or JCO V must not exceed the salary rate identified in [Appendix D](#) for his/her career ladder pay level, except when:
- (A) a JCO IV or V receives a merit salary increase (see [PRS.10.03](#)); or
 - (B) a move to a JCO IV or V position is the result of a reduction in force and the employee's eligible service months exceed the service requirements for the corresponding career ladder's highest pay level (e.g., a dorm supervisor who accepts a JCO V position). In such instances:
 - (i) the human resources director or designee must approve any salary rate exceeding the career ladder's highest salary rate; and
 - (ii) the employee's prior merit salary increases may be considered in determining his/her JCO salary rate.
- (4) Procedures relating to newly hired JCOs also apply to rehired JCOs unless specifically stated otherwise in this policy.
- (d) **Career Ladder Placement upon Hire or [Intra-agency Transfer](#).**
- (1) **Placement upon Hire.**
- Each [external applicant](#) hired into a JCO career ladder is hired at pay level one unless he/she is eligible to be placed at a higher level. An applicant may be placed at a higher level if the applicant is:
- (A) allowed to substitute qualifying education or experience for current JCO service months and the months of allowed substitution result in placement at a higher pay level;
- Note: Every external JCO V applicant is hired at pay level 1, because 36 months is the maximum possible substitution and pay level 2 requires 42 current JCO service months. However, the months of substitute credit will allow him/her to advance to pay level 2 sooner than he/she would otherwise advance. (See [\(e\)\(2\)\(A\)\(i\)](#) below.)
- (B) a former JCO who is being rehired through the [automatic rehire consideration](#) process after a medical separation (See [PRS.11.17](#)); or
 - (C) a former JCO who is being rehired within 12 months after separating employment as a JCO due to a TJJD reduction in force (RIF). In this situation, the JCO is placed on the applicable career ladder based on the same number of JCO service months that he/she had credit for at the time of the RIF separation, unless a qualifying education or experience substitution would result in a higher placement on the career ladder (e.g., a former JCO II obtains a bachelor's degree while separated).
- (2) **Placement upon Intra-agency Transfer.**
- (A) **Employee Does Not Have Current JCO Service Months.**
- (i) When an employee who does not have any current JCO service months moves into a JCO career ladder, his/her pay level is determined in the same manner as a newly hired employee, with the exception described in (ii) below.
 - (ii) If the employee has external and internal qualifying juvenile justice experience (e.g., qualifying external experience accrued before last date of hire and TJJD case manager experience accrued since last date of hire):
 - (I) the effective date of the move from the TJJD position qualifying for experience substitution is considered equivalent to the separation date for an external applicant; and

- (II) whichever service (i.e., internal vs. external) results in the higher JCO career ladder placement is the service used for an experience substitution.

(B) Employee Has Current JCO Service Months.

When an employee who is not a JCO moves into one of the JCO career ladders and he/she has current JCO service months, his/her pay level is based on whichever of the following results in the higher pay level:

- (i) placement in the same manner as an employee who does not have current JCO service months; or
- (ii) placement based on his/her creditable months of JCO service when he/she last moved from a JCO career ladder plus any months of service accrued while in a JCO's chain of supervision since then.

(3) Qualifying Substitutions Identified After Career Ladder Placement.

- (A) If a JCO believes that he/she did not receive credit for a qualifying education or experience substitution, he/she must provide the human resources administrator (HRA) with a completed JCO Career Ladder Request for Placement Review form, [HR-322](#).

- (i) If the JCO included the qualifying education or experience on his/her State of Texas Application for Employment, the JCO will receive:
 - (I) credit for the same number of months as he/she would have received if the substitution was made at the time he/she was hired; and
 - (II) any back pay resulting from the substitution credit being applied as of his/her hire date.
- (ii) If the JCO did not include the qualifying education or experience on his/her State of Texas Application for Employment:
 - (I) the JCO will receive substitution credit only for the number of months he/she would have received upon hire **minus** any current JCO service months; and

Note: This will result in no substitution credit if the JCO has already accrued current JCO service months equal to or greater than the requested substitution credit.

- (II) the JCO will not receive any back pay even if he/she does receive substitution credit.

Note: The JCO may be subject to disciplinary action for omitting relevant information in the application for employment.

- (B) If a JCO becomes eligible for a qualifying substitution after hire (e.g., obtains a bachelor's degree after hire), he/she must provide the HRA with a completed HR-322 form. The amount of credit received will be determined in the same manner as a JCO who did not include the qualifying education or experience on the State of Texas Application for Employment. (See paragraph [\(3\)\(A\)\(ii\)](#) above.)

(e) Career Ladder Salary Adjustments.

- (1) A JCO I is automatically promoted to a JCO II after two months of JCO service.
- (2) To receive any other career ladder salary adjustment, a JCO must meet the following eligibility criteria.

- (A) The JCO must complete the months of JCO service identified in [Appendix D](#) for his/her current pay level, except as noted in (i) and (ii) below.
- (i) If the JCO was allowed to substitute prior experience for current JCO service months and the number of months credited exceeds the months required for the placement pay level, the extra months of substitute service will count toward the JCO's first career ladder salary adjustment.
 - (ii) A full calendar month of unpaid leave, other than unpaid military leave, does not count toward a career ladder salary adjustment. A period of unpaid leave less than a full calendar month does not affect a career ladder salary adjustment.
- (B) If the JCO has at least six current JCO service months, the JCO must have a "satisfactory" [current performance evaluation](#), as described on the applicable JCO performance evaluation form. If the only reason for a delay in a career ladder salary adjustment is an unsatisfactory performance evaluation, the JCO advances upon receipt of a satisfactory performance evaluation. (See [PRS.31.03](#) for procedures relating to follow-up performance evaluations.)
- (C) The JCO must not have a recommendation for termination pending final approvals (i.e., the [HR-200d](#) recommending the disciplinary action has been submitted to Human Resources). In addition, a JCO V must not have an involuntary [demotion](#) pending final approvals.
- A JCO will receive a career ladder salary adjustment retroactive to his/her original eligibility date if a termination or an involuntary demotion:
- (i) does not receive final approval; or
 - (ii) is overturned as a result of a [grievance](#) or [independent dismissal mediation](#).
- (3) Career ladder salary adjustments occur on the first day of the month after an eligible JCO has met the required months of JCO service, except when the JCO is in an unpaid status on the first day of the month. In these cases, the JCO's salary adjustment will be effective on the same day that he/she returns to a paid status, which could be any day of the month.
- (4) If a JCO is not eligible to receive a salary adjustment as scheduled, the HRA or designee provides the JCO with a completed JCO Career Ladder: Notice of Delayed Salary Adjustment form, [HR-321](#).
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