

COURTEX

Texas Judicial Branch News

Spring 2007

From the Office of Court Administration Director

Well, the legislature has gone home, and the dust is still settling from this rather extraordinary session, which will be remembered most for the Speaker's travails and the collapse of the Youth Commission. Of course, many other issues, some of vital importance to the Judicial Branch, were in play. Several bills are mentioned in the articles throughout this newsletter, but I wanted to mention some others here, and note that we will be doing a more thorough report in June with the Judicial Council. Bills of interest that were passed include:

- HB 8, sex offender crimes, sentencing and supervision.
- HB 41, confidentiality of personal information on judges.
- HB 530, operation and funding of drug court programs.
- HB 368, allows OCA and JCIT to distribute grants and surplus computer equipment.
- HB 842, allows a judge's address in financial statements to be confidential.
- HB 1380, use of courthouse security funds, and court security incident reporting.
- HB 206I, disclosure of SSNs under the Public Information Act, effective 3/28/07.
- HB 2766, location of proceedings after disasters.
- HB 2882, judicial retirement multiplier at 2.3%.
- HB 2884, omnibus juvenile justice.
- HB 3060, capias pro fine.
- HB 3135, compensation to visiting judges.
- HB 3199, Judicial Compensation Commission.
- HB 3505, judicial education on child abuse and neglect.
- HJR 36, judicial retirement age while in office, to be submitted to voters on 11/06/07.
- SB 103, TYC reform.
- SB 237, Supreme Court rulemaking on JP court e-filing, effective 5/11/07.
- SB 378, use of force in defense of a person.
- SB 496, use of judicial and court personnel training fund.
- SB 560, reimbursement for jury service.
- SB 600, compensation for statutory county court judges.
- SB 749, MDL litigation involving asbestosis or silicosis.
- SB 1182, Supreme Court judicial system fee.
- SB 1519, longevity pay for judges.
- SB 1951, creation of new district courts.

And, as is often the case, many of the most interesting bills did not pass:

- HB 2068, trial by special judge in civil and family law cases.
- HB 3095, requiring appellate dispositions within prescribed time periods.
- HB 3413, jury assembly and administration.
- HB 3884, qualifications of statutory county court judges.
- HJR 89, board certification for judges.
- SB 406, recusal of statutory probate judge.
- SB 758, child protective services reform (II).
- SB 1164, compensation of court reporters.
- SB 1204, court reorganization bill.
- SB 1300, relating to juries.
- SB 1554, discretion in the form of recordkeeping in courts of record.
- SB 1556, appointment of regional PJs by the CJ.
- SB 1655, establishing state Office of Capitol Writs.

- [Carl](#)

Table of Contents

Court Administration		Court Professions	
Judicial Statistical Trends Report...	2	Court Administration.....	7
Weighted Caseload Study.....	3	Guardians.....	7
Indigent Defense.....	3	Court Reporters.....	8
Collection Improvement Program...	4	Process Servers.....	8
Court Services Program.....	5	Licensed Court Interpreters.....	9
		Court Administrator Profile:	
Court Tech		David Slayton.....	10
The Texas Path to NIEM.....	5	OCA Profile: Angela Garcia.....	10
Texas Appeals Management and		Courts for Kids.....	11
E-filing System.....	6	Judicial Branch Events.....	12
Judicial Committee on Information		About OCA.....	14
Technology.....	6		

Court Administration

Judicial Statistical Trends Report

In 2008, OCA will publish a special report focusing on significant trends and issues that have occurred in the judicial system over the past 20 years. Publication of the “Trends” report will loosely coincide with the retirement of the existing data reporting system, tentatively scheduled for September 1, 2008. The Trends report will consist of articles written by members and observers of the judicial system and its partners. We invite readers of this newsletter to participate in our endeavor by contributing an article in your area of interest or expertise, and to contact Carl or Angela.Garcia@courts.state.tx.us to express your interest. (And see page 10 for more on Angela.)

OCA maintains summary statistics on state appellate court activity, including the filing and disposition of civil and criminal cases. This information is available online in our [Annual Reports](#) for fiscal years 1996 to 2006. Older information may be found in our published Annual Reports. OCA also maintains summary statistics, compiled by county, on state trial court activity, including the filing and disposition of cases within numerous case categories. This information is available online in our Annual Reports for fiscal years 1996 to 2006. It is also accessible from our [Trial Court Judicial Data Management System](#), which allows you to run reports for court activity information from September 1992 to the present.

Ideally, we would like the articles to incorporate aspects of data compiled by OCA. This might involve trying to evaluate the relationship between OCA’s data and other data, or it might involve doing an analysis of OCA’s data and developing a theory about why certain trends are occurring. Examples of possible trend topics include:

- Capital murder cases or death sentences
- Juvenile probation
- Deferred adjudications and revocations
- Case types in the appellate courts, district courts, etc.
- Drug case filings over time or by county
- Civil filings of various types over time

- Divorce filings over time
- Litigation by geographic area
- Criminal filings of various types over time
- Impact of significant enactments affecting courts (e.g., tort reform, workers comp reform)

Judicial Needs Assessment

This major project is the culmination of several years of work by the Judicial Council. In December 2000, the Council recommended the state seek the assistance of the National Center for State Courts to conduct a weighted caseload study, and on September 17, 2002, the Council unanimously adopted the report entitled [Assessing Judicial Workload in Texas' District Courts](#). The 79th Legislature passed [S.B. 729](#), which directed OCA to contract with a nonprofit organization that specializes in providing consulting services to courts to conduct a weighted caseload study of the district courts. OCA has contracted with the [National Center for State Courts](#) (NCSC) to conduct the study, which is also (more aptly) known as a Judicial Needs Assessment.

During the first few months of the project, OCA compiled a broad range of information for the NCSC, which allowed them to gain a more thorough working knowledge of the complexities of the Texas courts. This information included case-related data as well as information on the Texas court structure, staffing, budgets, and facilities.

OCA worked with Judge Barbara Walther, Chair of the [Judicial Section](#) of the State Bar, to create a Judicial Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC), which will provide guidance and oversight during the life of the project. The Committee consists of 13 district judges, two county court at law judges, one child protection associate judge, two district court administrators, and one county court administrator. The role of the Committee is to advise and comment on: the general study design, the identification of the general case types (e.g., criminal, civil, family, probate, and juvenile), the time study design, and the approach to reconcile and finalize the workload standards. JNAC met on February 23, 2007 to discuss the purpose and design of the weighted caseload study. The time study was initially planned for May 2007. However, in consultation with the Committee, NCSC, and Chief Justice Jefferson, the pace felt rushed and the time study has been postponed until October 2007, with the completion date extended to March 31, 2008.

JNAC met again on May 18, 2007 to further discuss the purpose and design of the study, a meeting that was webcast for the benefit of Judicial Branch viewers in particular. OCA is posting more information about the study on its website in the near future, and has asked that the study be put on the agenda of the Judicial Section Annual Conference in September 2008.

Indigent Defense

Grant Proposals

At its June 6, 2007 meeting, the Task Force on Indigent Defense will consider three proposals under its FY2008 Discretionary Grant program:

Bowie County seeks to create and operate a regional public defender office that will represent indigent adult defendants in all misdemeanor, felony and juvenile cases in Bowie and Red River Counties. Cases involving limited appeals will also be accepted. The office will not accept Capital Murder Cases where the death penalty is sought. Bowie County has requested \$621,516 with an operating budget of \$776,896.

Lubbock County seeks to establish Texas's first regional public defender for capital murder cases for the 85 counties in the 7th and 9th Administrative Judicial Regions. They are requesting full funding of \$1,028,046 in the beginning. There are very few attorneys qualified and available for appointment to capital murder cases in the region. The office would provide for appointment the most qualified experts in capital defense and sufficient support staff necessary to prepare the best possible defense. The office would also allow counties to have budget predictability and the ability to provide adequate defense in counties which typically might not have the capability to do so.

Galveston County is requesting equipment for the Indigent Defense Resource Center. The center would provide equipment, supplies and other resources to ensure that indigent defense attorneys in Galveston County have the necessary resources.

80th Legislative Recap—Task Force Bills that Passed

SB 168 by Ellis: Eliminates the scheduled 2007 sunset of the State Bar legal services fee, half of which is allocated to indigent defense and half to civil legal services to the poor. The fee generates almost \$2 million per year for indigent defense, which must be used for demonstration and pilot programs, and to date has been used to fund six new public defender offices in Texas.

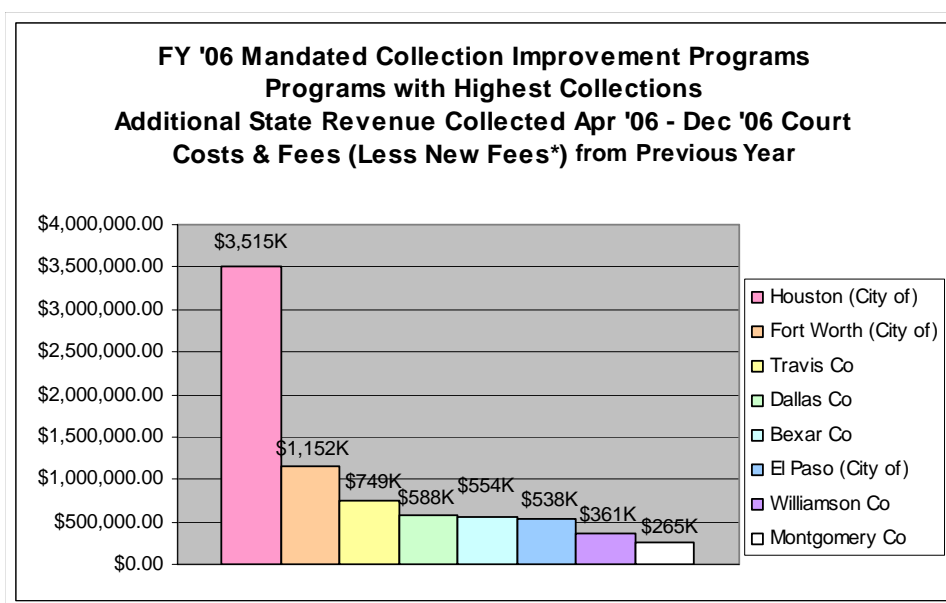
HB 1265 by Peña: Makes technical changes to the Task Force on Indigent Defense's enabling statute, allowing the Task Force to meet four times per year rather than each quarter, and striking the improper use of "ad hoc" from the definition of assigned counsel programs.

HB 1267 by Peña: Allows appointed counsel to appeal a judge's failure to act on a request for payment within 60 days. There were also two amendments added by the Senate, one that streamlines the payment for attorneys for representing TDCJ inmates, and another that provides for a \$2 fee on criminal convictions to be deposited into the Fair Defense Account.

Collection Improvement Program

As reported in the Winter edition, several bills were introduced that would have dramatically affected the collection improvement program, and diminished the state's expectation of revenue. The bill that emerged and ultimately *almost* passed was [S.B. 280](#), a consensus bill from an informal working group assembled by Alison Brock, Chief of Staff for Representative Sylvester Turner. The bill changed the program from a mandate on larger cities and counties, with a penalty for non-compliance, to a voluntary program that any city or county may implement and develop, with a reward for doing so.

In the absence of this new approach, OCA and the Comptroller's office will be reaching out to stakeholders to help chart a course for the next two years. In the meantime, significantly increased revenues from the program are a testimony to the efforts of local officials and staff across the state:



Source: Comptroller of Public Accounts, Revenue Accounting Division

* Excludes:

- 1) \$4.00 Jury Reimbursement Fee (CCP, Art. 102.0045), Effective 9/1/05; and
- 2) \$4.00 Judicial Support Fee (Local Gov't Code, Sec. 133.105), Effective 12/1/05

Court Services Program

OCA is pleased to announce the addition of Eva Walla to its staff. As the agency's court services consultant, Ms. Walla provides assistance to courts in evaluating and implementing case management and other administrative programs to improve the efficiency of court operations and the administration of justice—a key element of OCA's mission. Examples of services offered include:

- Evaluation of the dockets, systems, practices, and procedures of your court, and development of recommendations for improvement;
- On-site training and technical assistance for judges and court managers in case and calendar management and other administrative matters;
- Assistance with the preparation of a court administration manual designed for your court that covers preparing the daily court calendar, daily court dockets, etc.; and
- Assistance with developing forms for case management, dismissal dockets, pretrial scheduling orders, notices, mediation orders and any other forms that would be beneficial to you and your court.

Ms. Walla's consulting services are provided at no cost to the courts. However, because of limited travel funds, OCA requests that counties cover Ms. Walla's travel expenses.

A member of the Texas Association for Court Administration (TACA) since 1997 and a member of the National Association for Court Management (NACM), she has over 10 years experience as the District Court Administrator of the 33rd and 424th District Courts and has also attended all three phases of the court coordinator's certification program through the Texas Center for the Judiciary. She is also the co-founder and former Vice-President of the Texas Rural Association for Court Administration (RACA). To learn more about the services offered by OCA or to request assistance, call Ms. Walla at (512) 475-1777 or email her at Eva.Walla@courts.state.tx.us.

Court Tech

The Texas Path to NIEM

The National Information Exchange Model ([NIEM](#)) is an effort by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to develop, disseminate, and support enterprise-wide information exchange standards and processes that can enable jurisdictions to effectively share critical information. NIEM builds on the significant XML standards work already accomplished within the justice domain through the U. S. Attorney General's *Global Advisory Committee*. The goal of the effort is to break down barriers to information sharing by developing common standards for information sharing between communities of interest at all levels of government, extending from justice to homeland security and beyond.

In order to bring this national effort to the state of Texas, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Office of Court Administration (OCA) and the Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) partnered together—in collaboration with the Texas Integrated Justice Information Systems ([TIJIS](#)) Advisory Committee—to release a Request for Proposals on a project entitled, *The Texas Path to NIEM*. TIJIS is a user's group dedicated to developing justice information sharing capabilities in Texas. The contract was awarded to [UNISYS](#).

The *Texas Path to NIEM* project calls for two major deliverables to be completed by October 31, 2007. The deliverables are intended to bring immediate value to justice agencies in their information sharing efforts, and to lay the foundation for Texas agencies to reach NIEM compliance over time:

- (1) The vendor in collaboration with representatives from state and local users must review and update the [Texas Justice Information Integration Plan](#) (TJI3) that was written in 2002. The result will be a new information sharing plan for the state that uses NIEM compliance as its guiding principle.
- (2) Separately, the project requires a “gap analysis” of certain information exchanges within the Texas justice community and the development of the initial version of a NIEM-compliant *Texas Data Reference Model* for justice exchanges.

Because of the very short deliverable time frame required, the exchanges under evaluation are limited to external exchanges between local and state justice agencies that bring immediate value to the information exchange process. However, that initial version of the model will form the foundation upon which NIEM compliance can be built in Texas. It will be a public document to which other Texas NIEM efforts can add additional data and exchanges, as they are developed. This project will form the foundation upon which justice, homeland security, and other disciplines will be able to build future information sharing projects. By employing the emerging NIEM standard, Texas agencies will be able to share information within the state as well as nationally.

Texas Appeals Management & E-filing System

With the help of Chief Justice Jefferson and 14th Court of Appeals Chief Justice Adele Hedges in particular, OCA secured two-thirds of the needed funding to implement the TAMES project in the next biennium. Expected benefits for the appellate courts affect all areas of court operations:

- Justices and attorneys will have simultaneous electronic access to relevant documents.
- Clerks’ office staff will have less data entry to perform, and less handling of paper files.
- An increased number of public requests for information can be handled through the web site capabilities.
- Mailings can be reduced through increased use of e-mail or web site access to provide information to attorneys and parties.
- As paper files decrease, the need for secure, climate-controlled storage will decline, with a corresponding cost savings.

A steering committee has been chartered to assist OCA with this major project. Stay tuned here for further developments.

Judicial Committee on Information Technology

The [JCIT](#) will meet on June 15th, 10:00-12:00 in the Legislative Conference Center, State Capitol Extension, Austin. Among the topics to be discussed in June will be a rider the conference committee on the appropriations bill added in May. It describes a new, IT-related responsibility for OCA, with broad impact on trial courts. OCA has therefore requested that JCIT act as a steering group for the implementation. The rider text provides:

Automated Registry. Included in amounts appropriated above is \$3,000,000 from General Revenue in fiscal year 2008 and 2.0 additional FTEs each fiscal year to enter into a contract for the creation and maintenance of an automated registry system to coordinate the sharing of information from various state agency databases and the judicial system. Nothing in this provision shall require state agencies and the judiciary to share information that is in violation of any state or federal law. Any unexpended balances as of August 31, 2008 in the appropriations made herein to the Office of Court Administration are appropriated for the same purpose for the fiscal year beginning September 1, 2008.

In addition to this new project, JCIT will hear updates on a variety of ongoing work, including the Path to NIEM discussed above; the Department of Information Resources RFP for case filing software (including a possible Application Service Provider (ASP) model) for trial courts; eFiling; and the Conference of Urban Counties TechShare rollout of Odyssey case management software.

Court Professions

Court Administration

The [Texas Center for the Judiciary](#)'s Professional Development Program (PDP) provides a plan for the professional education and development of persons employed as court coordinators, court administrators, and court managers. PDP also meets the educational requirements of Rule 6(a) of the Court of Criminal Appeals [Rules of Judicial Education](#). The PDP program, scheduled for June 18-22 in Dallas, consists of a core curriculum sponsored by the Texas Center and developed in conjunction with the [Texas Association for Court Administration](#). Judges and experienced court coordinators provide education in topics such as caseload management, leadership skills, ethics, criminal and civil procedure. Click [here](#) to access the PDP Fact Sheet and [here](#) for the brochure.

The [Texas Association for Court Administration](#) is holding its 31st Annual Education Conference, October 9th-12th at the Omni San Antonio, providing continuing education and promoting professional standards for court administrators, managers and coordinators from across Texas. The conference theme centers on the National Association for Court Management's Core Competency, "Court Community Communications." The program is designed to fit the needs of a rural coordinator managing several counties, a coordinator from a general jurisdiction court, or a coordinator managing a single court in a large county.

Guardians

At their May 18 meeting, the Board accepted the proposal of the Administrative Director to appoint Lesley Ondrechen of the Office of Court Administration Legal Division, to be the new Director of the Guardianship program. We are all pleased for Lesley, and for the program. Meanwhile, the march toward September 1 implementation of certification continues.

As reported in the Winter issue, the [Guardianship Certification Board](#) (GCB) secured the approval of the Supreme Court of Texas on [rules](#) for the certification of guardians, on December 12, 2006. One of the requirements for certification is that applicants must take and pass an exam on Texas law. A committee of experts wrote the exam earlier this year. The exam has been given four times in different locations around the State and will be given several more times prior to September 1. The GCB has begun receiving applications but is holding the applications pending the Court's consideration of rule amendments proposed by the GCB, and the submission of criminal history information that will be required if the amendments are approved.

Besides the exam requirement, the rules contain certain requirements regarding criminal history. Rule VI(e) requires that applicants not have been convicted of a felony, crime of moral turpitude, or any offense listed in the rule (e.g., sexual assault; injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual; misapplication of fiduciary property). At the time the GCB developed the rules, neither Chapter III nor Chapter 411 of the Government Code, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) enabling statute, authorized the GCB to obtain criminal history information directly from the DPS. S.B. 505 was introduced during the current legislative session to provide that authority; the bill was enacted, signed by the Governor, and became effective on April 25, 2007.

The GCB met on April 16, 2007 to consider various options for obtaining criminal history checks. They decided to require applicants to obtain their criminal history record from the DPS by fingerprint search and have the record sent to the GCB. They also decided to require both a state search and a national (FBI) search. These requirements are contained in proposed amendments to Rules VI(g) and VII(a), which have been forwarded to the Supreme Court of Texas, and approved, with an order forthcoming.

At the May 18 meeting, the GCB also approved publishing for comment [proposed amendments](#) establishing a provisional certification program – an apprenticeship-type program authorized by another recent legislative enactment, S.B. 506. The Board will meet on June 5, 2007 to consider any comments received and will submit the proposed amendments to the Court for approval shortly thereafter.

Court Reporters

Congratulations to the [recipients](#) of 8 new licenses issued after the April 27, 2007 examination administered by the [Court Reporters Certification Board](#) (CRCB). The Board administers the exam three times a year and certifies those individuals who are qualified to practice based on successful completion. Statistics for the most recent exam were:

Oral Exam	Written Exam	Certification Rate =
Pass Rate = 11%	Pass Rate = 87%	8%

The CRCB has three new Board members, appointed effective date January 1, 2007:

- Chair, Judge Ben Woodward (San Angelo, 119th District Court)
- Official Court Reporter, LaVearn Ivey (Houston, 215th District Court)
- Representative, non-court reporter owned court reporting firm, Janice Eidd-Meadows (Dallas)

During the summer of 2007, the CRCB will be working on a negotiated rulemaking process, with representatives of all the interests at stake, to develop regulations for contracting. The Rules Committee will also meet to work on CRCB audit recommendations, including complaint procedures, outsourcing the court reporter skills test, and a reorganization of the rules and policies governing court reporting.

In August, for the first time ever, the state and national court reporting associations will meet concurrently. The [Texas Court Reporters Association \(TCRA\)](#) and the [National Court Reporters Association \(NCRA\)](#) are sponsoring the [conference](#) in Dallas, Texas on August 9-12, 2007. Continuing education will be offered to court reporters to meet the 10 hour (1.0 CEUs) CE requirement to renew their certification. Texas requires 2.5 hours (.25 CEUs) of the 10 hours to be in ethics/rules.

Two bills of interest to the CRCB are HB 1518, which was signed into law on 5/4/2007, relating to the circumstances under which court reporting firms, shorthand reporting firms, and affiliate offices are considered to provide services in Texas; and HB 335, requiring a court reporter to provide a transcript of the evidence in a case within 120 days.

Process Servers

In June 2005 the initial list of authorized Supreme Court process servers was about 1,300. As the [Process Server Review Board](#) approaches the two year anniversary of the order there are approximately 2,600 process servers certified by the Supreme Court of Texas across the State. Effective April 2,

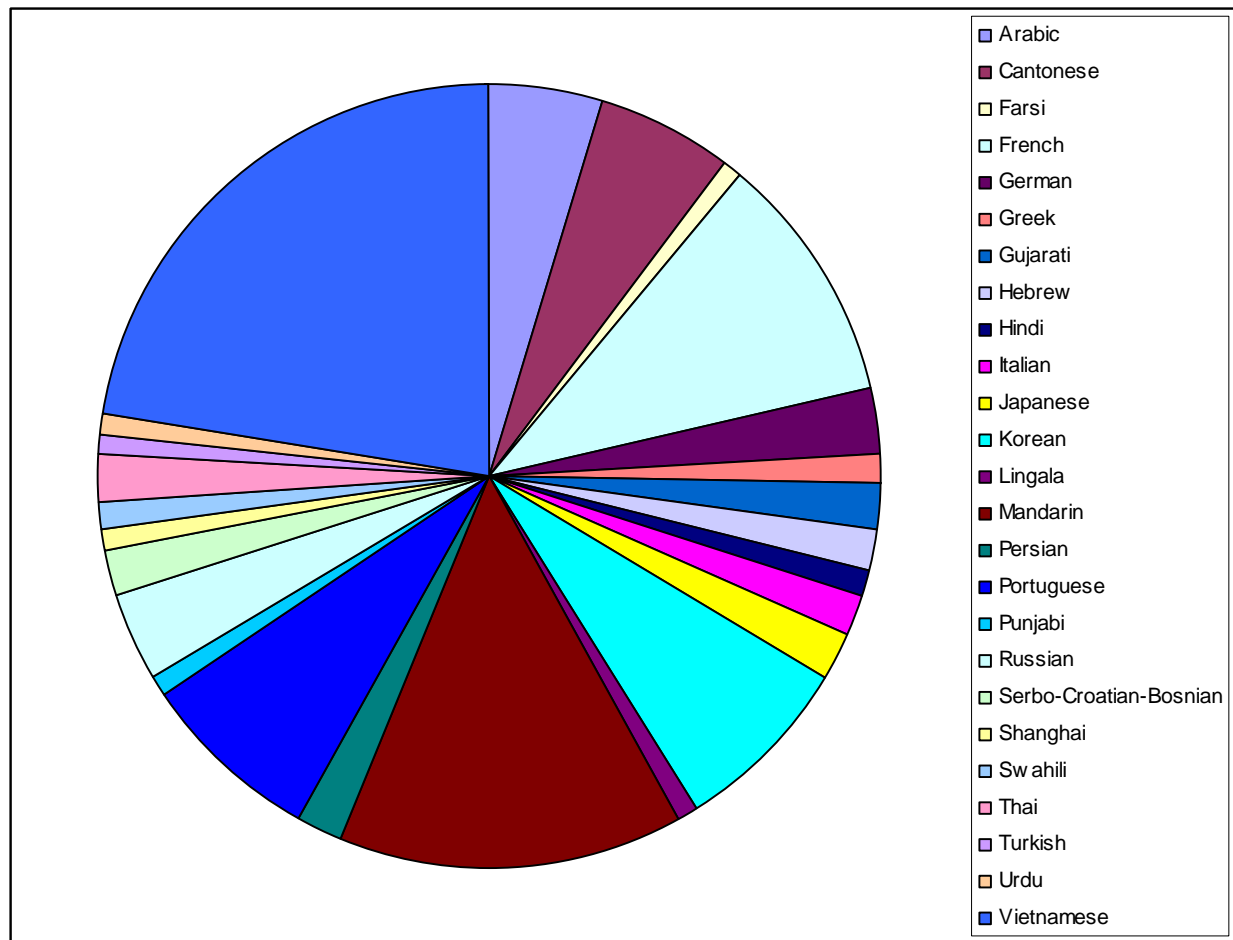
2007, the Supreme Court has promulgated the final version of [Rule 14 of the Rules of Judicial Administration](#) that governs Statewide Certification to Serve Civil Process.

Licensed Court Interpreters

House Bill 2735 in 2001 directed the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation ([TDLR](#)) to administer the licensed court interpreter program and enforce the provisions of Texas Government Code Chapter 57 pertaining to licensed court interpreters. HB 2735 also established a nine member advisory board to advise TDLR on the adoption of rules affecting the program and on the design of a licensing examination. By statute, the Licensed Court Interpreter Advisory Board includes one judge and one court administrator, along with an attorney, three licensed court interpreters, and three public members. H.B. 2735 also authorized courts to appoint licensed court interpreters if a motion for appointment of an interpreter is filed by a party, if requested by a witness, or on their own motion in a civil or criminal proceeding in the court.

A person seeking licensure must pass written and oral examinations to demonstrate proficiency interpreting the language they are seeking a license for. Examinations have been developed by the [National Center for State Courts](#) and are available for Arabic, Cantonese, Haitian-Creole, Hmong, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. A person seeking a license for another language may take other examinations acceptable to TDLR.

There are more than 600 licensed court interpreters in Texas. All Texas Licensed Court Interpreters and their language specialty and location are available on TDLR's [website](#). Not surprisingly, Spanish is the leading endorsement, followed by Vietnamese, Mandarin, French, Korean, and Cantonese. The following chart shows the distribution of languages other than Spanish.



Court Administrator Profile: David Slayton

If you need to know what is going on in the Lubbock County court system, look no further than David Slayton. David is the Director of Court Administration for Lubbock County, a new position that was created in 2004 to consolidate the administration of the District Courts and County Courts at Law. David acts as the chief executive officer for virtually all non-judicial functions of the Lubbock County courts, including personnel management, fiscal management, research and planning, space and facilities management, procurement activities, information technology management, and overall caseload management policy.



Prior to becoming Director of Court Administration, David worked for almost three years as Court Services Supervisor for the United States District Court in Dallas, responsible for managing the intake, records and pro se sections of the federal court. Prior to that, David worked for the 99th District Court in Lubbock County as a court coordinator.

David was recently responsible for the release of a report entitled "[Accountability Through Measurement](#)," which applied many of the National Center for State Courts' [CourTools](#) measurements to Lubbock County. The report was hailed by the National Center for State Courts as "among the very first in the nation to have

successfully implemented almost all of the balanced scorecard of measures." Because of this accomplishment, David has been asked to speak at the National Association for Court Management's Annual Conference in Chicago in July regarding the implementation of CourTools.

David most recently earned the distinction as a Fellow of the [Institute for Court Management](#) after completing the Court Executive Development Program offered by the National Center for State Courts. The graduation ceremony was held on May 11 in the Great Hall of the US Supreme Court. Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. delivered remarks to the graduates, and David was chosen by his classmates to be the class speaker to deliver an address on behalf of the class.

David holds a master's degree in public administration from Troy University and a bachelor's degree in political science from Texas Tech University. He is married to Amy Slayton, who stays at home with their children, Zachary (6) and Emma (4).

OCA Profile: Angela Garcia

If you have ever reported information to OCA, or obtained any kind of statistics from OCA, you have had the pleasure of dealing with Angela L. Garcia. She is the Judicial Information Manager for the Office of Court Administration's Research and Court Services Division. Judicial Information staff is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and publishing court activity statistics and other judicial data. Ms. Garcia has served in this position for more than five years and was extensively involved in the development of OCA's Trial Court Judicial Data Management System.



Prior to her employment with OCA, she worked for three years as a business process and management analyst for Austin Municipal Court. While at the court, she served on the team that created the Downtown Austin Community Court, one of the first of its kind in the nation. She holds a master's degree in public affairs from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of Southern California.

Angela spent a majority of her childhood living in the middle of the Coronado National Forest on the Arizona-Mexico border. She is married to Ricky Garcia, who is an employee of the Health and Human Services Commission's External Relations Division. They met while studying abroad in Santiago, Chile and now have two (very adorable) children aged (almost) 4, and 5 months.

Courts for Kids

In the fall of 2005, the Minneapolis Summit on Children inspired many Supreme Court initiatives to strengthen courts who hear child protection cases. This past March, Texas sent another multi-disciplinary team to the Summit on Children in New York, including the Supreme Court of Texas Staff Attorney for Children and Families, Kristi Taylor, Carl Reynolds from the Office of Court Administration, Assistant Commissioner Joyce James from the Department of Family and Protective Services, and Mari Kay Bickett and Ginny Woods from the Texas Center for the Judiciary. The Summit's plenary sessions were aimed at extending collaboration among courts and agencies that provide services to children and families. Among the many topics discussed during the workshops and roundtables of the Summit were effective approaches to strategic planning; initiatives that states have taken to implement the action plans developed at the Minneapolis Summit; and the next generation of issues facing states in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and the permanence and timeliness of placements.

To lead Texas in effectively implementing its action plan, the Court has hired Tina Amberboy as its first-ever Executive Director of the Task Force on Foster Care. Ms. Amberboy's experience representing children and families as a court-appointed attorney ad litem gives her first-hand knowledge of the integral role the judiciary plays in the lives of children in the foster care system.

Many projects are underway, such as developing additional training for attorneys, judges and court personnel, and creating technology solutions for increased efficiency and collaboration between the agencies and courts. The Court also anticipates conducting a public hearing this fall regarding the formation of a statewide judicial commission for children, youth, and families. The hearing will ensure that community stakeholders have an opportunity and forum to provide diverse perspectives on such a commission and allow the Court to receive broad public input.

Judicial Branch Events

JUNE

5	Noon	Guardianship Certification Board Tom C. Clark Building, 7th Floor, Austin
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6	9:30 a.m.	Task Force on Indigent Defense Grants and Reporting Committee Court of Criminal Appeals, Austin
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	11:00 a.m.	Task Force on Indigent Defense Policies and Standards Committee Court of Criminal Appeals, Austin
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	1:30 p.m.	Task Force on Indigent Defense Court of Criminal Appeals, Austin
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8	9:30 a.m.	Presiding Judges Meeting Tom C. Clark Building, 6th Floor, Austin
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8-9		Supreme Court Advisory Committee Texas Association of Broadcasters 502 E. 11th, Suite 200, Austin
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15	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Judicial Committee on Information Technology Capitol Extension 2.002, Austin
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21	3:00 p.m.	Court Reporters Certification Board Meeting Tom C. Clark Building, 6th Floor, Austin
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JULY

8-12		National Association for Court Management 2007 Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois http://www.nacmnet.org/conferences.html
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13	9:30 a.m.	Presiding Judges Meeting Tom C. Clark Building, 6th Floor, Austin
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18-20 Associate Judges Conference
Hilton Austin Airport, Austin
<http://www.yourhonor.com/pdfs/07aj.pdf>

27 11:00 a.m. Guardianship Certification Board
Tom C. Clark Building, 6th Floor, Austin

AUGUST

10 9:30 a.m. Presiding Judges Meeting
Tom C. Clark Building, 6th Floor, Austin

24-25 Supreme Court Advisory Committee
State Bar Building, Austin

SEPTEMBER

16 3:00 p.m. Presiding Judges Meeting
The San Luis, Galveston (time and date subject to change)

16-19 Judicial Section Annual Conference
The San Luis, Galveston

29 Public Meeting - Court Reporters Certification Board
(location to be announced) - Austin

About [OCA](#)

Resources & Information
for the Efficient Administration
of the Judicial Branch of Texas

OCA provides **resources** for the judicial branch:

- technical assistance, training, and research on court administration;
- staffing for judicial branch regulatory boards and policymaking bodies;
- information technology solutions, including [Texas Courts Online](#);
- funding and standards for [indigent defense](#) services;
- fiscal and legal consultation for [appellate courts](#); and
- staffing and administration for [specialty courts](#).

OCA provides **information** about the judicial branch:

- statistics and analysis of court information and case activity;
- descriptions of court system structure and jurisdiction;
- legislative responses and reports about the courts and judiciary; and
- comparative policy studies and recommendations.

[Organization Chart](#)
[Divisions and Contacts](#)
[Strategic Plan](#)



Please refer comments or questions about this newsletter or the
Office of Court Administration to:
carl.reynolds@courts.state.tx.us

