

**Independent Ombudsman
for the
Texas Juvenile Justice Department**



Fourth Quarter Report FY 25

June 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth Quarterly Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 to be submitted by the Office of Independent Ombudsman for the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) as per the Texas Human Resources Code, Chapter 261. This report is intended for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, members of the State Legislature, the TJJD Governing Board, the TJJD Executive Director, and the Texas State Auditor. This report will cover the reporting period of June 2025 through August 2025. It should be noted, this is not an all-inclusive report, but rather a summary of significant findings during the reporting period.

STRATEGIC INTENT

The Office of Independent Ombudsman (OIO) was established for the purpose of investigating, evaluating, and securing the rights of children committed to the Juvenile Justice Department, including a child released under supervision before final discharge. Legislation enacted during the 84th Legislative Session (Senate Bill 1630), expanded those duties to include county post-adjudication facilities and contract facilities where county post-adjudicated youth are placed. To fulfill the duties of the office, OIO staff regularly visit all TJJD secure facilities, halfway houses, parole offices, all county post-adjudication facilities and county contract care programs. Currently, the Office of Independent Ombudsman conducts regular site visits at approximately 150 facilities and probation/parole offices that meet the definition added by Senate Bill 1630, 84th Legislative Session.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During this reporting period, the Office of Independent Ombudsman conducted 101 facility site visits and interviewed 888 youth offenders (Refer to the Annex for a listing of facility site visit locations). During this quarter, the OIO opened four individual cases and closed one as sustained.

SYSTEMIC ISSUES

Systemic Issues are recurring findings within a single facility or across multiple facilities occurring over a period of time that substantially interfere with youth rights or the delivery of services. The Juvenile Justice Department has experienced staffing issues at all five State Secure facilities. This issue has been pervasive for more than 12 consecutive months. This issue is related to several career positions within facilities; however, it is most volatile with Juvenile Correctional Officers (JCO). The Juvenile Justice Department continues to experience difficulty in recruiting and retention in the JCO position.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Office of Independent Ombudsman (OIO) is required by statute to promote awareness of the Office and the services provided. This is accomplished through various initiatives. The Ombudsman meets with civic and advocacy groups to discuss issues, trends in juvenile justice and concerns with youth rights. In addition, the Office of Independent Ombudsman maintains a public web page describing the duties of the Office and how the Ombudsman may be contacted, either by phone, mail, or e-mail. In addition, the OIO periodically mails informational brochures regarding services of the OIO to the parents of youth newly committed to TJJD. In order to facilitate contact from youth in the facilities as well as the public, the OIO maintains a hotline that is answered 24 hours a day. The Deputy Ombudsmen distribute posters containing the OIO's hotline number to the facilities that are routinely visited, as well as educating youth on complaint procedures.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Accounting of Site Visits, Youth Contact and Individual Cases

	4th Quarter FY24	3rd Quarter FY25	4th Quarter FY25	FY25 Total
TJJD/Contract Site Visits	25	23	24	92
County Post Adjudicated/Contract Facility Site Visits	79	75	77	306
Number of Youth Interviewed	866	892	888	2523
Number of Youth Interviews Conducted	999	1058	1074	4162
Closed Individual Cases	1	1	1	11

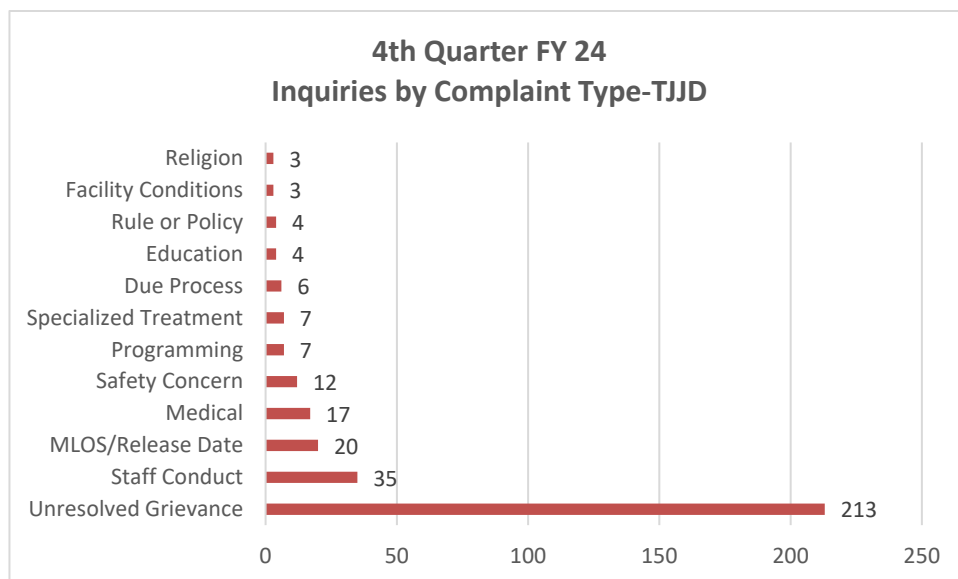
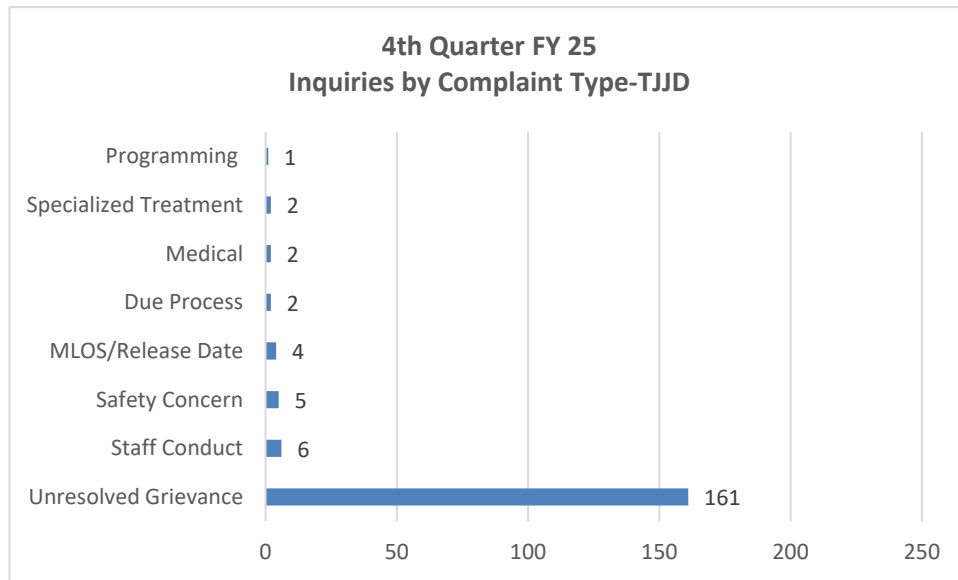
Inquiries

An inquiry is a review of potential youth rights violations conducted by the OIO. All inquiries are thoroughly reviewed and may include interviews of involved youth and staff, review of relevant paperwork, and video review. The OIO obtains information related to potential youth rights violations utilizing interviews, video review, documentation review, and consultation with other entities or divisions.

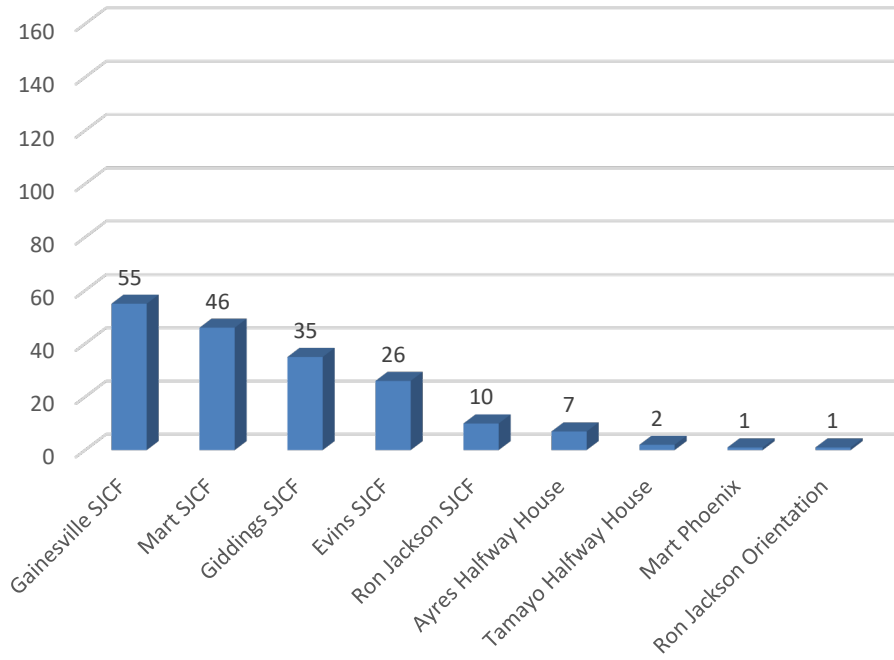
The OIO received 195 complaints during the fourth quarter of FY 25, 183 related to TJJD and 12 related to county post-adjudicated facilities. This represents a 42% decrease compared to the fourth quarter of FY 24.

Inquiries TJJD

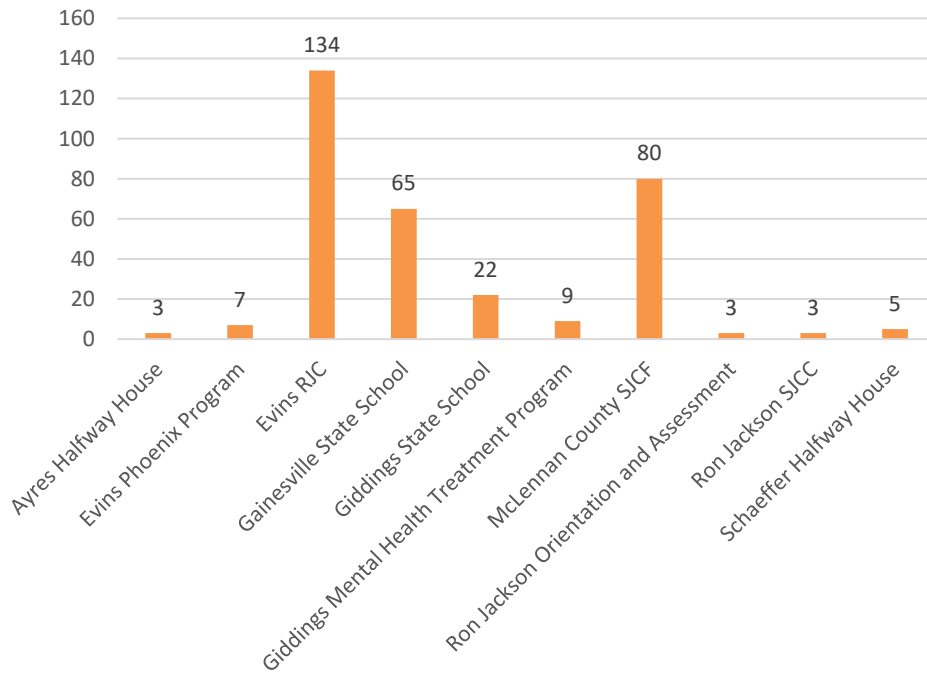
Of the 195 complaints received during the fourth quarter, 183 were Inquiries related to TJJD youth.



**Fourth Quarter FY 25
Inquiries by Facility-TJJD**

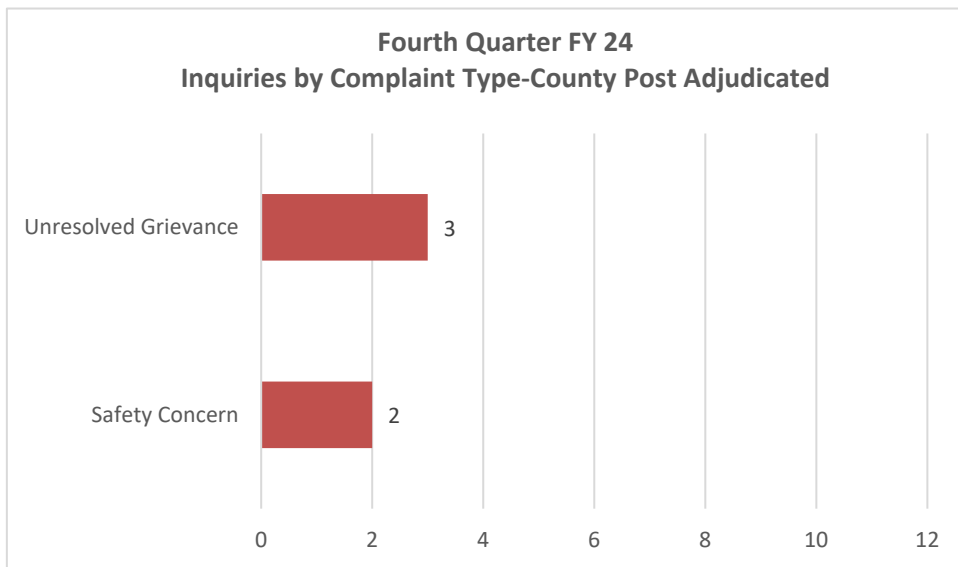
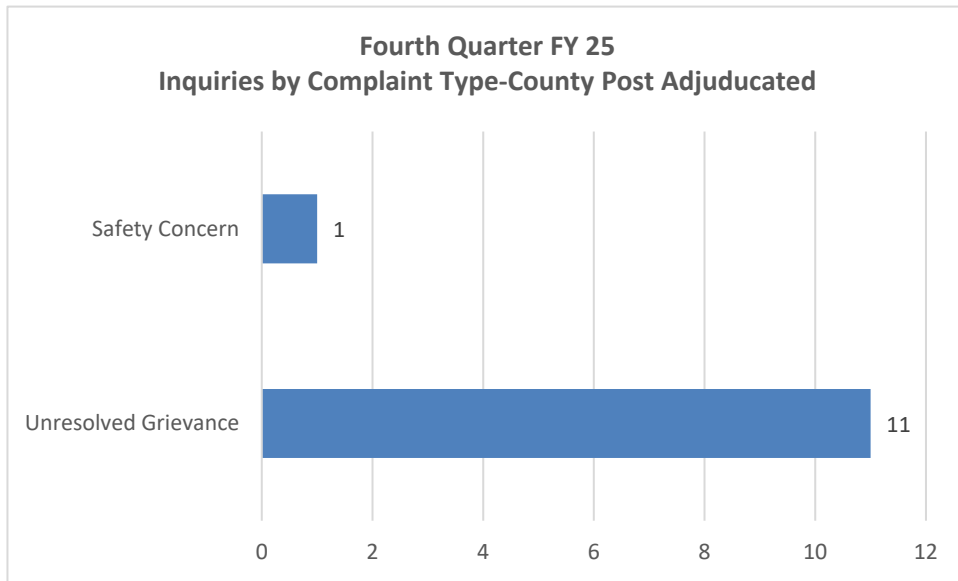


**Fourth Quarter FY 24
Inquiries by Facility-TJJD**



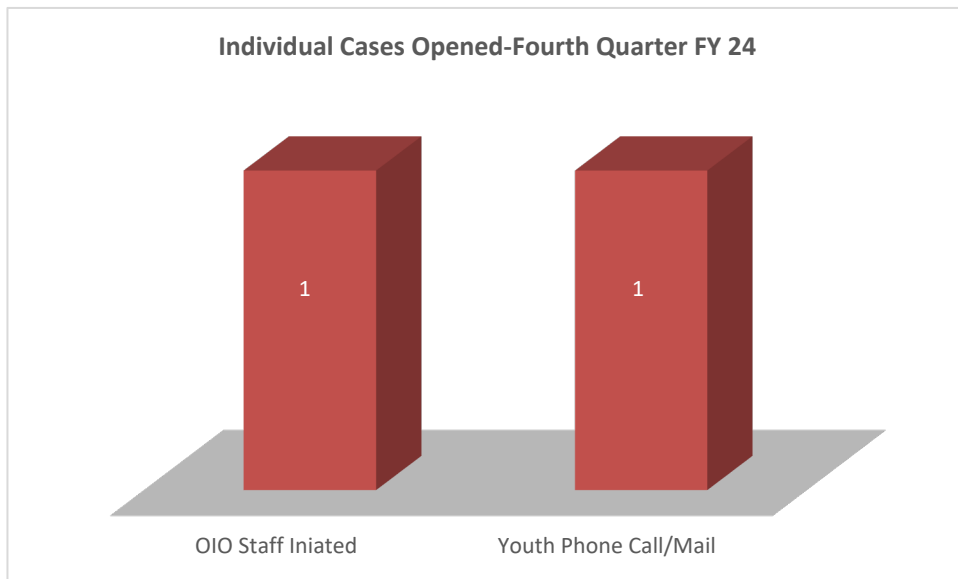
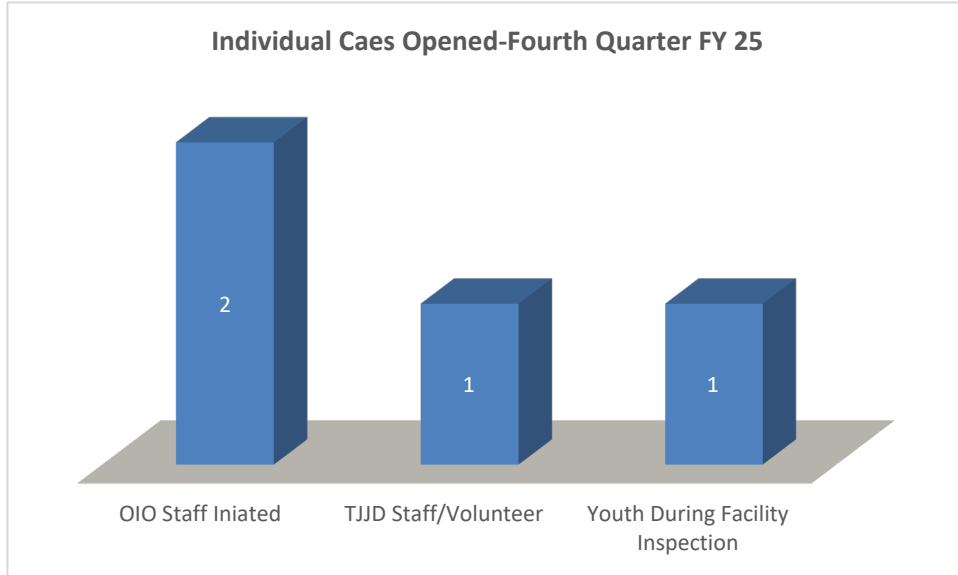
Inquiries-County

Of the 195 complaints received during the fourth quarter of FY 25, 12 were Inquiries related to County post-adjudicated youth.



Individual Cases

Inquiries involving serious issues related to youth rights may be opened as an Individual Case, which entails an in-depth review and investigation of the issues. During the fourth quarter of FY 25, the OIO opened four complaints as individual cases, all involving TJJJ youth.



Individual Cases by Facility-Fourth Quarter FY 25

	Total for Facility	Safety Concern	Specialized Treatment
TJJD/Contract Facilities			
Mart SJCF	3	2	1
Ron Jackson SJCF	1	1	0

Individual Cases by Facility-Fourth Quarter FY 24

	Total for Facility	Unresolved Grievance	Safety Concern
TJJD/Contract Facilities			
McLennan County SJCF	2	1	1

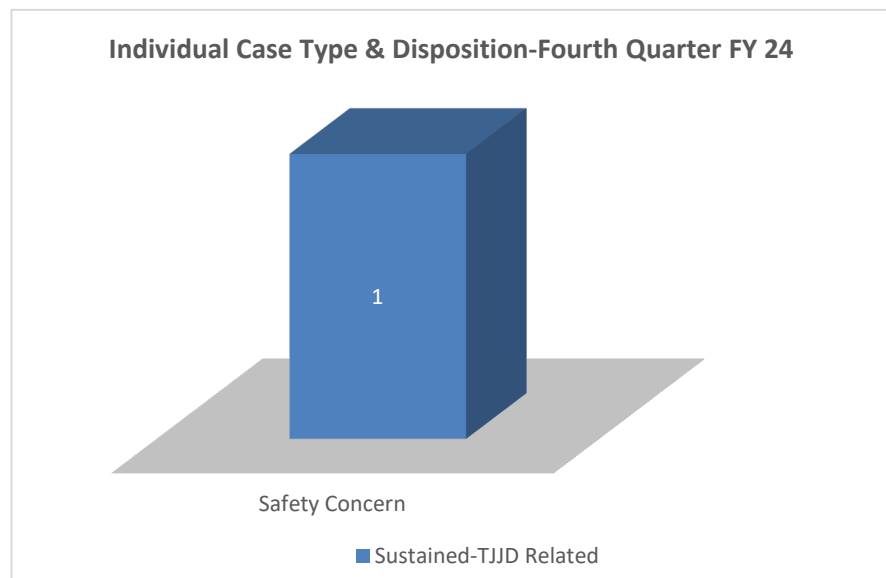
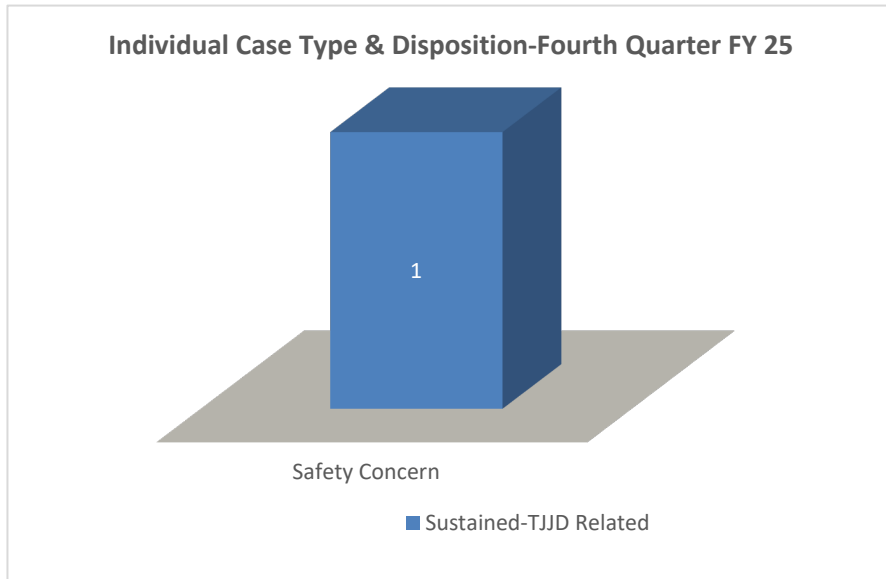
Closed Individual Cases

The OIO closed one individual case involving a TJJJ youth during the fourth quarter of FY 25.

Sustained-There is sufficient corroborated information to warrant noting and a follow-up response/action plan from the facility.

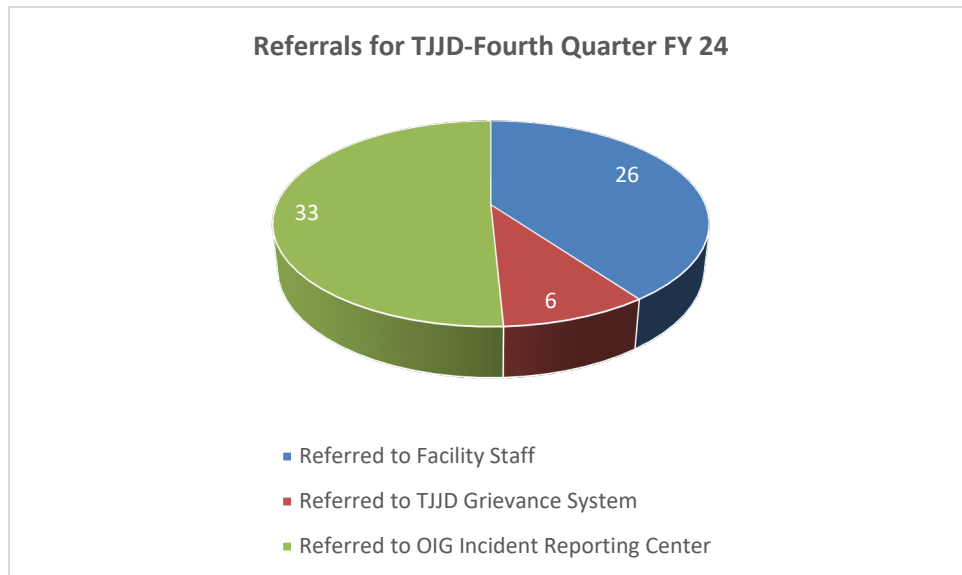
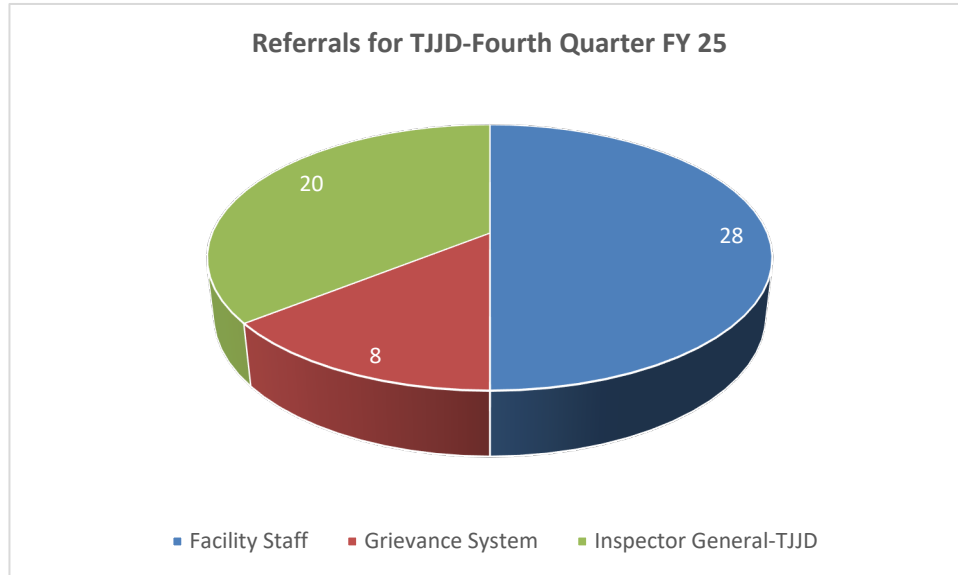
Not Sustained-There is insufficient information or evidence to prove or disprove the allegation.

Unfounded-The complaint is without merit or is within applicable law or policy.

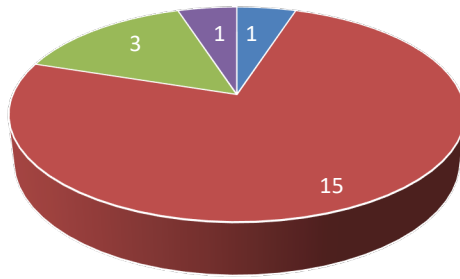


Referrals

The OIO receives numerous inquiries and complaints that, upon review, are either outside the scope of the OIO, a matter that should be addressed by facility staff or grievance process, or would be better addressed by another agency or group. During the fourth quarter of FY 25, the OIO received 76 referrals, 56 related to TJJJ youth and 20 related to county post adjudicated youth. This is an increase of 10% from the fourth quarter of FY 24.

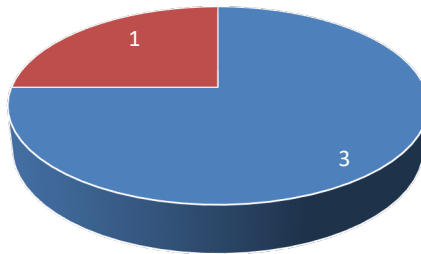


**Referrals for County Post-Adjudicated Facilities
Fourth Quarter FY 25**



■ Attorney/Judge ■ Facility Staff ■ Grievance System ■ Probation

**Referrals for County Post-Adjudicated Facilities
Fourth Quarter FY 24**



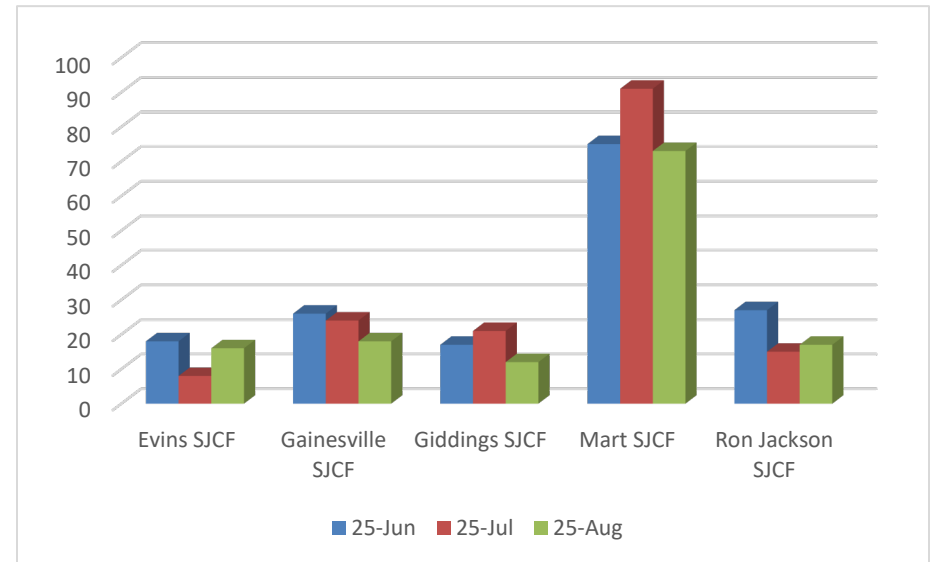
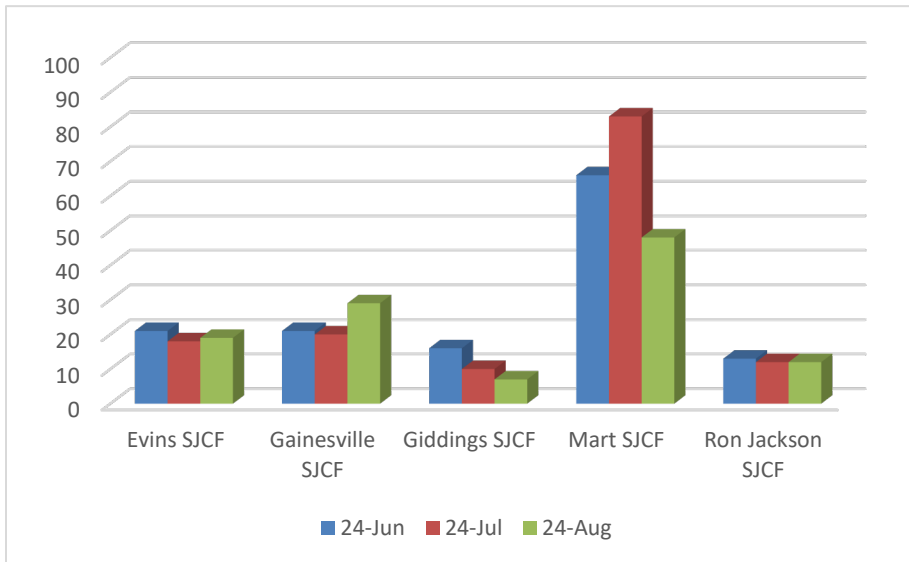
■ Referred to Facility Staff ■ Referred to OIG Incident Reporting Center

INCIDENT TRENDS FOR TJJD SECURE FACILITIES

Suicide Assessments

The following data represents the number of new assessments conducted, either from initial mental health screenings or suicide assessments, resulting in a youth who was not previously on suicide alert being placed on any kind of suicide alert.

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
Evins SJCF	21	18	19	18	8	16
Gainesville SJCF	21	20	29	26	24	18
Giddings SJCF	16	10	7	17	21	12
Mart SJCF	66	83	48	75	91	73
Ron Jackson SJCF	13	12	12	27	15	17

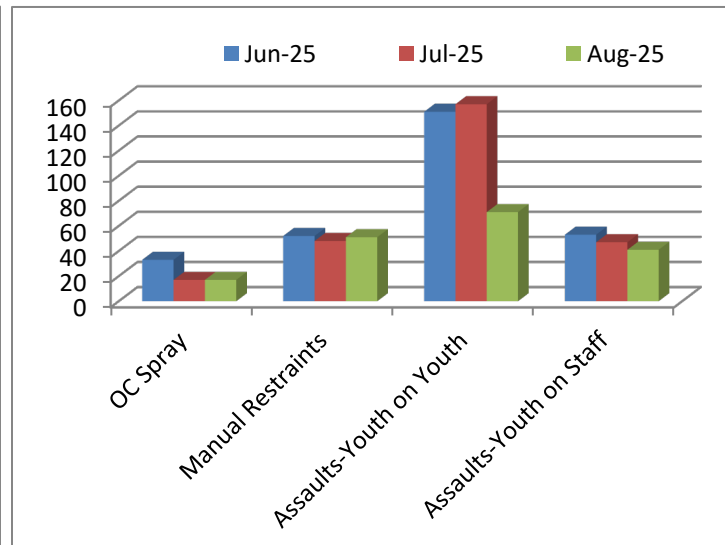
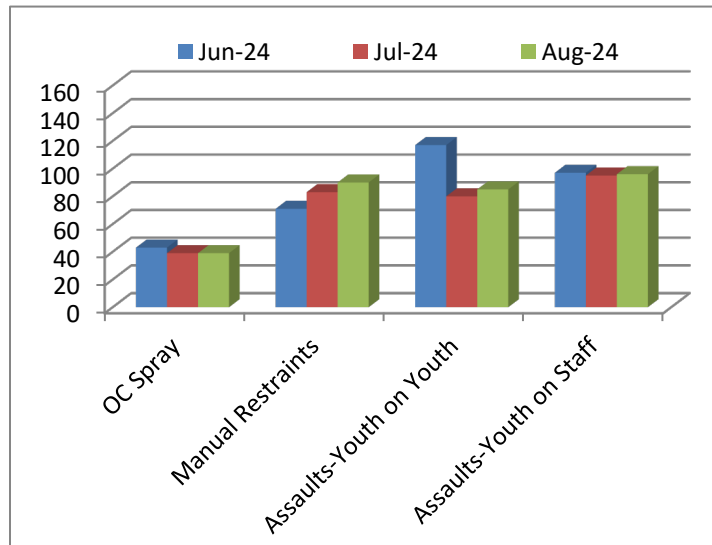


The OIO reviews on a monthly basis at the secure correctional facilities the number of incidents involving the use of OC pepper spray, the number of youth restrained, and assaults involving youth on youth and youth on staff. These metrics give the OIO some indication of the environment related to the safety and security of all the youth offenders as well as the staff within a particular facility. These metrics are by no means an absolute indicator and should be taken into context and combined with other factors when drawing conclusions regarding a particular facility.

Evins SJCF-General Program

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	43	39	39
Manual Restraints	71	83	90
Assaults-Youth on Youth	117	80	85
Assaults-Youth on Staff	97	95	96

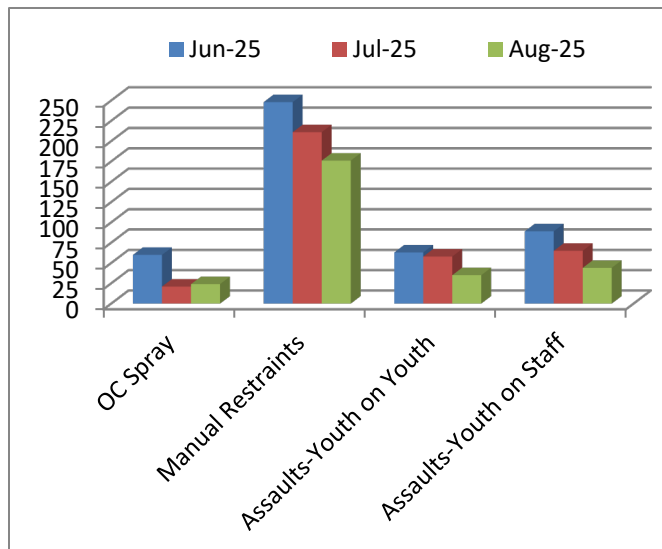
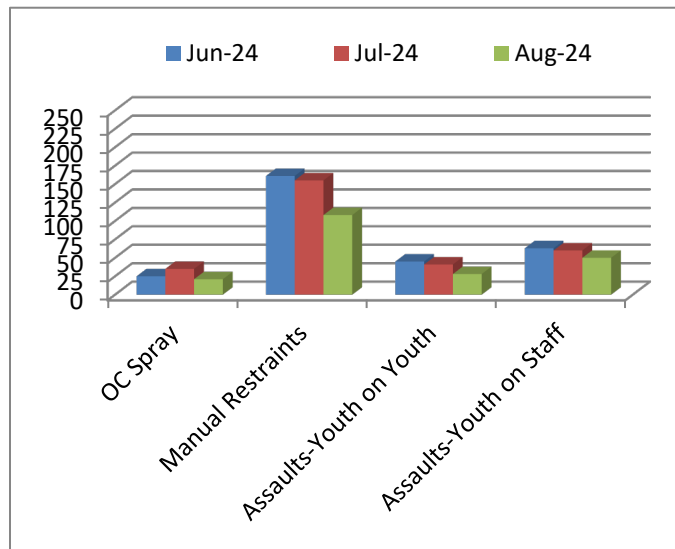
	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
OC Spray	33	17	17
Manual Restraints	52	48	51
Assaults-Youth on Youth	151	157	71
Assaults-Youth on Staff	53	47	41



Gainesville SJCF-General Program

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	25	35	21
Manual Restraints	161	155	108
Assaults-Youth on Youth	45	41	28
Assaults-Youth on Staff	63	60	50

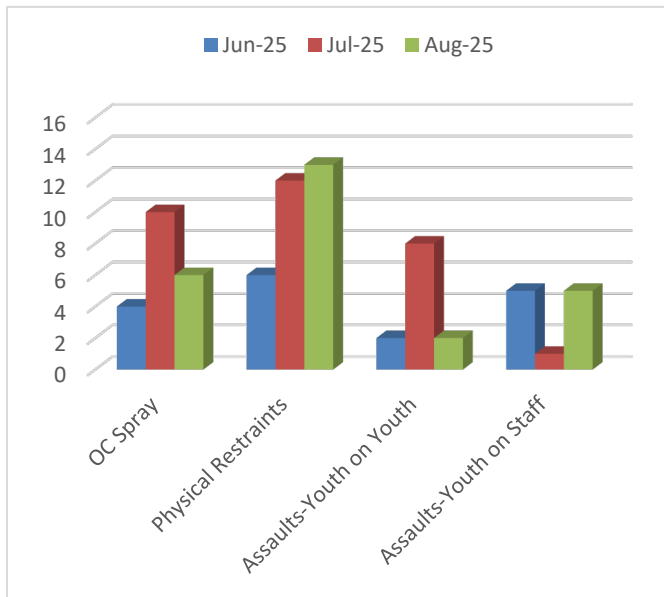
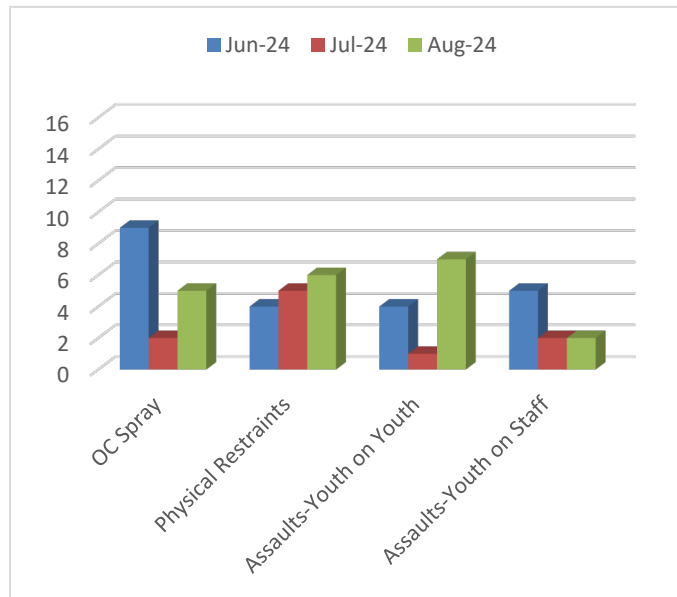
Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
60	21	24
248	211	176
63	58	35
89	65	45



Giddings SJCF-General Program

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	9	2	5
Manual Restraints	4	5	6
Assaults-Youth on Youth	4	1	7
Assaults-Youth on Staff	5	2	2

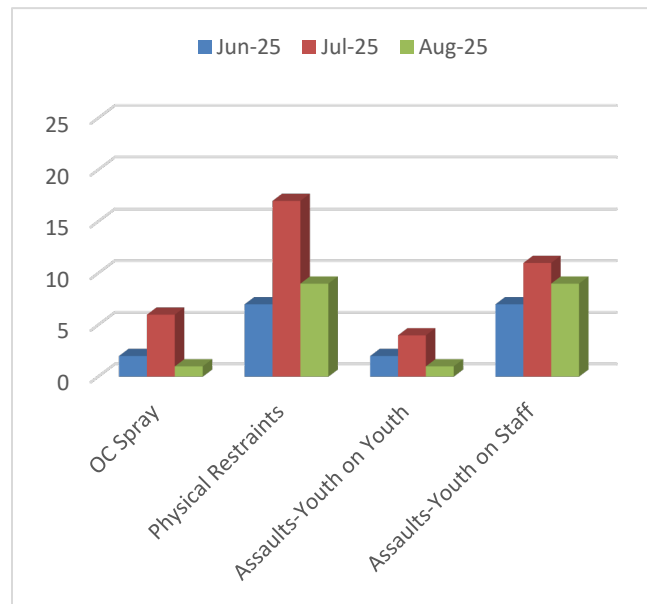
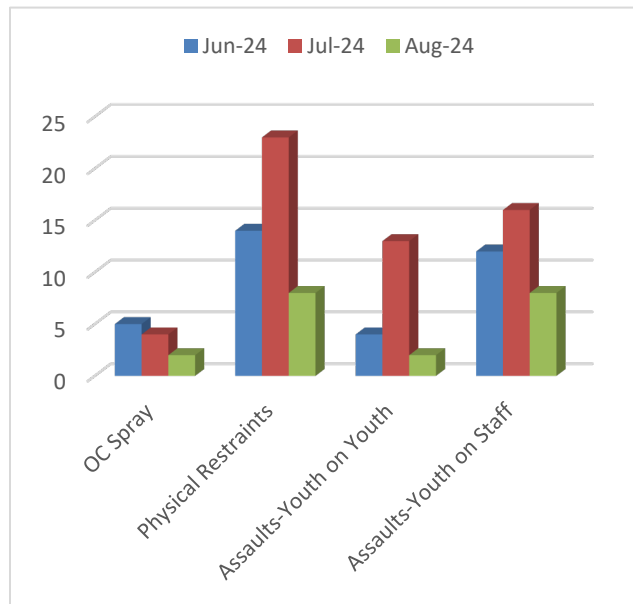
Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
4	10	6
6	12	13
2	8	2
5	1	5



Giddings Mental Health Program

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	5	4	2
Manual Restraints	14	23	8
Assaults-Youth on Youth	4	13	2
Assaults-Youth on Staff	12	16	8

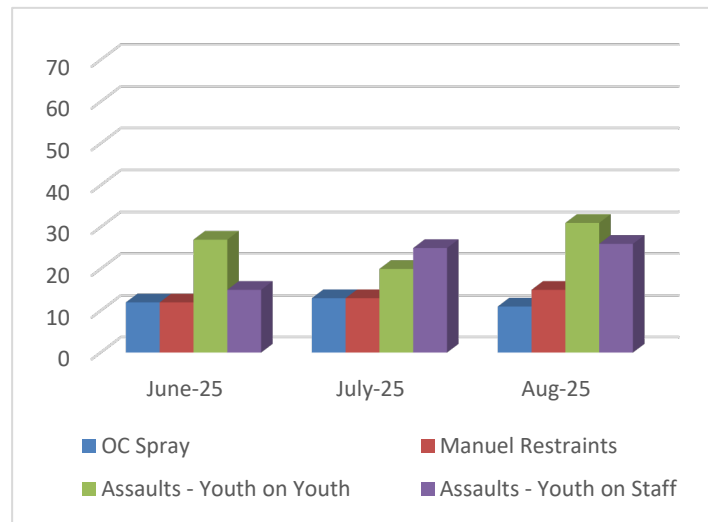
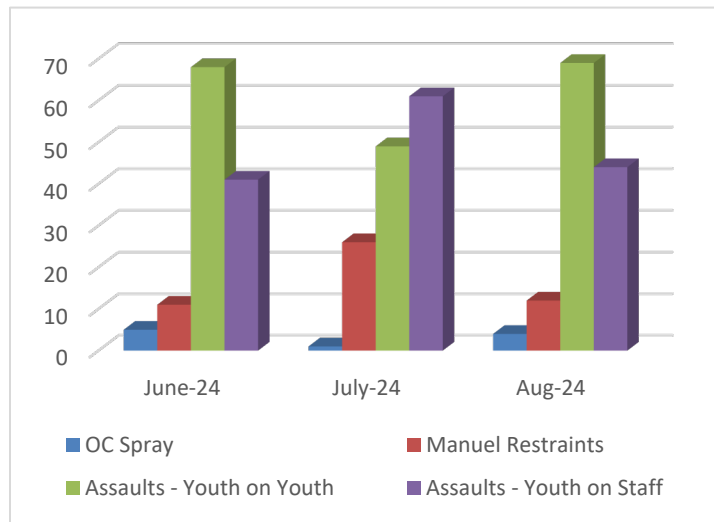
	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
OC Spray	2	6	1
Manual Restraints	7	17	9
Assaults-Youth on Youth	2	4	1
Assaults-Youth on Staff	7	11	9



Mart SJCF-General Program

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	5	1	4
Manual Restraints	11	26	12
Assaults-Youth on Youth	68	49	69
Assaults-Youth on Staff	41	61	44

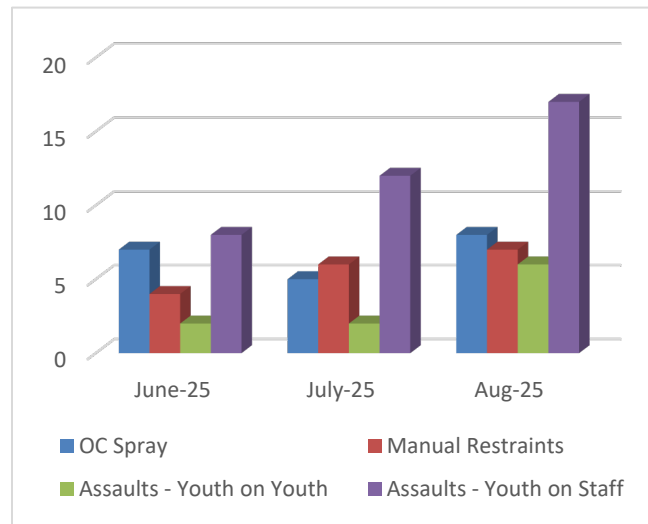
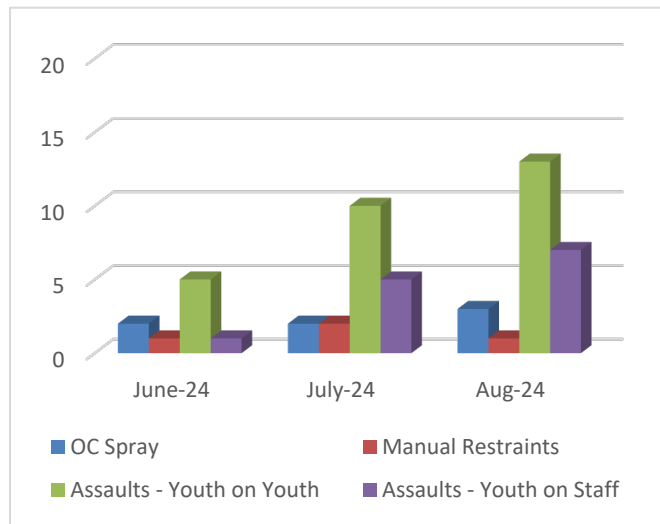
Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
12	13	11
12	13	15
27	20	31
15	25	26



Mart-Young Male Program

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	2	2	3
Manual Restraints	1	2	1
Assaults-Youth on Youth	5	10	13
Assaults-Youth on Staff	1	5	7

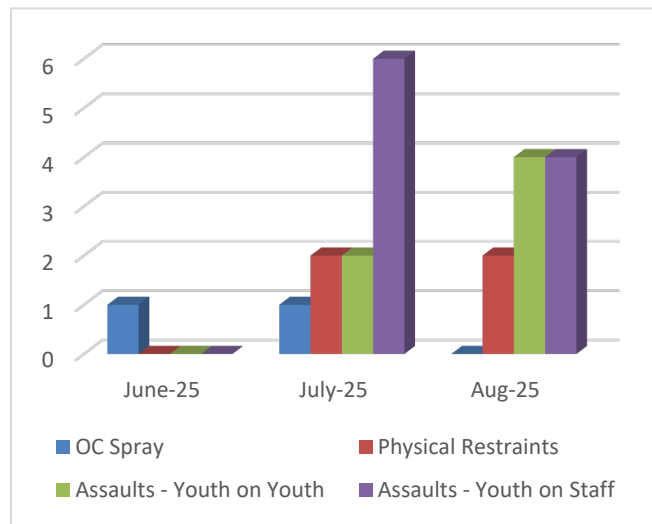
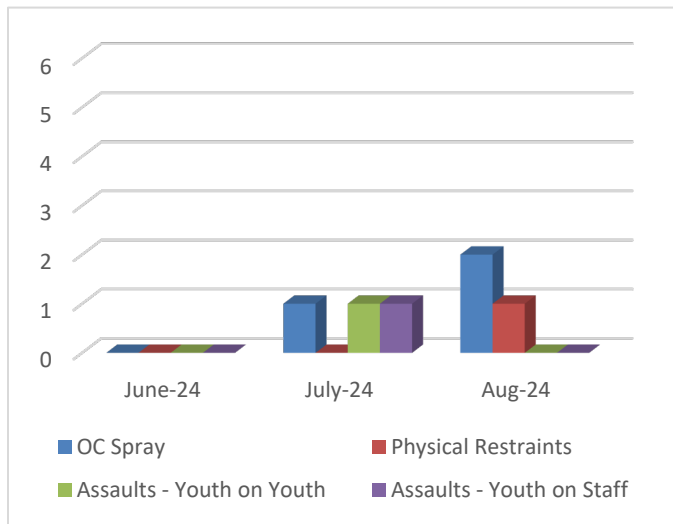
Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
7	5	8
4	6	7
2	2	6
8	12	17



Mart-Orientation and Assessment (Females Only)

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	0	1	2
Manual Restraints	0	0	1
Assaults-Youth on Youth	0	1	0
Assaults-Youth on Staff	0	1	0

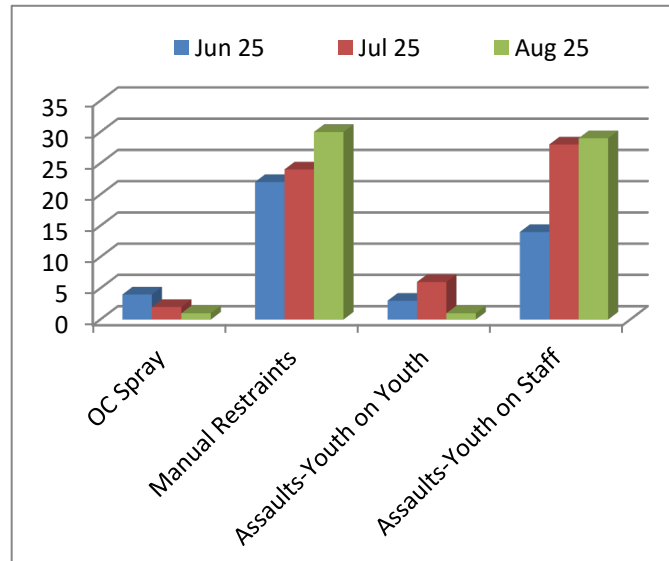
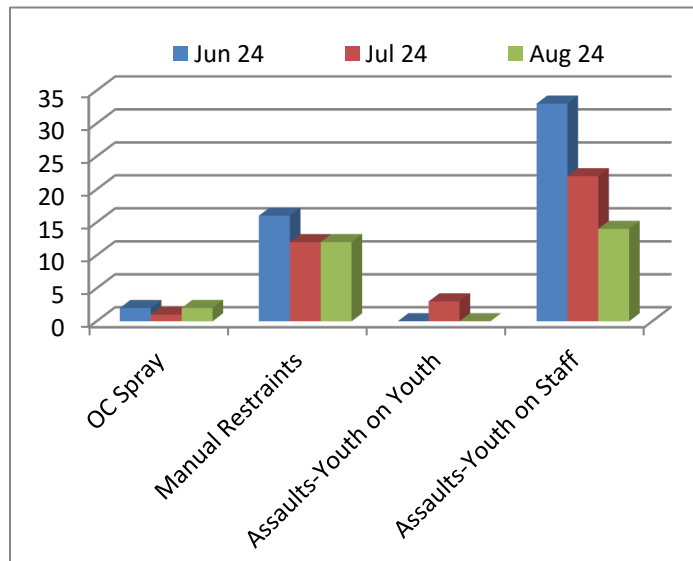
	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
OC Spray	1	1	0
Manual Restraints	0	2	2
Assaults-Youth on Youth	0	2	4
Assaults-Youth on Staff	0	6	4



Ron Jackson SJCF-General Program

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	2	1	2
Manual Restraints	16	12	12
Assaults-Youth on Youth	0	3	0
Assaults-Youth on Staff	33	22	14

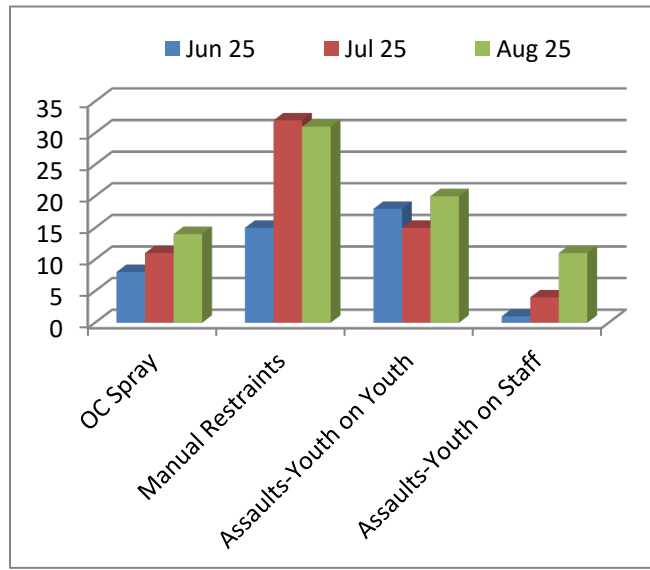
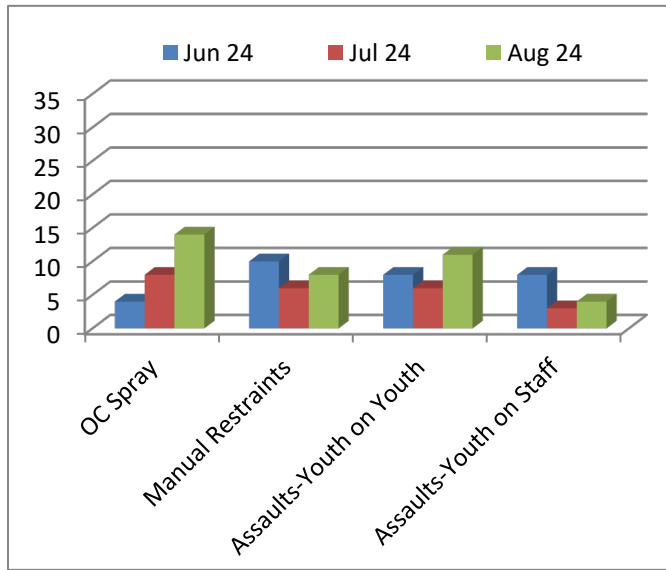
Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
4	2	1
22	24	30
3	6	1
14	28	29



Ron Jackson SJCF-Orientation and Assessment (Males Only)

	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
OC Spray	4	8	14
Manual Restraints	10	6	8
Assaults-Youth on Youth	8	6	11
Assaults-Youth on Staff	8	3	4

Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
8	11	14
15	32	31
18	15	20
1	4	11



The OIO is uniquely positioned to observe trends and patterns objectively within secure facilities during site visits, record reviews, staff and youth interviews, and complaints and grievances reviews. The OIO remains concerned about high staff turnover and staff shortages, which lead to staff fatigue and ultimately to decreased supervision of youth offenders in the state's secure facilities. TJJJD has made a significant investment in the attempted hiring of additional staff, particularly in the Juvenile Corrections Officers (JCO) role, and continues to seek pay raises for this and other critical positions within the department.

During this reporting period, the OIO continues to observe several patterns concerning the safety and security of the state's secured facilities. The volume and the acuity level of assaults by youth offenders on the staff, particularly the Juvenile Corrections Officers (JCO), are still concerning. The assaultive conduct by the youth offenders generally appeared to be unprovoked by the staff, and it often led to an injury or the potential for serious injury being incurred by the JCOs, staff, and other youth as well. The OIO is concerned that this level of violence will increase the difficulty of TJJJD in delivering programming to the youth committed to the department.

The OIO continues to review several serious incidents, indicating that the current training curriculum or its delivery to the JCOs needs review and adaptation to address the youth acuity level adequately. The OIO still observes issues with youth engagement, responsiveness from JCOs to serious incidents, and a lack of situational awareness during stressful events such as restraints and the use of OC spray. The majority of the Individual Cases (IC) investigated for potential youth rights violations come from the McLennan State Correctional Facility (Mart).

The OIO has received, through the 2026/2027 Legislative Budget Appropriations, four additional positions, including one Data Analyst and three Deputy Ombudsman. The new deputy ombudsperson positions will allow the OIO to assign a Senior Ombudsman solely to monitor the five secured state facilities. The Data Analyst will enable the OIO to review and inspect TJJJD data for patterns and trends that may indicate systemic issues.

R. Sean McCleskey, Chief
Office of the Independent Ombudsman
For the Texas Juvenile Justice Department
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ANNEX

TJJD site visits conducted by IO staff during the fourth quarter

Secure Facilities

Evins SJCF-*Edinburg TX*

Gainesville SJCF-*Gainesville TX*

Giddings SJCF-*Giddings TX*

Mart SJCF-*Mart TX*

Ron Jackson SJCF -*Brownwood TX*

TJJD Halfway Houses

Ayres House-*San Antonio TX*

Edna Tamayo House-*Harlingen TX*

Schaeffer House-*El Paso TX*

Contract Care Facilities

Austin State Hospital-*Austin TX*

Pegasus School RTC-*Lockhart TX*

Terrell State Hospital-*Terrell TX*

Vernon State Hospital-*Wichita Falls TX*

Parole

Region North

Region Southeast

County post-adjudicated facility site visits conducted by IO staff during the fourth quarter

County Operated

Amador R Rodriguez Boot Camp & Educational Center-*San Benito TX (Cameron County)*
Atascosa County Juvenile Justice Center-*Jourdanton TX*
Bell County Juvenile Services Center-*Killeen TX*
Bexar County Juvenile Detention Center-*San Antonio TX*
Brazoria County Juvenile Detention/Residential Treatment, Post-*Angleton TX*
Cyndi Taylor Krier Juvenile Correctional Treatment-*San Antonio TX (Bexar County)*
Dallas County Youth Village-*Dallas TX*
Dallas County-HOPE-*Dallas TX*
Dallas County Residential Drug Treatment-*Dallas TX*
Dallas County-STARs-*Dallas TX*
Denton County Secure Correctional Facility-*Denton TX*
Dr. Jerome McNeil Jr. Detention Center-*Dallas TX*
El Paso County Juvenile Detention Center-*El Paso TX*
Fort Bend County Juvenile Detention Center-*Richmond TX*
Fort Bend County Juvenile Leadership Academy-*Katy TX*
Grayson County Post-Adjudication Facility-*Denison TX*
Guadalupe County Juvenile Detention Center-*Seguin TX*
HOPE Academy-*Tyler TX*
Harris County Leadership Academy-*Katy TX*
Harris County Youth Village-*Houston TX*
Hays County Juvenile Post Detention Center-*San Marcos TX*
Jerry J. Esmond Juvenile Justice Center-*Dickinson TX (Galveston County)*
John R. Roach Juvenile Detention Center-*McKinney TX*
Judge Mario E. Ramirez Jr. Juvenile Justice Center-*Weslaco TX (Hidalgo County)*
L.I.F.E. & B.R.A.V.E. Residential Program-*San Benito TX (Cameron County)*
Letot Residential Treatment Center-*Dallas TX*
Lubbock County Juvenile Justice Center-*Lubbock TX*
Lyle B Medlock Treatment Facility-*Dallas TX*
Lynn W. Ross Juvenile Detention Center-Fort Worth TX (Tarrant County)
Meurer Intermediate Sanctions Center-*Austin TX (Travis County)*
Nueces County Juvenile Detention Center-*Corpus Christi TX*
Robert N. Barnes Regional Juvenile Facility-*Corpus Christi TX (Nueces County)*
Samuel F. Santana Challenge Program-*El Paso*
The Youth Center of the High Plains-*Amarillo TX (Randall County)*
Van Zandt County Youth Multi-Service Center-*Grand Saline TX*
Victoria Regional Juvenile Justice Facility-*Victoria TX*
Williamson County C.O.R.E. Program-*Georgetown TX*
Willoughby Juvenile Services-*Marshall TX (Harrison County)*

Contract Care Facilities for Post Adjudicated

Arms of Hope-*Quinlan TX*
Azleway Drug Treatment Program-*Big Sandy TX*
Bridge Emergency Shelter-San Antonio TX
Cal Farley's Boys Ranch-*Amarillo TX*
Center for Success and Independence-*Houston TX*
Center for Success and Independence-*Rockdale TX*
Cherokee Home for Children-*Cherokee TX*
Concho Valley Home for Girls-*San Angelo TX*
Everyday Life RTC-*Bryan TX*
Father Flanagan's Boys Home-*Boystown, NE*
Garza County RJC-*Post TX*
Gulf Coast Trades Center-*New Waverly TX*
High Plains Children's Home-*Amarillo TX*
Meadowland-Roy Maas Youth Alternatives-*Boerne TX*
Mesquite Treatment Center-*Lyford TX*
MHMR Tarrant County-*Fort Worth TX*
Monarch Academy for Girls-*Denison TX*
New Horizons-*Abilene TX*
New Horizons-*Goldthwaite TX*
New Life Children's Home-*Canyon Lake TX*
North Texas State Hospital-*Wichita Falls TX*
Odyssey House-*Houston TX*
Pathways Wilderness Program-*Mountain Home TX*
Rite of Passage, Inc-*Brownwood TX*
Rite of Passage, Inc-*Granbury TX*
Rite of Passage, Inc-*Queen Creek AZ*
San Marcos Treatment Center-*San Marcos TX*
SCAN Youth Recovery Home-*Laredo TX*
SCAN Youth Recovery Home-*San Benito TX*
Shoreline RTC-*Taft TX*
Sundown Ranch-*Canton TX*
West Texas Boys Ranch-*San Angelo TX*
Woodward Youth Academy-*Woodward IA*