

GOVERNMENT CODE

TITLE 2. JUDICIAL BRANCH

SUBTITLE F. COURT ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 71. TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 71.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

- (1) "Chair" means the chair of the council.
- (2) "Council" means the Texas Judicial Council.
- (3) "Defendant" means a person accused of a crime or juvenile offense, as those terms are defined by Section 79.001.

(4) "Public defender's office" has the meaning assigned by Article 26.044(a), Code of Criminal Procedure.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 906, Sec. 12, eff. Jan. 1, 2002.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 855 (H.B. 1265), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 984 (H.B. 1754), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2011.

SUBCHAPTER B. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Sec. 71.011. NUMBER AND CLASSES OF MEMBERS. The Texas Judicial Council is an agency of the state composed of 16 ex officio and six appointive members.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 71.012. EX OFFICIO MEMBERS. The ex officio members are:

- (1) the chief justice of the supreme court;
- (2) the presiding judge of the court of criminal appeals;
- (3) two members of the senate, appointed by the

lieutenant governor;

(4) the chair of the House Judicial Affairs Committee;

(5) one member of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house;

(6) two justices of the courts of appeals designated by the chief justice of the supreme court;

(7) two district judges designated by the chief justice of the supreme court;

(8) two judges of county courts, statutory county, or statutory probate courts designated by the chief justice of the supreme court;

(9) two justices of the peace designated by the chief justice of the supreme court; and

(10) two municipal court judges designated by the chief justice of the supreme court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, Sec. 8.44(13), eff. Aug. 28, 1989; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1328, Sec. 2, eff. June 21, 2003.

Sec. 71.013. TERMS OF EX OFFICIO MEMBERS; DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS. (a) The chief justice of the supreme court and the presiding judge of the court of criminal appeals are members of the council as long as they hold those offices.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (a), all members of the judiciary appointed to the council serve staggered terms of four years with the term of one member from each judicial group expiring on February 1 of each odd-numbered year.

(c) A legislative member whose membership in the legislature ceases continues as a member of the council at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

(d) A vacancy in a judicial membership must be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment.

(e) A judicial or legislative member of the council serves until his successor is chosen and has qualified.

(f) The chief justice of the supreme court and the presiding judge of the court of criminal appeals may each designate a member

of his court to act in his stead under this chapter. The designated person serves at the will of the official who chose him for service. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, Sec. 8.44(14), eff. Aug. 28, 1989; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 71.014. CITIZEN MEMBERS. (a) The governor shall appoint the six citizen members on the council.

(b) A citizen member must be a resident citizen of the state. Three of the six citizen members must be members of the State Bar of Texas and two must be persons who are not licensed to practice law.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 71.015. TERMS OF CITIZEN MEMBERS. (a) Citizen members serve for staggered terms of six years with two members' terms expiring on June 30 of each odd-numbered year.

(b) A vacancy in citizen membership is filled for the unexpired term by appointment by the governor.

(c) A citizen member serves on the council until his successor is appointed and has qualified.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 71.016. MEETINGS. (a) The council shall meet at least once in each calendar year and may meet at other times as ordered by the council or under its authority.

(b) The council may meet at a place and time designated by it or under its authority.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 71.017. QUORUM. Eleven members of the council constitute a quorum.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 7, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 71.018. OFFICERS; COMMITTEES. (a) The chief justice of the supreme court shall serve as chair and the presiding judge of the court of criminal appeals shall serve as vice chair of the council. Other officers of the council shall be elected by the council.

(b) The council may prescribe the duties of an officer of the council.

(c) The council may appoint committees from its membership. It may prescribe the duties of and delegate powers under this chapter to a committee except as otherwise limited by this chapter.

(d) The chair may appoint committees for two-year terms that he considers necessary for the organization of the council.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 8, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 71.019. RULES. The council may adopt rules expedient for the administration of its functions.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 71.020. EXPENSES. (a) A member of the council may not receive compensation for service on the council.

(b) A member is entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing the duties of the council and approved for payment as provided by this section.

(c) The council, its officers, and its committees are entitled to reimbursement for the actual and necessary clerical expenses incurred in performing functions under this chapter and approved for payment as provided by this section.

(d) Before any expenses incurred by the council, its members or officers, or its committees may be paid, the chair of the council or the vice chair, if authorized by the chair in writing to do so, must approve a verified and itemized account of the expenses.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 9, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

SUBCHAPTER C. POWERS AND DUTIES

Sec. 71.031. CONTINUOUS STUDY. The council continuously shall study the organization, rules, procedures and practice, work accomplished, results, and uniformity of the discretionary powers of the state courts and methods for their improvement.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 71.032. RECEIPT OF ADVICE ON REMEDIES. The council shall receive and consider advice from judges, public officials, members of the bar, and citizens concerning remedies for faults in the administration of justice.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 71.033. METHODS FOR IMPROVEMENT. The council shall design methods for simplifying judicial procedure, expediting the transaction of judicial business, and correcting faults in or improving the administration of justice.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 71.034. REPORTS; INVESTIGATIONS. (a) The council shall file a complete detailed report with the governor and the supreme court before December 2 of each year on council activities, information from the council's study, and council recommendations.

(b) The council may file a supplemental report on council activities, findings, or recommendations at a time it considers advisable.

(c) The council shall investigate and report on a matter concerning the administration of justice that the supreme court or the legislature refers to the council.

(d) The yearly or supplemental reports of the council are public information and may be given to the press when filed.

(e) In addition to the information described by Subsection (a), the council shall include in the report a summary of information provided to the council during the preceding year under Articles [2.211](#) and [2.212](#), Code of Criminal Procedure.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 85, Sec. 4.02, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 292 (S.B. 291), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 71.035. STATISTICS; ENFORCEMENT BY MANDAMUS.

(a) The council shall gather judicial statistics and other pertinent information from the several state judges and other court officials of this state. In addition, the council shall implement a monthly tracking system to ensure accountability for counties and courts which participate in the statewide integrated system for child support, medical support, and dental support enforcement established under Section 231.0011, Family Code. As a duty of office, the district clerks and county clerks serving the affected courts shall report monthly such information as may be required by the council, including, at a minimum, the time required to enforce cases from date of delinquency, from date of filing, and from date of service until date of disposition. Such information as is necessary to complete the report and not directly within the control of the district or county clerk, such as date of delinquency, shall be provided to the clerk by the child support registry or by the enforcement agency providing Title IV-D enforcement services in the court. The monthly report shall be transmitted to the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System no later than the 20th day of the month following the month reported, in such form as may be prescribed by the Office of Court Administration, which may include electronic data transfer. Copies of such reports shall be maintained in the office of the appropriate district or county clerk for a period of at least two years and shall be available to the public for inspection and reproduction.

(b) The council may require a state justice, judge, clerk, or other court official, as an official duty, to comply with reasonable requirements for supplying statistics pertaining to the amount and character of the civil and criminal business transacted by the court or other information on the conduct, operation, or business of his court or the office of the clerk of his court that is within the scope of the functions of the council. If the official does not supply the information within a reasonable time after the

request, he is presumed to have wilfully refused the request. The council shall prescribe procedures, definitions of terms, and forms for supplying the statistics and other information.

(c) The duty provided by this section to supply information may be enforced by writ of mandamus in:

(1) the district court of the county of residence of the respondent if the petition for mandamus is filed against a district clerk or a clerk, judge, or other official of a trial court other than a district court;

(2) the court of appeals for the court of appeals district in which the respondent resides if the petition for mandamus is filed against a district judge or a clerk of a court of appeals; or

(3) the supreme court in any other case.

(d) Except as provided by this subsection, the attorney general shall file and prosecute an action for mandamus on behalf of the council if requested to do so in writing by the council. To be valid, the written request must be signed by the chair or by at least 11 members of the council. The attorney general may refuse to file an action if he certifies in writing that the action is without merit.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 1.63, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 341, Sec. 2.05, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 79, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1408, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1150 (S.B. 550), Sec. 54, eff. September 1, 2018.

Sec. 71.0351. BAIL AND PRETRIAL RELEASE INFORMATION.

(a) As a component of the official monthly report submitted to the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System under Section 71.035, the clerk of each court setting bail in criminal cases shall report:

(1) the number of defendants for whom bail was set after arrest, including:

- (A) the number for each category of offense;
 - (B) the number of personal bonds; and
 - (C) the number of surety or cash bonds;
- (2) the number of defendants released on bail who subsequently failed to appear;
- (3) the number of defendants released on bail who subsequently violated a condition of release; and
- (4) the number of defendants who committed an offense while released on bail or community supervision.

(b) The office shall post the information in a publicly accessible place on the agency's Internet website without disclosing any personal information of any defendant, judge, or magistrate.

(c) Not later than December 1 of each year, the office shall submit a report containing the data collected under this section during the preceding state fiscal year to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and presiding officers of the standing committees of each house of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over the judiciary.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 11 (S.B. 6), Sec. 16, eff. January 1, 2022.

Sec. 71.0352. JUVENILE DATA: JUSTICE, MUNICIPAL, AND TRUANCY COURTS. As a component of the official monthly report submitted to the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System:

(1) a justice court, municipal court, or truancy court shall report the number of cases filed for:

(A) truant conduct under Section 65.003(a), Family Code;

(B) the offense of parent contributing to nonattendance under Section 25.093, Education Code; and

(C) a violation of a local daytime curfew ordinance adopted under Section 341.905 or 351.903, Local Government Code; and

(2) in cases in which a child fails to obey an order of a justice court, municipal court, or truancy court under

circumstances that would constitute contempt of court, the justice court, municipal court, or truancy court shall report the number of incidents in which the child is:

(A) referred to the appropriate juvenile court for delinquent conduct as provided by Article 45.050(c)(1), Code of Criminal Procedure, or Section 65.251, Family Code; or

(B) held in contempt, fined, or denied driving privileges as provided by Article 45.050(c)(2), Code of Criminal Procedure, or Section 65.251, Family Code.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 283, Sec. 43, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 935 (H.B. 2398), Sec. 36, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 71.0353. TRAFFICKING OF PERSONS INFORMATION. (a) As a component of the official monthly report submitted to the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System, a district court or county court at law shall report the number of cases filed for the following offenses:

(1) trafficking of persons under Section 20A.02, Penal Code;

(2) prostitution under Section 43.02, Penal Code;

(3) solicitation of prostitution under Section 43.021, Penal Code; and

(4) compelling prostitution under Section 43.05, Penal Code.

(b) A district or county court at law shall provide a copy of the report required under Subsection (a) to the attorney general.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 515 (H.B. 2014), Sec. 3.01, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 807 (H.B. 1540), Sec. 40, eff. September 1, 2021.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 856 (S.B. 800), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 71.0355. PLAN AND REPORT ON COURT-ORDERED

REPRESENTATION. (a) The council shall develop a statewide plan requiring counties and courts in this state to report information on court-ordered representation for appointments made in suits affecting the parent-child relationship under Part 1, Subchapter B, Chapter 107, Family Code. In developing the plan, the council must consider the costs to counties of implementing the plan and design the plan to reduce redundant reporting.

(b) Not later than November 1 of each odd-numbered year and in the form and manner prescribed in the plan, each local administrative district judge for a court subject to the plan, or the person designated by the judge, shall prepare and provide to the council:

(1) a copy of all formal and informal rules and forms the court uses to appoint representation in suits affecting the parent-child relationship under Part 1, Subchapter B, Chapter 107, Family Code;

(2) any fee schedule the court uses for court-ordered representation; and

(3) information on whether the court is complying with Chapter 37, including the lists and the rotation system required by that chapter.

(c) Each county auditor, or other individual designated by the commissioners court of a county, shall prepare and send to the council, in the form and manner prescribed in the plan, information on the money spent by the county during the preceding state fiscal year to provide court-ordered representation in suits affecting the parent-child relationship under Part 1, Subchapter B, Chapter 107, Family Code. The information must include:

(1) the total amount of money spent by the county to provide court-ordered representation services; and

(2) of the money spent under Subdivision (1), the amount of money spent:

(A) for appointments in each district court, county court, statutory county court, and appellate court in the county;

(B) for appointments of private attorneys for respondents, including parents, children, and alleged fathers, who

are indigent;

(C) for appointments of public counsel for respondents, including parents, children, and alleged fathers, who are indigent; and

(D) for investigation, expert witness, or other litigation expenses.

(d) Each local administrative district judge for a court subject to the plan, or the person designated by the judge, and each county auditor, or other individual designated by the commissioners court of a county, shall provide to the council the information required under the plan and this section.

(e) The council annually shall:

(1) compile in a report the information submitted to the council under the plan and this section;

(2) submit the report compiled under Subdivision (1) to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives; and

(3) electronically publish the report compiled under Subdivision (1).

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 586 (S.B. 560), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 71.036. PUBLIC HEARINGS. (a) The council may appoint a committee of at least three members to hold a public hearing.

(b) The committee may:

(1) order the production of books or other documents;

(2) require a report from a state court, including a court that is not a court of record;

(3) administer oaths; or

(4) take testimony.

(c) An officer of the council, either prior to or while sitting at a hearing, or a member of the council sitting at a hearing may issue a subpoena or similar order to a prospective witness under his official signature.

(d) The subpoena or similar order may be served by registered or certified mail or by an adult person.

(e) If a witness fails to comply with a subpoena or similar

order issued as provided by this section, the council or its committee holding the hearing may request in writing that a district judge of the county of residence of the witness enforce its subpoena or similar order. When requested to enforce a subpoena or order as provided by this section, the district judge shall order compliance with the council's order by the same means that the judge may compel the appearance and testimony of witnesses in a trial in his own court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 71.037. SPECIALTY COURT BEST PRACTICES. The council shall review and as appropriate approve recommendations made by the Specialty Courts Advisory Council under Section [772.0061\(b\)\(2\)](#). Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 747 (S.B. [462](#)), Sec. 2.06, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 71.038. REGIONAL INFORMATION. The council shall collect judicial statistics and other pertinent information from the presiding judges of each administrative judicial region in this state regarding the amount and character of any business transacted by the presiding judges. As a duty of office, the presiding judges shall report monthly any information required by the council under this section. Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 954 (S.B. [1893](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2017.

Sec. 71.039. PROCEDURES FOR ISSUANCE OF MARRIAGE LICENSE THROUGH REMOTE TECHNOLOGY. The council, in consultation with the Department of State Health Services, by rule shall develop and implement a voluntary certification process under which a county clerk may be certified to issue a marriage license to applicants through the use of remote technology in accordance with procedures adopted by the council. The procedures adopted by the council must ensure sufficient verification of each applicant's age and identity to prevent fraud. Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 857 (S.B. [907](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2021.