

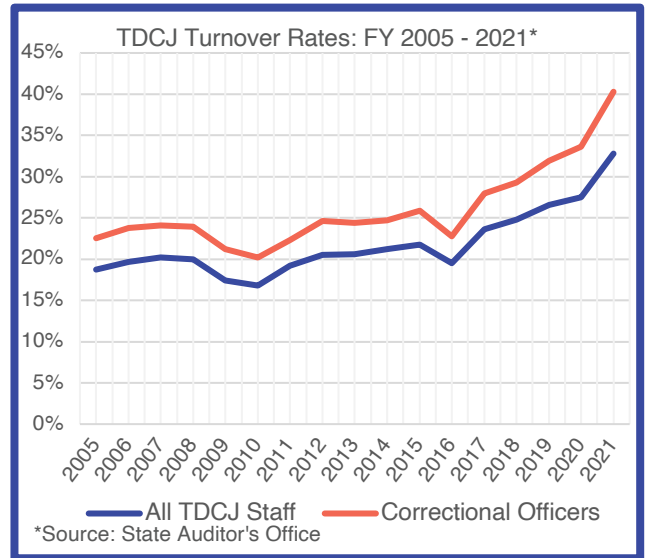
Supporting TDCJ Staff & Expanding Climate Control Equipment

Key Takeaways:

- Historic TDCJ staff turnover makes a hard job even harder for remaining correctional and parole officers.
- A phased installation of air conditioning will improve both the living conditions of incarcerated Texans and the working conditions of the TDCJ staff that serve them.

Background:

TDCJ is facing historic staff turnover, which caps a trend of generally increasing turnover rates over the past 16 years. While correctional officer turnover is driving the rate, parole officers are also experiencing a 20-year peak in turnover. The agency has consistently had among the highest staff turnover rates over the past 10 years compared to other state agencies and is currently second only to TJJD.



Of the roughly 133,000 online beds in TDCJ facilities housing over 121,000 inmates, only 41,000 beds are “air conditioned” according to the agency. The lack of AC has historically led to illness and death, along with ensuing litigation against the state. The extreme heat in many inmate housing facilities likely exacerbates the high staff turnover rate. Among the top reasons cited by staff who voluntarily left TDCJ over the past two fiscal years has been “poor working conditions/environment.”

Proposed Action:

Adopt TDCJ’s Exceptional Items 1, 2 and 3 into the base budget, which address increased salaries for correctional officers, parole officers, and all TDCJ staff respectively to address historic turnover rates. Additionally, to reduce the risks of serious heat-related illness and death among inmates, prevent future litigation against the state, and improve working conditions for TDCJ staff, support a phased installation of climate control systems in inmate housing facilities.

Budget Cost Estimate:

- TDCJ Staff Pay Raises (EI’s 1, 2, & 3): \$464.9 million (FY2024-25) to provide a 10% raise for all non-officer TDCJ staff (\$65.9 million), 15% raise for parole officers (\$24.2 million), and continued funding the recent 15% raise for correctional officers (\$374.7 million)
- A/C Installation (Phase I): \$225.9 million (FY2024-25) to provide for design and construction of air conditioning to cover 24,825 beds at TDCJ intake facilities.

Public Policy Impact:

Addressing TDCJ staff shortages ultimately improves the quality of service provided to Texas’s inmates as well as the safety of officers and inmates alike. Likewise, making a down payment on the installation of air conditioning in inmate housing areas, beginning with intake facilities, will reduce key long-term costs and improve conditions for inmates and employees who serve them.