



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

Statement in Response to DOJ Report on Conditions at TJJD Secure Facilities

August 1, 2024

AUSTIN – At TJJD we are continually working to improve our operations and services to the youth in our care and the communities of Texas we protect. We have a zero-tolerance policy toward abuse and neglect and have always fully rejected any abusive behaviors at our campuses.

Thanks to the investment in TJJD by the 88th Texas Legislature and support from the Governor’s Office, we have already made several recent significant improvements in our staffing, mental health care and educational programs.

TJJD worked closely with DOJ investigators during their site visits in 2022, the peak of the agency’s unprecedented staffing shortages. We provided extensive responsive material and appreciate the DOJ’s professionalism throughout this process.

Additional background:

In the last two years, TJJD has taken these steps, which have increased supervision and safety at our campuses:

- Raises for direct care staff salaries of 15 percent (2022), and another 5 percent in 2023, enabling us to increase our JCO strength by about 30 percent.
- Hired more mental health professionals and added enhanced stabilization units to provide more intensive supervision and care for youth with high mental health needs.
- Improved training for JCOs, Case Managers and all campus staff.
- Added a holistic rehabilitative program that uses Dialectical Behavior Therapy, which is already reducing disruptions and self-harm incidents.
- TJJD schools have strengthened their multi-tiered system of supports for youth struggling with behavior or academic needs.

Please direct any questions to TJJD Communications Director Barbara.Kessler@tjtd.texas.gov.