

HUMAN RESOURCES CODE

TITLE 12. JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

SUBTITLE A. TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE BOARD AND TEXAS JUVENILE  
JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

CHAPTER 203. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOARD AND DEPARTMENT

Sec. 203.001. CONTROL OVER DEPARTMENT; DEPARTMENT MISSION.

(a) The board is the governing body of the department and is responsible for the operations of the department.

(b) The board shall develop and implement policies that clearly separate the policymaking responsibilities of the board and the management responsibilities of the executive director and the staff of the department.

(b-1) The board may delegate to the executive director the board's responsibilities as the board determines appropriate.

(b-2) In making a delegation under Subsection (b-1), the board shall provide, as appropriate:

(1) to the executive director with respect to each delegation:

- (A) clear direction;
- (B) performance measures; and
- (C) reporting requirements; and

(2) to the department, sufficient oversight to ensure that delegated responsibilities are performed according to the mission and funding priorities described by Subsection (c).

(b-3) The executive director is a full-time employee of the board and shall:

(1) perform the regular administrative functions of the board and any other duty as the board directs; and

(2) under the direction of the board, perform the duties required by this subtitle or designated by the board.

(b-4) The executive director may not perform a discretionary or decision-making function for which the board is solely responsible.

(c) The board shall establish the mission of the department with the goal of establishing a cost-effective continuum of youth services that emphasizes keeping youth in their home communities

while balancing the interests of rehabilitative needs with public safety. The board shall establish funding priorities for services that support this mission and that do not provide incentives to incarcerate youth.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. [653](#)), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. [1727](#)), Sec. 18, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.002. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. (a) The board shall:

(1) employ an executive director to administer the department; and

(2) supervise the director's administration of the department.

(b) The executive director must possess the following minimum qualifications:

(1) five years of experience in the field of juvenile corrections or congregate care in an administrative capacity;

(2) three years of experience in the field of juvenile corrections or congregate care in an administrative capacity and a graduate degree from an institution of higher education in a relevant field, including penology, adolescent development, behavior management, or rehabilitative services; or

(3) seven years of experience in management and administration of a government agency, institution of higher education, or business enterprise of a size comparable to the department.

(c) The department shall track the frequency with which the executive director takes the following actions as defined by department rule:

(1) selects a child for a conditional placement;

(2) selects a child for a home placement;

(3) waives the requirement for a child with a determinate sentence to spend the child's entire minimum period of confinement in a high-restriction facility;

(4) waives the requirement for a child to be on

intensive supervision when initially released on parole;

(5) authorizes early discharges for a child on parole;  
or

(6) finalizes an appeal brought by an advocacy group or social service provider who was denied certain access to department facilities.

(d) The executive director shall provide the board and the Sunset Advisory Commission at the beginning of each calendar quarter aggregated data on the number of times each action described by Subsection (c) was taken during the previous calendar quarter.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 19, eff. September 1, 2023.

#### Sec. 203.003. ACCESSIBILITY TO PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES.

(a) The department shall comply with federal and state laws related to program and facility accessibility.

(b) The board shall prepare and maintain a written plan that describes how a person who does not speak English can be provided reasonable access to the department's programs and services.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.004. NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING; ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION. (a) The board shall develop and implement a policy to encourage the use of:

(1) negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008, Government Code, for the adoption of department rules; and

(2) appropriate alternative dispute resolution procedures under Chapter 2009, Government Code, to assist in the resolution of internal and external disputes under the department's jurisdiction.

(b) The department's procedures relating to alternative dispute resolution must conform, to the extent possible, to any

model guidelines issued by the State Office of Administrative Hearings for the use of alternative dispute resolution by state agencies.

(c) The department shall:

(1) coordinate the implementation of the policy adopted under Subsection (a);

(2) provide training as needed to implement the procedures for negotiated rulemaking or alternative dispute resolution; and

(3) collect data concerning the effectiveness of those procedures.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.005. GIFTS AND GRANTS. (a) The department may apply for and accept gifts and grants from any public or private source.

(b) The department shall deposit money received under this section in the state treasury. The department may use the money for the purpose of funding any activity under this title.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.006. MEDICAID BENEFITS. The department shall:

(1) identify areas in which federal Medicaid program benefits could be used in a manner that is cost-effective for juveniles in the juvenile justice system;

(2) develop a program to encourage application for and receipt of Medicaid benefits;

(3) provide technical assistance to counties relating to eligibility for Medicaid benefits; and

(4) monitor the extent to which counties make use of Medicaid benefits.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.0065. PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SERVICES.

(a) In this section, "prevention and intervention services" means programs and services intended to prevent or intervene in at-risk behaviors that lead to delinquency, truancy, dropping out of school, or referral to the juvenile justice system.

(b) The department shall provide prevention and intervention services for:

(1) at-risk youth who are six years of age or older and younger than 18 years of age and who are:

(A) subject to compulsory school attendance under the Education Code; or

(B) under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court; and

(2) the family of an at-risk youth described by Subdivision (1).

(c) The prevention and intervention services provided under Subsection (b) must:

(1) consolidate prevention and intervention services within the department to avoid fragmentation and duplication of programs and services; and

(2) increase accountability for the delivery and administration of the programs and services.

(d) The department shall, to the extent funds are available:

(1) plan, develop, and administer a comprehensive and unified statewide delivery system of the prevention and intervention services to at-risk youth and their families;

(2) improve the efficiency and responsiveness of prevention and intervention services by facilitating greater coordination and flexibility in the use of funds by state and local service providers;

(3) ensure program effectiveness by funding evidence-based or research-based programs;

(4) provide accountability for the provision of services in order to demonstrate the impact or public benefit of a program by adopting outcomes measures;

(5) assist local communities in the coordination and development of prevention and intervention services in order to maximize access to federal, state, and local resources; and

(6) provide funding for prevention and intervention services through a competitive process to entities, including private service providers, local juvenile boards, municipal and justice courts, schools, and non-profit organizations.

(e) The department may seek, through a competitive process, an independent services provider with demonstrated experience in administration of similar statewide projects in Texas to effectively and efficiently provide prevention and intervention services and implement the duties under Subsection (d).

(f) The department shall periodically evaluate the continued effectiveness of prevention and intervention services provided under this section.

(g) The records related to a youth who was provided prevention and intervention services under this section are confidential and may only be inspected or copied by an individual or entity to whom the youth is referred for treatment or services.

(h) An individual or entity that receives information under this section may not disclose the information unless otherwise authorized by law.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. [653](#)), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 131 (H.B. [1760](#)), Sec. 11, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 203.007. STUDIES; STATISTICAL RECORDS. (a) The department may conduct or participate in studies relating to corrections methods and systems and to treatment and therapy programs at the governor's request or on the department's own initiative.

(b) The department shall continuously study the problem of juvenile delinquency in this state and the effectiveness of services provided or regulated by the department under Subtitle B or C and shall report the department's findings to the governor and the legislature before each regular legislative session.

(c) The department shall keep records relating to juveniles within the juvenile justice system that participate in research

programs or studies.

(d) The records must show, for each calendar quarter and for each calendar year:

(1) the number of juveniles participating in research programs or studies for the appropriate reporting period;

(2) the type of research program or study in which each juvenile is participating;

(3) the name of the principal investigator conducting the research program or study; and

(4) the entity sponsoring the research program or study.

(e) The department shall submit a report that contains the information in the records kept under Subsection (d) on or before the 15th day after the last day of the appropriate reporting period to the:

(1) governor;

(2) lieutenant governor;

(3) speaker of the house of representatives; and

(4) members of the senate and house of representatives.

(f) A report submitted under this section is public information under Chapter 552, Government Code.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.008. AUTHORITY TO ISSUE SUBPOENA, ADMINISTER OATH, RECEIVE EVIDENCE, AND GATHER INFORMATION. (a) In this section, "evidence" means any record, book, paper, document, data, or other evidence maintained by electronic or other means.

(b) The department may issue a subpoena requiring the attendance of a witness or the production of evidence that the department considers necessary for the investigation of:

(1) abuse, neglect, or exploitation allegations;

(2) complaints;

(3) financial and programmatic audits of juvenile probation programs, services, and facilities, including juvenile justice alternative education programs; or

(4) any other matter under the authority of the department, including a determination of treatment under Section [244.005](#).

(c) The department may issue a subpoena under Subsection (b) only if the subpoena is signed by:

(1) the presiding officer of the board or, if the presiding officer is unavailable, the presiding officer's designee; and

(2) at least two other members of the board, including a board member who is a judge.

(d) A hearings examiner appointed by the department may issue a subpoena requiring the attendance of a witness or the production of any record, book, paper, or document the hearings examiner considers necessary for a determination of treatment under Section [244.005](#). The hearings examiner may sign a subpoena.

(e) Any peace officer, department investigator, other department official, or person authorized under Article [24.01](#), Code of Criminal Procedure, may serve the subpoena in the same manner that similar process in a court of record having original jurisdiction of criminal actions is served.

(f) A subpoena under this section shall be served and witness fees and mileage paid as in civil cases in the district court in the county to which the witness is called, unless the proceeding for which the service or payment is made is under Chapter [2001](#), Government Code, in which case the service or payment shall be made as provided in that chapter. Witnesses subpoenaed at the instance of the department shall be paid their fees and mileage by the department out of funds appropriated for that purpose.

(g) On application of the department, a court of record having original jurisdiction of criminal actions may compel the attendance of a witness, the production of material, or the giving of testimony before the department, by an attachment for contempt or in the same manner as the court may otherwise compel the production of evidence.

(h) The presiding officer or a member of the board may administer an oath to a witness in attendance before the department or before an authorized representative of the department.



(i) If a witness in attendance before the department or before an authorized representative refuses without reasonable cause to be examined or answer a legal or pertinent question, or to produce evidence when ordered by the department, the department may apply to the district court for a rule or order returnable in not less than two or in more than five days, directing the witness to show cause before the judge why the witness should not be punished for contempt. The department may apply to the district court of any county where the witness is in attendance, on proof by affidavit of the fact, unless the order of contempt is sought under Chapter 2001, Government Code, in which case the department shall apply to a district court of Travis County, as provided by that chapter. On return of the order, the judge hearing the matter shall examine the witness under oath and the witness shall be given an opportunity to be heard. If the judge determines that the witness has refused, without reasonable cause or legal excuse, to be examined or answer a legal or pertinent question, or to produce evidence that the witness was ordered to bring or produce, the judge may immediately find the witness in contempt of court.

(j) The department shall be granted access at any reasonable time to any evidence that is related to any matter the department or executive director considers necessary to administer the department's functions, powers, and duties.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.0081. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON JUVENILE SERVICES.

(a) The advisory council on juvenile services consists of:

(1) the executive director of the department or the executive director's designee;

(2) the director of probation services of the department or the director's designee;

(3) the director of state programs and facilities of the department or the director's designee;

(4) the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission or the commissioner's designee;

(5) one representative of the county commissioners

courts appointed by the board;

(6) two juvenile court judges appointed by the board;

(7) seven chief juvenile probation officers appointed by the board as provided by Subsection (b); and

(8) the commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services or the commissioner's designee.

(b) The board shall appoint to the advisory council one chief juvenile probation officer from each regional chiefs association in this state from a list of nominees submitted to the board by each regional chiefs association. To the greatest extent practicable, a regional chiefs association shall include in its list of nominees:

(1) one chief juvenile probation officer of a juvenile probation department serving a county with a population that includes fewer than 7,500 persons younger than 18 years of age;

(2) one chief juvenile probation officer of a juvenile probation department serving a county with a population that includes at least 7,500 but fewer than 80,000 persons younger than 18 years of age; and

(3) one chief juvenile probation officer of a juvenile probation department serving a county with a population that includes 80,000 or more persons younger than 18 years of age.

(c) Advisory council members, other than ex officio members, serve staggered two-year terms, with the terms of one-half of the members, as nearly as practicable, expiring on February 1 of each year.

(c-1) The board shall adopt rules regarding:

(1) the purpose, role, responsibility, goals, and duration of the advisory council;

(2) the quorum requirement for the advisory council;

(3) training requirements for advisory council members;

(4) policies to avoid conflicts of interest by advisory council members;

(5) a periodic review process to evaluate the continuing need for the advisory council;

(6) policies to ensure the advisory council does not

violate any provision of Chapter 551, Government Code, applicable to the board or the advisory council;

(7) the appropriate level of participation from ex officio advisory council members designated under Subsections (a)(1)-(4) and (8); and

(8) reporting requirements and other communication procedures between the board and the advisory council.

(d) The advisory council shall report to the board any determinations made under Subsection (e).

(e) The advisory council shall assist the department in:

(1) determining the needs and problems of county juvenile boards and probation departments;

(2) conducting long-range strategic planning;

(3) reviewing and proposing revisions to existing or newly proposed standards affecting juvenile probation programs, services, or facilities;

(4) analyzing the potential cost impact on juvenile probation departments of new standards proposed by the board;

(5) assessing and developing recommendations to improve the sharing of information between agencies that serve children, including agencies serving children in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems; and

(6) advising the board on any other matter on the request of the board.

(f) The advisory council is not subject to Chapter 2110, Government Code.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1033 (H.B. 2733), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 20, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.0082. FEES. If the General Appropriations Act does not specify the amount of the fee, the board by rule may establish fees that:

- (1) are reasonable and necessary;
- (2) produce revenue sufficient for the administration of this chapter; and
- (3) do not produce unnecessary revenue.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.0083. AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

(a) The board by rule may establish advisory committees to make recommendations to the board on programs, rules, and policies administered by the board.

(b) In establishing an advisory committee under this section, the board shall adopt rules, including rules regarding:

- (1) the purpose, role, responsibility, goals, and duration of the committee;
- (2) the size of and quorum requirement for the committee;
- (3) qualifications for committee membership;
- (4) appointment procedures for members;
- (5) terms of service for members;
- (6) training requirements for members;
- (7) policies to avoid conflicts of interest by members;
- (8) a periodic review process to evaluate the continuing need for the committee; and
- (9) policies to ensure the committee does not violate any provision of Chapter 551, Government Code, applicable to the board or the committee.

(c) The board shall establish a youth career and technical education advisory committee and adopt rules required by Subsection (b) for the committee. The advisory committee shall assist the department with overseeing and coordinating vocational training for youth in the custody of the department, including training provided by community colleges and other local entities with which the department may partner.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 21, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.0084. RISK FACTORS AND RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS.

(a) The department shall develop a comprehensive set of risk factors to use in assessing the overall risk level of the facilities and entities inspected by the department under:

- (1) Chapter [51](#), Family Code;
- (2) Section [221.008](#) of this code; and
- (3) Subtitle C, Title 12, of this code.

(b) The risk factors described by Subsection (a) may include:

- (1) the entity type;
- (2) available programming;
- (3) past and repeat standards violations;
- (4) the volume and types of complaints received by the department;
- (5) recent leadership changes;
- (6) high staff turnover;
- (7) relevant findings from the office of independent ombudsman and the office of inspector general;
- (8) negative media attention; and
- (9) the number of months since the date of the department's last inspection of the entity.

(c) The department shall use the risk factors developed under this section to guide the inspections process for facilities and entities described by Subsection (a) by developing risk assessment tools with clear, objective standards to use in assessing the overall risk level of each entity.

(d) The department may develop distinct assessment tools under Subsection (c) for different entity types, as appropriate.

(e) The department shall periodically review the assessment tools developed under this section to ensure that the tools remain up to date and meaningful, as determined by the department.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. [1727](#)), Sec. 21, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.0085. RISK-BASED INSPECTIONS. (a) The department shall adopt a policy prioritizing inspections conducted by the

department under:

- (1) Chapter 51, Family Code;
- (2) Section 221.008 of this code; and
- (3) Subtitle C, Title 12, of this code.

(b) The policy under Subsection (a) must require the department to:

(1) prioritize the inspection of entities based on the relative risk level of each entity; and

(2) use the risk assessment tools established under Section 203.0084 to determine how frequently and intensively the department conducts risk-based inspections.

(c) The policy under Subsection (a) may provide for the department to use alternative inspection methods for entities determined to be low risk, including the following methods:

- (1) desk audits of key documentation;
- (2) abbreviated inspection procedures;
- (3) videoconference technology; and
- (4) other methods that are an alternative to conducting an in-person inspection.

(d) On request by the department, a juvenile probation department or a private facility under the department's jurisdiction shall provide information on a routine basis, as determined by the department, to assist the department in implementing a risk-based inspection schedule.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 21, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.009. PUBLIC INTEREST INFORMATION. The department shall prepare information of public interest describing the functions of the department and describing the procedures by which complaints are filed with and resolved by the department. The department shall make the information available to the public and appropriate state agencies.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.010. COMPLAINTS. (a) The department shall

maintain a system to promptly and efficiently act on complaints received by the department by or on behalf of a juvenile relating to the programs, services, or facilities of the department or a local juvenile probation department.

(b) The department shall make information available describing its procedures for complaint investigation and resolution.

(c) Criminal complaints initially referred to the office of inspector general relating to juvenile probation programs, services, or facilities shall be sent to the appropriate local law enforcement agency. The office of inspector general has concurrent jurisdiction on agreement with the local law enforcement agency to conduct a criminal investigation under [Section 242.102](#). Any other complaint shall be referred to the appropriate division of the department. The board by rule shall establish policies for the referral of noncriminal complaints.

(d) The department shall provide immediate notice to a local juvenile probation department of a complaint received by the department relating to the programs, services, or facilities of the local juvenile probation department.

(e) The department shall periodically notify the complaint parties of the status of the complaint until final disposition, unless the notice would jeopardize an undercover investigation. If the complaint relates to a claim of abuse, neglect, or exploitation involving a local juvenile probation department, the department shall provide monthly updates on the status of the complaint and immediate updates regarding department decisions to the local juvenile probation department.

(f) The department shall keep information about each written complaint filed with the department. The information must include:

- (1) the subject matter of the complaint;
- (2) the parties to the complaint;
- (3) a summary of the results of the review or investigation of the complaint;
- (4) the period of time between the date the complaint is received and the date the complaint is closed; and

(5) the disposition of the complaint.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 22, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.0101. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS.

(a) The department shall make available on the department's Internet website a statistical analysis of the complaints received against certified officers by the department.

(b) The complaint analysis under this section must include aggregate information on the number, source, type, and disposition of complaints received against certified officers during the preceding fiscal year and include the following information:

(1) the number of certified officers by certification type;

(2) the number of complaints against certified officers by certification type;

(3) the number of complaints resolved and the manner of resolution, including:

(A) the total number of agreed, default, and board orders entered;

(B) the total number of cases referred for contested case hearings by the State Office of Administrative Hearings;

(C) the total number of contested cases heard by the State Office of Administrative Hearings; and

(D) the total number of contested cases that were appealed to a district court;

(4) the average number of days required to resolve a complaint;

(5) a detailed analysis of the resolution for each closed complaint, by the nature of the alleged violation; and

(6) a detailed analysis of each closed complaint, by source.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 23,



eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.0105. DATA. Any data compiled by a local juvenile probation department related to abuse, neglect, or exploitation of youth, or to complaints regarding juvenile probation programs, that is required by this chapter or by any rule to be reported to the department or local juvenile probation board shall be provided to the office of the independent ombudsman.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.011. APPEALS FROM DECISION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. A juvenile probation department that is aggrieved by a decision of the executive director, including a decision relating to standards affecting juvenile probation programs, services, or facilities, may appeal the executive director's decision to the board. The decision of the board is final and cannot be appealed.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.012. ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT. The department shall prepare annually a complete and detailed written report accounting for all funds received and disbursed by the department during the preceding fiscal year. The annual report must meet the reporting requirements applicable to financial reporting provided in the General Appropriations Act.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Sec. 203.013. INTERNAL AUDIT; REPORT. (a) The department shall regularly conduct internal audits of the department, including audits of:

(1) facilities operated by and under contract with the department; and

(2) medical services provided to children in the custody of the department.

(b) The department shall on a quarterly basis report the

results of the audits to:

(1) the committees of the senate and house of representatives with primary jurisdiction over matters concerning correctional facilities; and

(2) the state auditor.

(c) The executive director shall acknowledge receipt of and discuss the results of internal audits with the board.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 24, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.014. TOLL-FREE NUMBER. (a) The department shall establish a permanent, toll-free number for the purpose of receiving any information concerning the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children in the custody of the department or housed in a local probation facility.

(b) The department shall ensure that:

(1) the toll-free number is prominently displayed in each department facility and each local probation facility;

(2) children in the custody of the department or housed in a local probation facility and employees of the department and the facility have confidential access to telephones for the purpose of calling the toll-free number; and

(3) the toll-free number is in operation and answered by staff 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

(c) The office of inspector general shall operate the toll-free number required by Subsection (a) and the 24-hour incident reporting center and shall share the complaints received with the appropriate department entity.

Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 25, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.015. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES EVALUATION SYSTEM. The department shall establish and implement a system to evaluate the effectiveness of county and state programs and services for youth. Added by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 85 (S.B. 653), Sec. 1.002, eff. September 1, 2011.

Text of section as added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1299 (H.B. 2862), and Ch. 1184 (S.B. 1003). Under Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1184 (S.B. 1003), Sec. 7, this section expires February 1, 2015; Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1299 (H.B. 2862), does not provide for expiration of this section.

Sec. 203.016. DATA REGARDING PLACEMENT IN DISCIPLINARY SECLUSION. (a) In this section:

(1) "Disciplinary seclusion" means the separation of a resident from other residents for disciplinary reasons and the placement of the resident alone in an area from which egress is prevented for more than 90 minutes.

(2) "Juvenile facility" means a facility that serves juveniles under juvenile court jurisdiction and that is operated as a pre-adjudication secure detention facility, a short-term detention facility, or a post-adjudication secure correctional facility.

(b) The department shall collect the following data during the annual registration of juvenile facilities and make the data publicly available:

(1) the number of placements in disciplinary seclusion lasting at least 90 minutes but less than 24 hours;

(2) the number of placements in disciplinary seclusion lasting 24 hours or more but less than 48 hours; and

(3) the number of placements in disciplinary seclusion lasting 48 hours or more.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1184 (S.B. 1003), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1299 (H.B. 2862), Sec. 35, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 203.017. REGIONALIZATION PLAN. (a) The department

shall develop and the board shall adopt a regionalization plan for keeping children closer to home in lieu of commitment to the secure facilities operated by the department under Subtitle C.

(a-1) The department shall update and submit the regionalization plan developed under Subsection (a) to the Sunset Advisory Commission and standing legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over juvenile justice matters by December 1 of each even-numbered year. Before submitting the plan, the department must present an updated draft of the regionalization plan to the board for public comment and board approval.

(a-2) The department may incorporate relevant suggestions, needs, or recommendations from the regionalization plan into subsequent strategic plans, legislative appropriation requests, and any other necessary document to support the plan's implementation.

(b) The department shall consult with juvenile probation departments in developing a regionalization plan, including the identification of:

(1) post-adjudication facility capacity that may be dedicated to support the plan; and

(2) resources needed to implement the plan.

(b-1) In addition to the requirements of Subsection (b), in developing the regionalization plan, the department shall consult with:

(1) the advisory council on juvenile services;

(2) juvenile probation departments;

(3) regional juvenile probation associations;

(4) advocacy groups;

(5) parents and guardians of children under the jurisdiction of the department;

(6) individuals formerly involved in the juvenile justice system; and

(7) any other stakeholder the department determines may be helpful.

(c) The regionalization plan must define regions of the state to be served by facilities operated by juvenile probation departments, counties, halfway houses, or private operators, based

on the post-adjudication facilities identified as being available for the purpose of the plan.

(d) The department shall ensure that each region has defined, appropriate, research-based programs for the target populations under the regionalization plan.

(e) The regionalization plan must, as applicable:

(1) include a budget review, redirection of staff, and funding mechanisms necessary to support the plan;

(2) create a new division of the department responsible for administering the regionalization plan and monitoring program quality and accountability;

(3) for the state fiscal year beginning September 1, 2017, and each subsequent state fiscal year, include any savings that are generated by the decreases in the population of the secure facilities operated by the department under Subtitle C that exceed the cost of implementing the plan;

(4) include:

(A) information on the department's compliance with statutory regionalization requirements;

(B) information on internal goals for diverting children from commitment to the department; and

(C) an analysis of rates of commitment to the custody of the department, broken down by region and county, and any relevant recommendations regarding trends in these rates; and

(5) include specific, actionable steps regarding how the department will enhance regional capacity, coordination, and collaboration among juvenile probation departments to keep children closer to home as an alternative to commitment to the department's facilities while ensuring access to programs and the supervision necessary to maintain public safety.

(e-1) In developing the steps under Subsection (e)(5), the department shall consider:

(1) options to target or expand funding for juvenile probation departments to enhance community-based programs and maximize the use of existing juvenile justice beds;

(2) opportunities to use financial and other incentives to encourage diversion, facilitate cooperation within

and across the regions established under Subsection (c), and emphasize the benefits of sharing available resources among counties;

(3) plans for creating additional capacity to minimize gaps in juvenile justice beds and services at the local level, including the expansion or development of beds and facilities designated specifically for regional use; and

(4) processes for downsizing, closing, or repurposing large state secure facilities to shift toward a more regionally based juvenile justice system.

(f) The division created under Subsection (e)(2) shall:

(1) approve plans and related protocols to administer the developed regional model;

(2) provide training on best practices for all local probation departments affected by the regionalization plan;

(3) assist in research-based program development;

(4) monitor contract and program measures for the regionalization plan;

(5) analyze department data to provide clear guidance to local probation departments on outcome measures; and

(6) report on performance of specific programs and placements to assist in implementing best practices and maximize the impact of state funds.

(g) A region is eligible for funding to support evidence-based, intensive in-home services only if the region meets the performance standards established by the department and adopted in contracts for placement and services.

(h) The department shall adopt rules to allow the local probation departments implementing the regionalization plan to access the data submitted by those departments in the state juvenile case management system for planning and research purposes. Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 962 (S.B. [1630](#)), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2015.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. [1727](#)), Sec. 26, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.018. SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS.

(a) The department shall develop specialized programs for children with a determinate sentence and children committed under Section 54.04013, Family Code. The programs must ensure safety and security for committed children and provide developmentally appropriate program strategies.

(b) The department shall establish performance-based goals related to improved outcomes that:

(1) must include measures to reduce recidivism; and

(2) shall include other well-being outcome measures.

(c) The department shall use case review strategies to identify children in department facilities who can safely and appropriately be transferred to alternative local placements or halfway houses, placed on parole, or discharged from the department.

(d) The department shall study and report to the board on the potential for repurposing existing secure facilities for the confinement of children with a determinate sentence or children committed under Section 54.04013, Family Code, or for other purposes.

(e) The department or any local probation department may use or contract with a facility that was constructed or previously used for the confinement of adult offenders if the department determines that the facility is appropriately retrofitted to accommodate youth-specific requirements and needs.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 962 (S.B. 1630), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2015.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. 1727), Sec. 27, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.0185. RESOURCE MAPPING. (a) The department shall partner with one or more public or private institutions of higher education to inventory and map resources available for children in the juvenile justice system. To determine the types of information the department requires to timely identify and address resource, program, and service gaps in probation regions that result in

commitments to department secure facilities, the department shall consult with:

- (1) institutions of higher education;
- (2) the advisory council on juvenile services; and
- (3) other relevant stakeholders.

(b) The board shall adopt rules requiring juvenile probation departments, at useful and reasonable intervals, to report to the department relevant information on resource, program, and service gaps identified under Subsection (a), including information on:

(1) the needs of children committed to the department that are not being met with community resources; and

(2) the types of resources, programs, and services that, if available in the community, may allow juvenile probation departments to keep children closer to home as an alternative to commitment to the department.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 950 (S.B. [1727](#)), Sec. 28, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.019. REPORT TO LEGISLATURE. Not later than August 15 of each year, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department shall submit to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the governor a report that contains the following statistical information relating to children referred to a juvenile court during the preceding year:

(1) the ages, races, and counties of residence of the children transferred to a district court or criminal district court for criminal proceedings; and

(2) the ages, races, and counties of residence of the children committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, placed on probation, or discharged without any disposition.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 262, Sec. 53, eff. Jan. 1, 1996.  
Amended by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1297, Sec. 40, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 734 (H.B. [1549](#)), Sec. 66, eff. September 1, 2015.



Transferred and redesignated from Family Code, Section 58.112 by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 746 (S.B. [1304](#)), Sec. 19, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 203.020. REPORT OF CRIMINAL CONDUCT; PENALTY.

(a) Each employee of the department or of a department contractor who becomes aware of conduct constituting a criminal offense engaged in by another employee of the department or by a department contractor against a person receiving services from the department or a department contractor shall report the conduct to a local law enforcement agency not later than the 48th hour after the hour the employee becomes aware of the conduct.

(b) A person commits an offense if the person is required to make a report under Subsection (a) and knowingly fails to make the report.

(c) An offense under Subsection (b) is a Class A misdemeanor, except that the offense is a state jail felony if it is shown on the trial of the offense that the actor intended to hinder an investigation of or conceal the criminal conduct described by Subsection (a).

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1044 (S.B. [182](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 203.021. EMPLOYER RETALIATION PROHIBITED. (a) In this section, "adverse employment action" means an action that affects an employee's compensation, promotion, transfer, work assignment, or performance evaluation, or any other employment action that would dissuade a reasonable employee from submitting or supporting a report under Section [203.020](#).

(b) An employer may not suspend or terminate the employment of, discriminate against, or take any other adverse employment action against a person who in good faith:

(1) reports conduct constituting a criminal offense as required by Section [203.020](#); or

(2) initiates or cooperates with an investigation or proceeding relating to the conduct constituting a criminal offense reported under Section [203.020](#).

(c) An employee may sue for injunctive relief, damages, or both if, in violation of this section, the employee:

(1) is suspended or terminated from the person's employment;

(2) is discriminated against; or

(3) suffers any other adverse employment action.

(d) A plaintiff who prevails in a suit under this section may recover:

(1) actual damages, including damages for mental anguish even if an injury other than mental anguish is not shown;

(2) exemplary damages under Chapter 41, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, if the employer is a private employer;

(3) court costs; and

(4) reasonable attorney's fees.

(e) In addition to amounts recovered under Subsection (d), a plaintiff who prevails in a suit under this section is entitled to:

(1) reinstatement to the person's former position or a comparable position in terms of compensation, benefits, and other conditions of employment;

(2) reinstatement of any fringe benefits and seniority rights lost because of the suspension, termination, or discrimination; and

(3) compensation for wages lost during the period of suspension or termination.

(f) A department employee who alleges a violation of this section may sue the department for the relief provided for by this section. Sovereign immunity is waived and abolished to the extent of liability created by this section.

(g) A plaintiff suing under this section has the burden of proof, except there is a rebuttable presumption that the plaintiff's employment was suspended or terminated or that the plaintiff was otherwise discriminated against for reporting abuse or neglect if the suspension, termination, or discrimination occurs before the 61st day after the date on which the person submitted a report in good faith.

(h) A suit under this section may be brought in a district or statutory county court of the county in which:

(1) the plaintiff was employed by the defendant; or

(2) the defendant conducts business.

(i) It is an affirmative defense to a suit under Subsection (c) that an employer would have taken against the employee the action that forms the basis of the suit based solely on information, observation, or evidence unrelated to the fact that the employee made a report under Section 203.020 or initiated or cooperated with an investigation or proceeding relating to the conduct constituting a criminal offense reported under Section 203.020.

(j) A public employee who has a cause of action under Chapter 554, Government Code, based on conduct described by Subsection (b) may not bring an action based on that conduct under this section.

(k) This section does not apply to a person who reports the person's own criminal conduct or who initiates or cooperates with an investigation or proceeding by a governmental entity relating to an allegation of the person's own criminal conduct.

Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1044 (S.B. 182), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2023.