

What Laws and Rules Govern Juvenile Probation Officers, Juvenile Supervision Officers, and Community Activities Officers?

A JPO, JSO, and CAO is bound by relevant state and federal laws and by TJJD standards. The primary state laws that govern these officers may be accessed at the Texas Legislature Online at www.capitol.state.tx.us and include:

- Texas Family Code Title III (Juvenile Justice Code);
- Texas Penal Code;
- Texas Code of Criminal Procedure;
- Texas Human Resources Code;
- Texas Education Code; and
- Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Chapters 341 – 358 (TJJD Standards).

Are Probation Officers, Supervision Officers and Community Activities Officers Bound by a Code of Ethics?

All staff certified by TJJD are bound by a professional Code of Ethics governing the performance of their duties and their professional conduct. The people of Texas expect juvenile justice professionals to exhibit unflinching honesty and respect for the dignity and individuality of human beings and display a commitment to professional and compassionate service. The Code of Ethics for a certified officer can be found in Title 37 TAC Chapter 345.

Juvenile probation departments, juvenile justice programs, and juvenile justice facilities must have written policies and procedures for reporting violations of the Code of Ethics to the administration of the department, program, or facility and to TJJD. Juvenile justice professionals found to be in violation of the Code of Ethics are subject to disciplinary action including suspension or revocation of the professional certification issued under the authority of TJJD.



What Resources are Available for Juvenile Justice Professionals?

There are a variety of resources available to assist juvenile justice professionals and include:

TEXAS JUVENILE LAW

Written by Professor Robert O. Dawson of UT Law School and its accompanying supplement which is updated following each Legislative Session. This may be purchased by contacting TJJD's Juvenile Justice Training Academy.

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

www.americanbar.org

AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION

www.aca.org

AMERICAN PROBATION AND PAROLE ASSOCIATION

www.appa-net.org

JUVENILE JUSTICE ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

www.jjat.com

JUVENILE LAW SECTION OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS

www.juvenilelaw.org

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES

www.ncjfcj.org

NATIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION ASSOCIATION

www.npjs.org/detention

TEXAS CORRECTIONS ASSOCIATION

www.txcorrections.org

TEXAS JUVENILE DETENTION ASSOCIATION

www.tjda.us

TEXAS PROBATION ASSOCIATION

www.txprobation.com

NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE

www.ncjrs.gov

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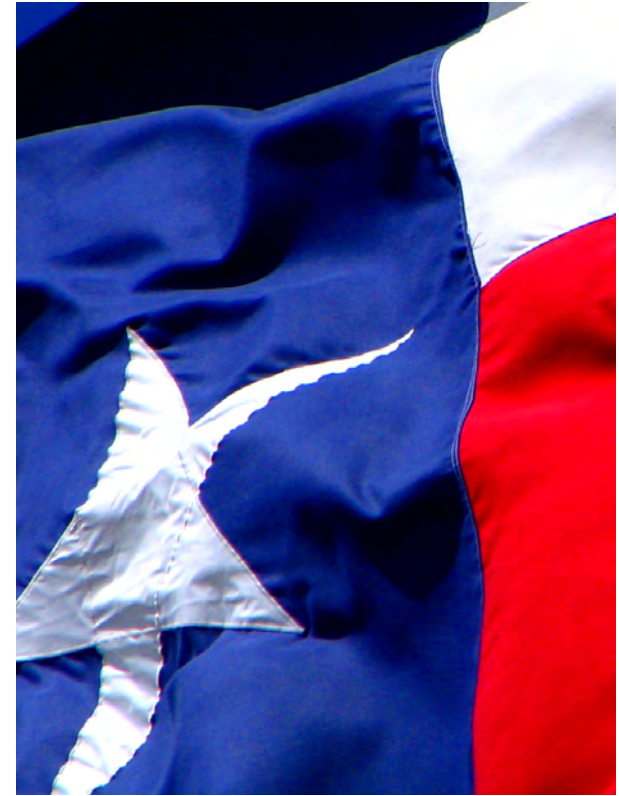


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An Overview of Becoming a Certified
Juvenile Justice Professional:

PROCESS, DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES



A publication for juvenile probation officers, juvenile
supervision officers, and youth activities supervisors



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

Texas Juvenile Justice Professionals

The Texas juvenile justice system is one of the largest in the nation, with over 60,000 referrals to juvenile probation departments each year. Juvenile Probation Officers (JPO), Juvenile Supervision Officers (JSO) and Community Activities Officers (CAO) are certified by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) and are dedicated professionals who are on the front lines in rehabilitating troubled youth. This brochure provides an overview of the requirements for becoming a JPO, JSO or CAO, the certification process, and the key responsibilities of certified officers who choose this profession.

What is Required to Become a Juvenile Probation Officer, Juvenile Supervision Officer or Community Activities Officer in Texas?

A JPO, JSO or CAO must meet certain basic educational and other requirements:

Juvenile Probation Officer

The requirements for becoming a JPO are found in Texas Human Resources Code §222.001 and Title 37 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 344. These include:

- At least 21 years of age;
- Good moral character;
- Bachelor's degree from accredited college or university;
- One year of graduate study or work experience in juvenile, criminal, social service, or related field;
- No disqualifying criminal history;
- Never have had any type of certification revoked by lawful authority of the former TJPC or TJJD; and
- Pass the certification exam as required by 37 TAC Chapter 344.

Juvenile Supervision Officer

The requirements for becoming a JSO are found in Texas Human Resources Code §222.002 and 37 TAC Chapter 344. These include:

- At least 21 years of age;
- Good moral character;
- High school diploma or equivalent;
- No disqualifying criminal history;
- Never have had any type of certification revoked by lawful authority of the former TJPC or TJJD; and
- Pass the certification exam as required by 37 TAC Chapter 344.

Community Activities Officer

The requirements for becoming a CAO are found in 37 TAC Chapter 344. These include:

- At least 21 years of age;
- Good moral character;
- High school diploma or equivalent;
- No disqualifying criminal history; and
- Never have had any type of certification revoked by lawful authority of the former TJPC or TJJD.

What Are the Requirements to be Certified by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department?

A JPO, JSO or CAO is certified by TJJD using the web-based Integrated Certification Information System (ICIS). The legal requirements for certification are found in 37 TAC Chapter 344. An individual can be certified as both a JPO and JSO simultaneously if all requirements for each position are met.

Training

A JPO or JSO must receive at least 80 hours of training and a CAO must receive at least 40 for initial certification. The training must include the mandatory topics in 37 TAC Chapter 344. Continuing education is required to maintain certification in accordance with 37 TAC Chapter 344.

Disqualifying Criminal History

An individual with the following criminal history shall not be eligible for employment or certification as a JPO, JSO, or CAO:

- Deferred adjudication or conviction for a felony listed in Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 42A.054 (formerly known as "3(g) offenses" under Article 42.12) or a substantially equivalent violation against the laws of another state or the United States, regardless of the date of disposition;
- Deferred adjudication or conviction for a felony other than those referenced in paragraph subsection (a)(1) of this subsection or a substantially equivalent violation against the laws of another state or the United States within the past 10 years;
- Deferred adjudication or conviction for any Class A or B misdemeanor in Texas or a substantially equivalent violation against the laws of another state or the United States within the past five years; or
- Current requirement to register as a sex offender under Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 62.

The offense disposition date shall be used to determine applicable time frames. The applicant shall not be eligible for employment or

certification until at least one year has lapsed since the completion of any period of incarceration, community supervision, or parole. For eligible applicants with a prior criminal history, the department may consider a range of factors to determine the applicant's fitness to perform the duties and discharge the responsibilities of the position.

Why is Certification Important?

Certification is statutorily required for employment as a JPO, JSO or CAO. The certification process ensures that an individual has received training in the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively perform the job duties. Certification also ensures a high level of professionalism in the workforce and a high quality of service provision for the youth in the juvenile probation programs and facilities.

What Are the Legal Requirements for Certification Renewal by TJJD?

JPO, JSO and CAO certifications must be renewed every two years by the end of the officer's birth month. To be eligible for renewal, an officer must:

- be employed by a juvenile probation department or a juvenile facility;
- document completion of required training during the previous 24 months; and
- confirm the continued absence of disqualifying criminal history.

An officer who fails to renew their certification in a timely manner will be placed on inactive status and their certification may expire.

What Are the Consequences of Allowing a Certification to Lapse, Become Inactive or Expire?

An officer whose certification is inactive is unable to perform the duties of a certified officer. A juvenile justice program or facility that allows inactive officers to continue to perform the duties of a certified officer is in violation of TJJD standards and potentially faces legal liability in the event of an injury to a juvenile or other person in the facility. The certification exam requirements in 37 TAC Chapter 344 may apply for an officer whose certification has expired.

