

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION FY 2008 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, Judicial Conduct Commission, and Child Protection courts. It also assists trial courts through the establishment of technology standards. 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 Service 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 funding for 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 court coordinators 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 computer equipment and on-site technical support for this program.

Child Protection Courts

The specialty child protection courts in Texas were created to assist trial courts in primarily 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. In FY 2008, OCA operates 15 child protection courts in 126 counties, with ten full-time associate judges, six assigned judges, and fifteen court coordinators, with some providing court reporting services. In fiscal year 2007, these courts held 25,124 hearings and issued 5,601 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.

Guardianship Certification Board

OCA employs a director to assist the Guardianship Certification Board (GCB). The GCB certifies certain individuals who provide guardianship services in the State of Texas. Certified guardians are governed by rules adopted by the Supreme Court of Texas and minimum standards adopted by the GCB. The director implements the policies set by the GCB, and performs all administrative and staff functions for the GCB.

Process Server Review Board

OCA provides administrative support to the Process Server Review Board (PSRB). The mission of the PSRB is to improve the standards for persons authorized to serve process and to reduce the

disparity among Texas civil courts for approving persons to serve process, by making recommendations to the Supreme Court of Texas on the certification of individuals and the approval of courses.

Legal

The Legal Division gives legal advice to agency management and certification boards and to judicial officers. 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 and 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:

Table 1

Customer Group	Number of Courts/ Regions/Counties <i>As of 3/1/2008</i>	Number of Judges/ Other Officials <i>As of 3/1/2008</i>
State Highest Appellate Courts <i>Supreme Court</i> <i>Court of Criminal Appeals</i>	1 1	9 9
State Intermediate Appellate Courts	14	94
Administrative Judicial Regions	9	9
State Trial Courts (District Courts)	443	443 ^{a,b}
Constitutional County Courts	254	254 ^{b,c}
Statutory County Courts	240	240 ^{b,d}
Justice of the Peace Courts	821	821
Municipal Courts	916	1,199 ^e
District Clerks and County Clerks	254	443 ^f
Court Coordinators / Administrators	254	915
Indigent Defense Coordinators	69	69
Court Collections Staff	84	361
County Auditors and County Treasurers	254	254
Court Reporting Firms / Court Reporters	321	2,600
Court Reporting Schools / Court Reporting Examinees	13	288
Process Servers	N/A	3,324
Guardians	N/A	222
State Bar Court Administration Task Force	1	50
TOTAL	3,949	11,604^g

^a 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).

^b 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).

^c Many county judges serve both as a trial court judge and as the administrative head of county government.

^d 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.

^e Some municipal judges serve in one or more municipal courts. While 1,412 judge positions were reported in OCA in FY 2008, 1,199 individuals served in these positions.

^f In 63 counties, one clerk serves as both district clerk and county clerk for the county.

^g This figure does not take into account justice and municipal court clerks and other officials and staff of the Texas judicial system who may use OCA services.

Survey Methodology

Since FY 2002, OCA has periodically distributed a *customer satisfaction survey* instrument developed by a team at OCA using guidelines set forth in the Legislative Budget Board's *Agency Strategic Plan Instructions*. In FY 2008, OCA surveyed a majority (76 percent) of the 11,604 individuals identified above. This is an increase of 68 percent over the number of individuals surveyed in FY 2006.

Customers were asked to respond to statements in the survey using a Likert scale with responses ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "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.^h If customers had not received any services from OCA within the last 12 months, they were asked to indicate this on the survey and were directed to not respond to the set of questions discussed above.

A survey invitation was distributed to all customers, except court reporters, for whom OCA had an email address on file. Recipients of the email were requested to click on a link that would open an electronic version of the survey. For customers without an email address on file, a paper version of the survey was faxed to them. Customers were requested to complete the survey by March 26, 2008. Responses were entered into the survey database until March 31, 2008.

The Court Reporters Certification board surveyed all examinees following court reporting oral and written exams. In addition, all court reporter applicants receiving a renewal notice for their certifications that expired December 31, 2007 received a paper copy and a link to the online survey with their license renewal notice. Results from both paper and electronic surveys submitted since September 1, 2007, are included in this report.

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

Table 2: Survey Distribution by Customer Group

	# in Population	Survey Emailed	Survey Faxed	Total Surveys Delivered
Highest Appellate Court Judges	18	18	0	18
Intermediate Appellate Court Judges and Clerks	94	104 ⁱ	0	104
Administrative Judicial Regions	9	14 ^j	0	14
District and County Courts	937	781	147	914
Justices of the Peace Courts	821	688	87	775
Municipal Courts	1,199	804	138	942
District Clerks, County Clerks, Court Coordinators / Administrators	1,358	1,110	207	1,317
Indigent Defense Coordinators	69	58	0	58
Court Collections Staff	361	361	0	361
County Auditors and County Treasurers	254	242	3	245
Court Reporting Firms / Court Reporters	2,600	1,201	0	1,201
Court Reporting Schools / Court Reporting Examinees	288	288	0	288
Process Servers	3,324	1,564	0	1,564
Guardians	222	159	0	159
State Bar Court Administration Task Force	50	50	0	50
Total	11,604	7,428	582	8,010

Response Rates

Nearly 15 percent of customers surveyed returned responses. More than 37 percent (438) of the 1,169 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 731 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 +/- 3.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.^k

ⁱ Surveys were sent to judges and clerks of the intermediate appellate courts as well as to their information technology staff.

^j Surveys were sent to the presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions as well as to their assistants.

^k 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 4.4 percentage points higher or lower than 60 percent (ranging from 56.5 percent to 63.5 percent).

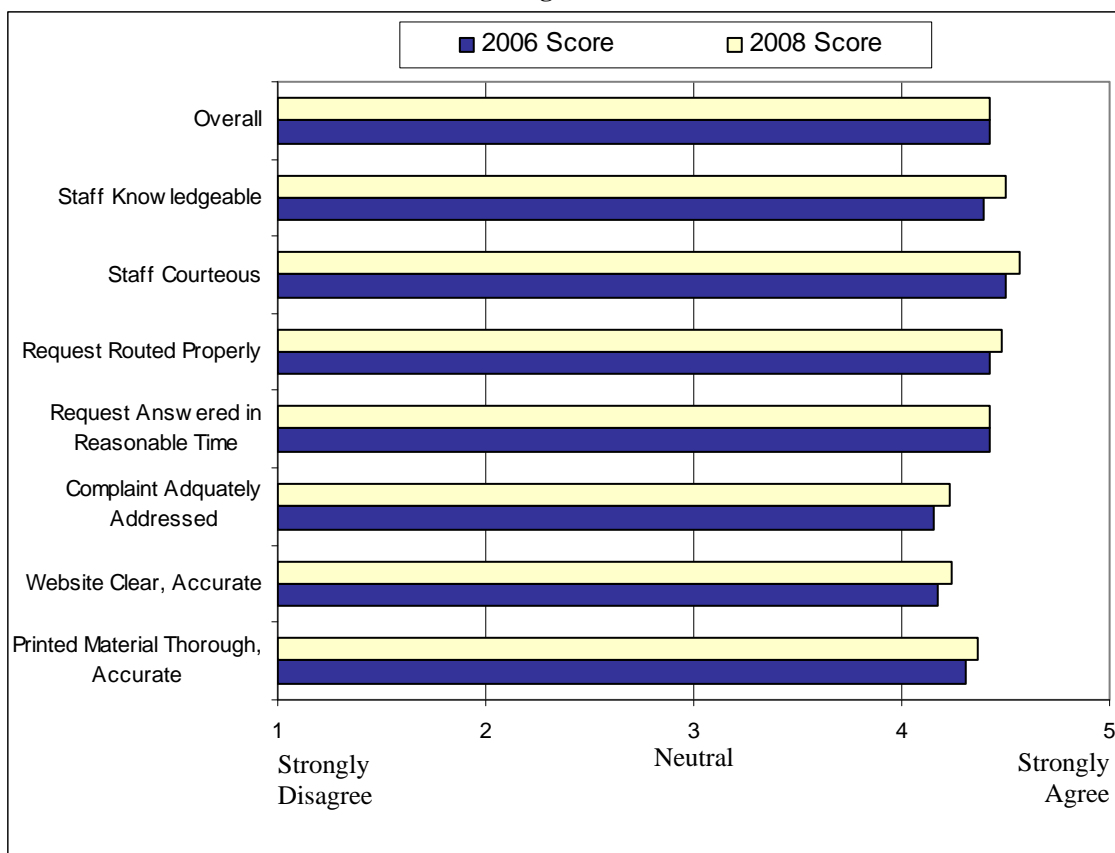
Customer Service Survey Results

As shown in Graph 1 (below) and Table 2 (on the following page), respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with OCA services. More than 98 percent of respondents who received services from OCA within the last year rated their overall satisfaction between “3” and “5.”¹

The average score for each customer service quality element was at least 4.23, indicating high levels of satisfaction. Scores for all questions increased or remained the same as the scores from the 2006 survey.

The agency’s strongest element was staff courtesy and willingness to assist customers (average score 4.57) and the lowest scoring element was addressing customer complaints (average score 4.23).

Figure 1



¹ A rating of “3” corresponded to “Neutral,” a “4” to “Agree,” and a “5” to “Strongly Agree.”

Table 2
Customer Satisfaction Survey Results^m

	<i>1</i> <i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>2</i> <i>Agree</i>	<i>3</i> <i>Neutral</i>	<i>4</i> <i>Disagree</i>	<i>5</i> <i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Minimum</i> ⁿ	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Change from Previous Survey</i>
Overall, I was satisfied with my experience. (n=636)	51.9%	41.0%	5.3%	0.8%	0.9%	1	5	4.42	0.0
Staff members were knowledgeable. (n=618)	55.3%	40.3%	3.1%	1.1%	0.2 %	1	5	4.50	+0.11
Staff members were courteous and demonstrated a willingness to assist. (n=620)	62.7%	32.6%	3.5%	0.8%	0.3%	1	5	4.57	+0.07
My inquiry/request was routed to the proper person. (n=547)	56.1%	38.0%	4.4%	0.9%	0.5%	1	5	4.48	+0.06
My inquiry/request was answered in a reasonable amount of time. (n=554)	53.4%	38.6%	5.6%	1.6%	0.7%	1	5	4.42	0.0
If I made a complaint about services I received, it was addressed in a reasonable manner. (n=248)	46.4%	35.5%	14.5%	2.0%	1.6%	1	5	4.23	+0.08
The agency's website contained clear and accurate information on services and contact information. (n=576)	43.9%	40.5%	12.5%	2.4%	0.7%	1	5	4.24	+0.07
Printed material I received was thorough and accurate. (n=550)	47.8%	44.0%	5.8%	2.2%	0.2%	1	5	4.37	+0.06

^m Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

ⁿ 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

Table 3

Type of Measure	Description	Performance
Outcome	Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Services Received	98.2%
Outcome	Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery	8.0%
Output	Number of Customers Surveyed	8,010
Output	Number of Customers Served	11,604
Efficiency	Cost Per Customer Surveyed	\$0.00
Explanatory	Number of Customers Identified	11,604
Explanatory	Number of Customer Groups Inventoried	18

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 distribute surveys. All surveys, except for court reporters, were distributed via email or fax, therefore there were no costs for distribution. The court reporter surveys were distributed in person at exams, or with license renewal notices. The cost of printing and mailing one additional piece of paper is not a material amount.