

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION FY 2010 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. 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 to equalize dockets across the state. This strategy provides funding for travel expenses incurred by appellate justices and their staff, who travel to hear cases transferred to them for disposition.

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.

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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 42 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 2010, OCA operates 17 child protection courts in 128 counties, with twelve associate judges, eight assigned judges, and seventeen court coordinators, with some providing court reporting services. In fiscal year 2009, these courts held 21,651 hearings and issued 4,896 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.

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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 activities of the agency, including accounting, purchasing and budgeting. The division is also responsible for the human resources function, as well as the operational support activities of the agency. The division provides support to the clerks and chief justices of the appellate courts and the presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions regarding legislative, fiscal, budgetary and other administrative issues.

Survey Methodology

Since FY 2002, OCA has periodically distributed a *customer satisfaction survey* instrument developed using guidelines set forth in the Legislative Budget Board's *Agency Strategic Plan Instructions*. In FY 2010, OCA surveyed a majority (86 percent) of the 13,313 individuals identified as external customers in **Table 1**. This is an increase of 10 percent over the number of individuals surveyed in FY 2008.

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TABLE 1: INVENTORY OF EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS AND SURVEY DISTRIBUTION BY CUSTOMER GROUP

	Number of Courts/Regions /Counties/ Organizations	Number of Customers	Survey Emailed	Survey Faxed	Total Surveys Delivered
Highest Appellate Court					
<i>Supreme Court</i>	1	10	10	0	10
<i>Court of Criminal Appeals</i>	1	10	10	0	10
Appellate Courts	14	94	93	0	93
Administrative Judicial Regions	9	9	5	0	5
District Courts	453	453	429	19	448 ^{a,b}
Constitutional County Courts	254	254	247	6	253 ^{b,c}
Statutory County Courts	231	231	201	29	230 ^{b,d}
Justices of the Peace Courts	822	822	699	81	780
Municipal Courts	915	1,258	1,115	113	1,228 ^e
District Clerks and County Clerks	254	443	403	36	439 ^f
Court Coordinators/Administrators	254	942	770	79	849
Indigent Defense Coordinators	80	80	68	0	68
Court Collections Staff	231	500	429	0	429
County Auditors and County Treasurers	254	254	242	0	248
Court Reporting Firms / Court Reporters	360	2,665	1,846	0	1,846
Process Servers	N/A	4,839	3,999	0	3,999
Guardians	N/A	326	314	12	326
Judicial Compensation Commission	1	9	9	0	9
Judicial Committee on Information Technology	1	42	42	0	42
Board Members	5	72	72	0	72
Total	4,140	13,313	11,015	363	11,384^g

^a Many of these judges also serve as the local administrative judge for the district court(s) in the county. There are 140 local administrative district judges (57 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 240 juvenile board chairmen (34 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 86 local administrative statutory county court judges.

^e Some municipal judges serve in one or more municipal courts. While 1,496 judge positions were reported in OCA in FY 2010, 1,263 individuals served in the 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.

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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 remainder of the survey.

A survey invitation was distributed to all customers for whom OCA had an email address. Email recipients were requested to complete an electronic version of the survey. The survey was faxed to customers without an email address on file. Customers were requested to complete the survey by April 2, 2010. The deadline was extended to May 10, 2010.

Response Rates

Six percent of customers surveyed returned responses. Nearly 39 percent (266) of the 686 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 420 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 +/- 3.75 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.ⁱ

Customer Service Survey Results

Respondents have expressed a high level of satisfaction with OCA services over time, as **Figure 1** shows. **Table 2** provides the customer service performance measures.

As **Table 3** shows, approximately 98 percent of respondents who received services from OCA within the last year rated their overall satisfaction between “3” and “5.”^j The average score for each customer service quality element was at least 3.99, indicating high levels of satisfaction. The agency’s strongest element was staff courtesy (average score 4.53) and the lowest scoring element was addressing customer complaints (average score 3.99).

^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.

ⁱ 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 3.75 percentage points higher or lower than 60 percent (ranging from 56.25 percent to 63.75 percent).

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

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FIGURE 1—SATISFACTION SCORES OVER TIME.

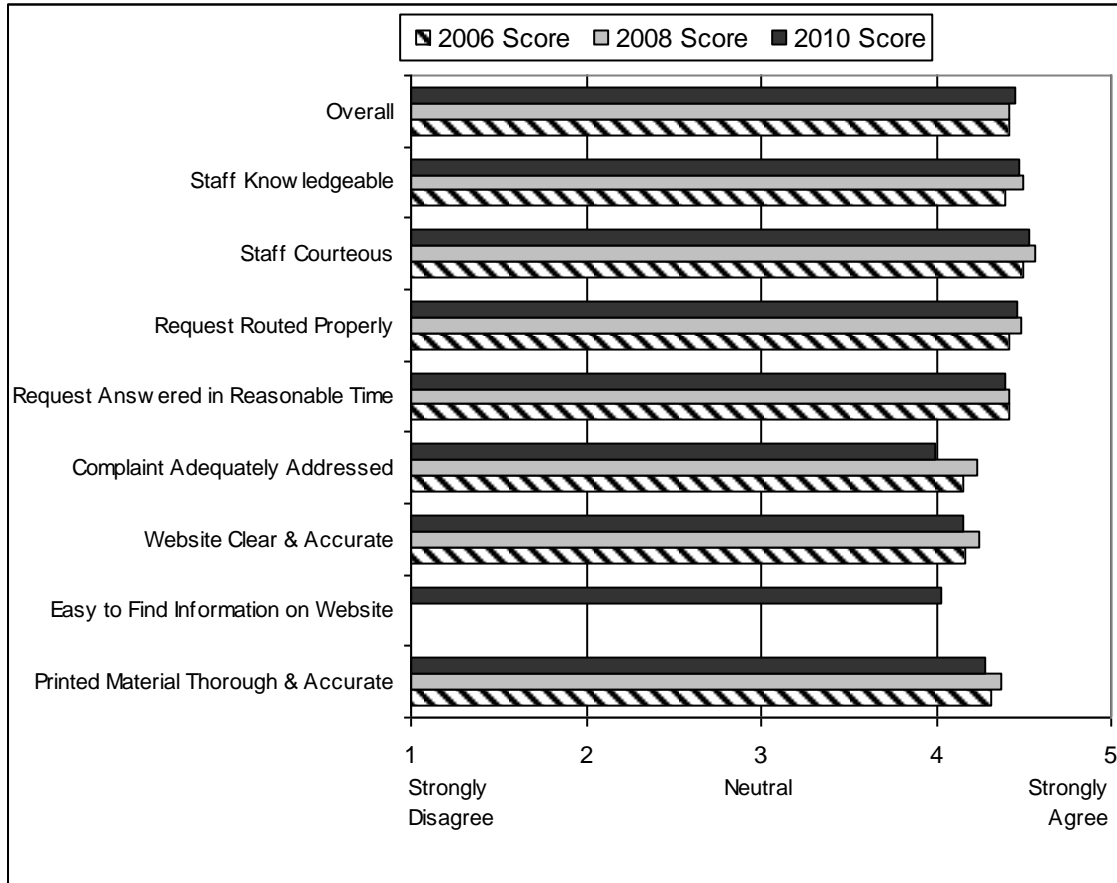


TABLE 2—CUSTOMER SERVICE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Type of Measure	Description	Performance
Outcome	Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Services Received	97.9%
Outcome	Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery	6.0%
Output	Number of Customers Surveyed	11,384
Output	Number of Customers Served	13,313
Efficiency	Cost Per Customer Surveyed	\$0.00*
Explanatory	Number of Customers Identified	13,313
Explanatory	Number of Customer Groups Inventoried	19

*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 were distributed via email or fax, therefore there were no costs for distribution.

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TABLE 3—FY 2010 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS*

	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	Mean	Change from FY2008 Survey
Overall, I was satisfied with my experience with OCA. (n=390)	53.8%	39.5%	4.6%	1.5%	0.5%	0.0%	4.45	+0.03
Staff members were knowledgeable. (n=379)	53.0%	39.8%	3.7%	1.1%	0.3%	2.1%	4.47	-0.03
Staff members were courteous and demonstrated a willingness to assist me. (n=379)	59.4%	33.5%	3.4%	0.8%	0.8%	2.1%	4.53	-0.04
My inquiry/request was routed to the proper person. (n=373)	46.9%	38.9%	3.8%	0.5%	0.3%	9.7%	4.46	-0.02
My inquiry/request was answered in a reasonable amount of time. (n=375)	45.9%	38.7%	3.7%	2.1%	0.8%	8.8%	4.39	-0.03
I made a complaint about services and it was adequately addressed. (n=360)	6.7%	6.4%	6.4%	0.3%	0.0%	80.3%	3.99	-0.24
The agency's website contains clear and accurate information. (n=369)	31.4%	37.9%	13.8%	1.9%	0.3%	14.6%	4.15	-0.09
It is easy to find the information I need on the agency's website. (n=368)	28.0%	35.3%	16.8%	3.0%	0.8%	16.0%	4.03	N/A
The printed materials I received were thorough and accurate. (n=372)	29.3%	29.3%	7.0%	0.5%	0.8%	33.1%	4.28	-0.09

*Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.