

# **OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION FY 2006 REPORT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE**

## **Overview of Agency Divisions and Programs**

The Office of Court Administration (OCA) provides a variety of services to the judges, court clerks and other officials of the Texas judicial system. OCA also provides services to the presiding judges of the nine Administrative Judicial Regions, as well as policy and funding assistance to counties for indigent defense. The duties and activities of OCA include the following:

### **Research and Court Services**

The Research and Court Services Division serves as a resource for the courts in key areas of judicial administration. The division provides consultation on recommended best practices in administrative operations, works to establish innovative court programs, serves to increase public accessibility to the courts and helps develop and implement programs designed to increase the collection of court costs, fees, and fines. This division also collects, analyzes, and publishes information related to court activities throughout the state. Statistics collected focus on significant issues and accomplishments in the judicial arena and are used for identifying opportunities for improvement in the judicial system.

### **Information Services**

The Information Services Division provides information technology services to support the infrastructure for the Office of Court Administration, Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals, Courts of Appeals, State Prosecuting Attorney, State Law Library, and Child Protection courts. It also assists trial courts through the establishment of technology standards and by providing funding assistance for internet connectivity, collection software, and case management software. The division provides case management systems for the appellate, child protection, and child support courts, and a data management system to maintain court statistics reported by the Texas courts. The division's Help Desk provides information and technical assistance to the appellate and trial courts, including training assistance to customers of state judicial systems. The Information Services Division also provides technical staff support to the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (J.C.I.T.), the Council of Chief Justices, the Texas Judicial Council, the Task Force on Indigent Defense, and the Administrative Presiding Judges .

### **Docket Equalization**

OCA provides administrative support to the Supreme Court in the transfer of cases from one court of appeals to another.

### **Assistance to Administrative Regions**

OCA employs or contracts with counties to provide administrative assistants for the presiding judges of the nine administrative judicial regions.

### **Indigent Defense**

The Indigent Defense Division serves as staff to the Task Force on Indigent Defense in developing policies and standards for providing legal representation and other defense services to indigent defendants, establishing a statewide county reporting plan for indigent defense

information, providing technical support to counties relating to indigent defense, and directing and monitoring the distribution of funds to counties to provide indigent defense services.

### **Specialty Courts Program**

OCA provides administrative support to the presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions for its child support courts and child protection courts programs in accordance with Chapter 201 of the Texas Family Code. OCA employs a specialty courts program director to manage the administrative functions and provide customer service to the specialty courts personnel, and provides extensive additional staff support and services for the programs.

#### Child Support Courts

The child support courts were created in response to the federal requirement that states create expedited administrative or judicial processes to resolve child support cases. OCA employs 43 associate judges and 41 administrative assistants to hear and dispose of Title IV-D child support establishment and enforcement cases and paternity cases within the expedited time frames established by Chapter 201.110 of the Texas Family Code. The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) provides purchasing and on-site technical (computer) support.

#### Child Protection Courts

The specialty child protection courts in Texas were created to assist trial courts in the rural areas in managing their child abuse and neglect dockets. The judges assigned to these dockets hear child abuse and neglect cases exclusively. Therefore, children can achieve permanency more quickly and the quality of placement decisions should be higher. The 15 child protection courts operate in 126 counties, with 12 associate judges, three assigned judges, nine court coordinators, five court reporters/coordinators, and one court reporter. In fiscal year 2005, these courts held 20,998 hearings and issued 6,744 final orders.

### **Court Reporters Certification**

The Court Reporters Certification division serves as staff to the Court Reporters Certification Board, a state Board charged with performing licensing and regulatory functions for the court reporting profession. The Board certifies to the Supreme Court individuals qualified to practice court reporting based on successful completion of the state exam and registers court reporting firms that provide court reporting services to the public. The court reporter's role is fundamental to the judicial process as an impartial party who prepares the records of legal proceedings.

### **Legal**

The Legal Division gives legal and policy advice to agency management and judicial officers, including support for the Texas Judicial Council's development of policy and legislation. It administers the child support courts and child protection courts programs by providing legal advice and administrative support to the presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions and to the associate judges and their staff. The Division researches, writes, and publishes procedure manuals for district and county clerks, promulgates model forms, and facilitates other legal assistance to the judiciary.

### **Finance & Operations**

The Finance and Operations division manages the fiscal (i.e., accounting, purchasing and budgeting), human resources, and operational support activities of the agency. The division also provides support to the clerks and chief justices of the appellate courts and the presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions regarding legislative and budgetary issues.

## Inventory of External Customers

OCA provides services to the courts and officials detailed in the table below:

<b>Customer Group</b>	<b>Number of Courts/ Regions/Counties</b> <i>As of 3/1/2006</i>	<b>Number of Judges/ Other Officials</b> <i>As of 3/1/2006</i>
State Highest Appellate Courts		
<i>Supreme Court</i>	1	9
<i>Court of Criminal Appeals</i>	1	9
State Intermediate Appellate Courts	14	94
State Trial Courts (District Courts)	432	432 <sup>a,b</sup>
Constitutional County Courts	254	254 <sup>b,c</sup>
Statutory County Courts	233	233 <sup>b,d</sup>
Justice of the Peace Courts	825	825
Municipal Courts	911	1,204 <sup>e</sup>
Administrative Judicial Regions	9	9
District Clerks and County Clerks	254	443 <sup>f</sup>
County Auditors and County Treasurers	254	254
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b>3,188</b>	<b>3,766<sup>g</sup></b>

In addition to the customers listed above, OCA serves the court reporting community, consisting of over 3,000 court reporters and court reporting firms, approximately 300 court reporting exam candidates and 13 court reporting schools. These individuals are surveyed using independent processes, the results of which are reported in a separate section of this report. In FY 2006, OCA began serving process servers and guardians. As these are new programs, these customers are not included in this survey.

<sup>a</sup> Many of these judges also serve as the local administrative judge for the district court(s) in the county. There are 129 local administrative district judges (60 district judges serve as local administrative judge in more than one county).

<sup>b</sup> Many of these judges also serve as the juvenile board chairman, as the chairman must be a district, statutory county court, or constitutional county court judge. There are 173 juvenile board chairmen (40 serve in multiple counties).

<sup>c</sup> Many county judges serve both as a trial court judge and as the administrative head of county government.

<sup>d</sup> Many of these judges also serve as the local administrative judge for the statutory county court(s) in the county. There are 82 local administrative statutory county court judges.

<sup>e</sup> Some municipal judges serve in one or more municipal courts. While 1,378 judge positions were reported in OCA in FY 2006, 1,204 individuals served in these positions.

<sup>f</sup> In 63 counties, one clerk serves as both district clerk and county clerk for the county.

<sup>g</sup> This figure does not take into account court clerks and other officials and staff of the Texas judicial system who may use OCA services.

## Survey Methodology

In FY 2002, a *customer satisfaction survey* instrument was developed by a team at OCA using guidelines set forth in the Legislative Budget Board’s *Agency Strategic Plan Instructions*. This instrument was reviewed and subsequently used again for the FY 2006 survey. The entire population of external customers—3,766 individuals identified above—was surveyed in 2006.

Customers were asked to respond to statements in the survey using a numerical scale, with “5” signifying “Strongly Agree” and “1” indicating “Strongly Disagree.” The survey instrument covered staff knowledge and courtesy, proper routing (communication) of the request or inquiry, timeliness of response, complaint handling, clarity and comprehensiveness of website and printed information, overall service quality, and suggestions for improvement of service delivery.<sup>h</sup> If customers had not received any services from OCA within the last 12 months, they were asked to indicate this on the survey.

A survey and an accompanying letter were sent to customers on March 6, 2006. To minimize survey costs, surveys were emailed or faxed to all customers for whom an email or fax number was available. A postage pre-paid survey was mailed to the remaining customers. All respondents were asked to complete the survey online or return a completed survey to OCA by March 25<sup>th</sup>. Responses were entered into the survey database until March 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Table 1: Survey Distribution by Customer Group**

	<b># in Population</b>	<b>Survey Emailed</b>	<b>Survey Faxed</b>	<b>Survey Mailed</b>
Highest Appellate Court Judges	18	18	0	0
Intermediate Appellate Court Judges and Clerks	94	94	0	0
Presiding Judges of Administrative Judicial Regions	9	9	0	0
District Judges	432	235	0	197
Constitutional County Court Judges	254	254	0	0
Statutory County Court Judges	233	91	0	142
Justices of the Peace	825	578	226	21
Municipal Judges	1,204	925	273	6
District Clerks and County Clerks	443	352	0	91
County Auditors and County Treasurers	254	254	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,766</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>457</b>

<sup>h</sup> The survey instrument did not include a statement about facilities, as most interactions between OCA and its customers occur by telephone, mail or email.

### ***Response Rates***

Approximately 16 percent of customers surveyed returned responses. More than 40 percent (262) of the 607 respondents indicated that they had not received any services from OCA within the last year and, therefore, did not answer any additional survey questions. Therefore, the resulting sample for data analysis totaled 345 responses.

Assuming the absence of 1) response bias due to under-representation of any one or more of the customer groups and 2) non-response bias in general, the results may be generalized to all customers with a margin of error of +/- 5.0 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.<sup>i</sup>

### **Customer Service Survey Results**

As shown in Table 2, respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with OCA services. Nearly 99 percent of respondents who received services from OCA within the last year rated their overall satisfaction between “3” and “5.”<sup>j</sup>

The average score for each customer service quality element was at least 4.15, indicating high levels of satisfaction. At least 82 percent of respondents gave a rating of “4” or “5” for each of the quality elements on the survey.

The agency’s strongest element was staff courtesy and willingness to assist customers.

Six respondents (1.0 percent of all respondents) offered suggestions or requests for improvement of service delivery. Suggestions included conducting information sessions at orientations for new judges, publishing a newsletter, and minimizing the use of Adobe (PDF) documents on the agency’s website.

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<sup>i</sup> In other words, if 60 percent of the respondents selected “Agree” for a question, we could be 95 percent confident that the actual proportion of all customers who would answer “Agree” to the same question is 5.1 percentage points higher or lower than 60 percent (ranging from 54.9 percent to 65.1 percent).

<sup>j</sup> A rating of “3” corresponded to “Neutral,” a “4” to “Agree,” and a “5” to “Strongly Agree.”

**Table 2:**  
**Customer Satisfaction Survey Results<sup>k</sup>**

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Minimum<sup>l</sup></i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Overall, I was satisfied with my experience. (n=344)	46.8 %	50.0 %	2.0 %	1.2 %	0.0 %	2	5	4.42
Staff members were knowledgeable. (n=332)	44.0 %	52.4 %	2.4 %	1.2 %	0.0 %	2	5	4.39
Staff members were courteous and demonstrated a willingness to assist. (n=330)	53.6 %	43.6 %	2.1 %	0.3 %	0.3 %	1	5	4.50
My inquiry/request was routed to the proper person. (n=313)	46.0 %	50.2 %	3.2 %	0.6 %	0.0 %	2	5	4.42
My inquiry/request was answered in a reasonable amount of time. (n=319)	47.6 %	47.6 %	3.8 %	0.9 %	0.0 %	2	5	4.42
If I made a complaint about services I received, it was addressed in a reasonable manner. (n=123)	37.4 %	44.7 %	15.4 %	0.8 %	1.6 %	1	5	4.15
The agency's website contained clear and accurate information on services and contact information. (n=289)	33.9 %	52.2 %	11.4 %	2.1 %	0.3 %	1	5	4.17
Printed material I received was thorough and accurate. (n=266)	38.7 %	54.5 %	6.0 %	0.8 %	0.0 %	2	5	4.31

<sup>k</sup> Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>l</sup> Customers were asked to respond to statements in the survey using a numerical scale, with "5" signifying "Strongly Agree" and "1" indicating "Strongly Disagree."

## Customer Service Performance Measures

Type of Measure	Description	Performance
Outcome	Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Services Received	98.8 %
Outcome	Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery	1.0 %
Output	Number of Customers Surveyed	3,766
Output	Number of Customers Served	3,766
Efficiency	Cost Per Customer Surveyed	\$0.10
Explanatory	Number of Customers Identified	3,766
Explanatory	Number of Customer Groups Inventoried	10

*Note: The Cost Per Customer Surveyed does not include staffing, information resources, or other “soft” costs. It includes only hard dollars spent to produce and mail postcard surveys. Of the 3,766 surveys distributed by OCA, only 457 were mailed. The others were distributed by email or fax. The cost per survey for only those surveys that were mailed is \$0.91.*

## Court Reporters Certification

### Inventory of External Customers

The Court Reporters Certification (CRC) division serves as staff to the Court Reporters Certification Board (the Board) and provides the following services:

- ❑ administers the court reporters examination required for certification;
- ❑ certifies individual court reporters;
- ❑ approves/audits continuing education for certified court reporters;
- ❑ registers court reporting firms;
- ❑ sanctions court reporters and court reporting firms via complaint process; and
- ❑ seeks injunctions against individuals practicing without certification.

The division's primary service populations are detailed in the table below:

	<b>FY 2006</b>
Active Court Reporters	2726
Court Reporting Firms	330
Court Reporting Schools	13
Examinees	288
Total	3,357

### Survey Methodology

The CRC division utilizes two types of customer service surveys to obtain feedback from its customers:

- 60 Second Survey
- Exam Elements Survey

The surveys ask customers to rate the CRC program and exam using a scale ranging from "Excellent" to "Poor".

The **60 Second Survey** is sent with renewal applications for individual certifications and firm registrations, as well as to court reporting schools. In addition, this survey is distributed at oral and written examinations. The survey instrument covers staff knowledge, professionalism, accessibility, and courtesy. The survey also asks about the quality of staff assistance, written materials, staff consistency in providing answers, timely communications, and the quality of communications conducted via email, the division's website, and voicemail.

In addition to the items covered in the 60 Second Survey, **the Exam Elements Survey** asks examinees to rate certain elements of the exam, administered in two (2) parts, oral and written. For the oral exam, respondents are asked to rate the Quality of Dictation, Speed and Consistency



of Dictation, and Accoustics. For both the oral and written exams, respondents are asked to rate the difficulty or density of the exam material.

### *Survey Distributions and Response Rates*

**60 Second Surveys** were **distributed with renewal applications** for individual certifications and firm registrations expiring December 31, 2004 and December 31, 2005. Of the 2,774 surveys sent, 492 were returned, for a response rate of 17.7 percent. The margin of error for the results of this survey was +/- 4.0 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

Due to poor response rates, results from the surveys of firms and court reporting schools were not included in this report. The CRC staff received only 27 responses from the 295 surveys sent out with firm renewals, resulting in a response rate of 9.2 percent with a margin of error for the results of +/- 18.0 percent. The division also received only 1 response out of the 78 surveys it sent to court reporting schools in FY 2005 and FY 2006, for a response rate of 1.3 percent and a margin of error of +/- 97.4 percent.

**60 Second Surveys** were **distributed at oral and written examinations** held October 1, 2004, January 14, 2005, May 13, 2005, September 16, 2005, January 27, 2006 and April 28, 2006. Of the 664 surveys distributed, 543 were returned, for a response rate of 81.8 percent and a margin of error of +/- 1.8 percent.

**Exam Element Surveys** were distributed at oral and written examinations held October 1, 2004, January 14, 2005, May 13, 2005, September 16, 2005, January 27, 2006 and April 28, 2006. Of the 426 surveys distributed during oral exams, 321 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 75.4 percent and a margin of error of +/- 2.7 percent.

Of the 238 surveys distributed during written exams, 222 were returned, for a response rate of 93.3 percent and a margin of error of +/- 1.7 percent.

## Customer Service Survey Results

*60 Second Surveys Distributed with Renewal Applications  
December 31, 2004 and December 31, 2005*

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Answer	Total Responses	Percent Satisfied <sup>1</sup>
<b>STAFF:</b>							
Knowledge	268	100	9	0	115	377	97.6%
Professional	278	85	7	2	120	372	97.6%
Accessible	238	109	22	9	114	378	91.8%
Courteous	276	86	5	5	120	372	97.3%
<b>COMMUNICATION:</b>							
Telephone Assistance	237	93	14	8	140	352	93.8%
Written Materials	257	108	13	13	101	391	93.4%
Consistent Answers	229	98	16	6	143	349	93.7%
Timely Communications	241	107	17	5	122	370	94.1%
E-mail	215	83	9	4	181	311	95.8%
Voicemail	176	76	17	7	216	276	91.3%
Web Site	257	96	19	9	111	381	92.7%

*60 Second Surveys Distributed at Oral Exams*

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Answer	Total Responses	Percent Satisfied <sup>m</sup>
<b>STAFF:</b>							
Knowledge	217	46	0	0	40	263	100%
Professional	224	38	1	1	39	264	99%
Accessible	224	39	0	0	40	263	100%
Courteous	209	32	1	1	60	243	99%
<b>COMMUNICATION:</b>							
Telephone Assistance	188	39	4	0	72	231	98.3%
Written Materials	175	40	6	4	78	225	95.6%
Consistent Answers	177	46	2	2	76	227	98.2%
Timely Communications	159	37	5	4	98	205	95.6%
E-mail	127	32	2	5	137	166	95.8%
Voice Mail	98	28	3	4	170	133	94.7%
Web Site	124	28	15	7	129	174	87.4%

<sup>m</sup> Percentage of customers selecting "Excellent" or "Good."

*60 Second Surveys Distributed at Written Exams*

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>No Answer</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>Percent Satisfied<sup>n</sup></b>
<b>STAFF:</b>							
Knowledge	170	11	0	0	41	181	100%
Professional	171	12	0	0	39	183	100%
Accessible	162	17	1	1	41	181	98.9%
Courteous	169	12	1	0	40	182	99.5%
<b>COMMUNICATION:</b>							
Telephone Assistance	147	15	1	0	59	163	99.4%
Written Materials	141	20	4	3	54	168	95.9%
Consistent Answers	134	23	1	0	64	158	99.4%
Timely Communications	139	15	6	0	62	160	96.3%
E-mail	87	15	3	1	116	106	96.2%
Voice Mail	77	13	2	0	130	92	97.8%
Web Site	86	21	7	6	102	120	89.2%

*Exam Element Surveys – Oral Exam*

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>No Answer</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>Percent Satisfied<sup>1</sup></b>
Dictation	172	41	14	2	74	229	99.1%
Speed/Accuracy	149	52	23	5	74	229	97.8%
Acoustics	155	51	16	0	81	222	100%
	<b>Difficult</b>	<b>Appropriate</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>No Answer</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>Percent Satisfied<sup>o</sup></b>
Difficulty	31	156	21	3	92	211	73.9%

*Exam Element Surveys – Written Exam*

	<b>Difficult</b>	<b>Appropriate</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>No Answer</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>Percent Satisfied<sup>p</sup></b>
Difficulty	3	41	2	0	176	46	89.1%

<sup>n</sup> Percentage of customers selecting “Excellent” or “Good.”

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of customers selecting “Excellent” or “Good.”

<sup>o</sup> Percentage of customers selecting “Appropriate.”

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of customers selecting “Excellent” or “Good.”

<sup>p</sup> Percentage of customers selecting “Appropriate.”

## Analysis of Findings from Customer Satisfaction Assessment

CRC staff considers all comments provided on the surveys and integrates changes in its operations if it is determined that such changes will enhance the quality of service provided. As a direct result of the most recent survey responses, the CRC division has:

- provided maps on CRC website of location of exam sites for exam registrants;
- provided checklist to examinees at oral exam for submission of exam documents.

## Customer Service Performance Measures

Type of Measure	Description	Performance
Outcome	Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Services Received	95.2%
Outcome	Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery	21.4%
Output	Number of Customers Surveyed	3,811
Output	Number of Customers Served	3,357
Efficiency	Cost Per Customer Surveyed	\$0.004
Explanatory	Number of Customers Identified	3,357
Explanatory	Number of Customer Groups Inventoried	4