

TEXAS COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT (TCOLE)

Key Takeaways:

- Texas has more law enforcement agencies (LEAs) than any other state. This makes the job of basic oversight and regulation a challenge and compounds the “wandering officer” problem.
- Investing in staffing and data capacity can see returns on greater transparency, accountability, and service quality for law enforcement agencies and professionals and the broader public they serve.

Background:

The regulation of law enforcement in Texas is at a crossroads moment in the wake of critical incidents and tragedies in Texas and across the nation, and in the midst of a second sunset review. The path forward requires investment in the people and data capacity at TCOLE.

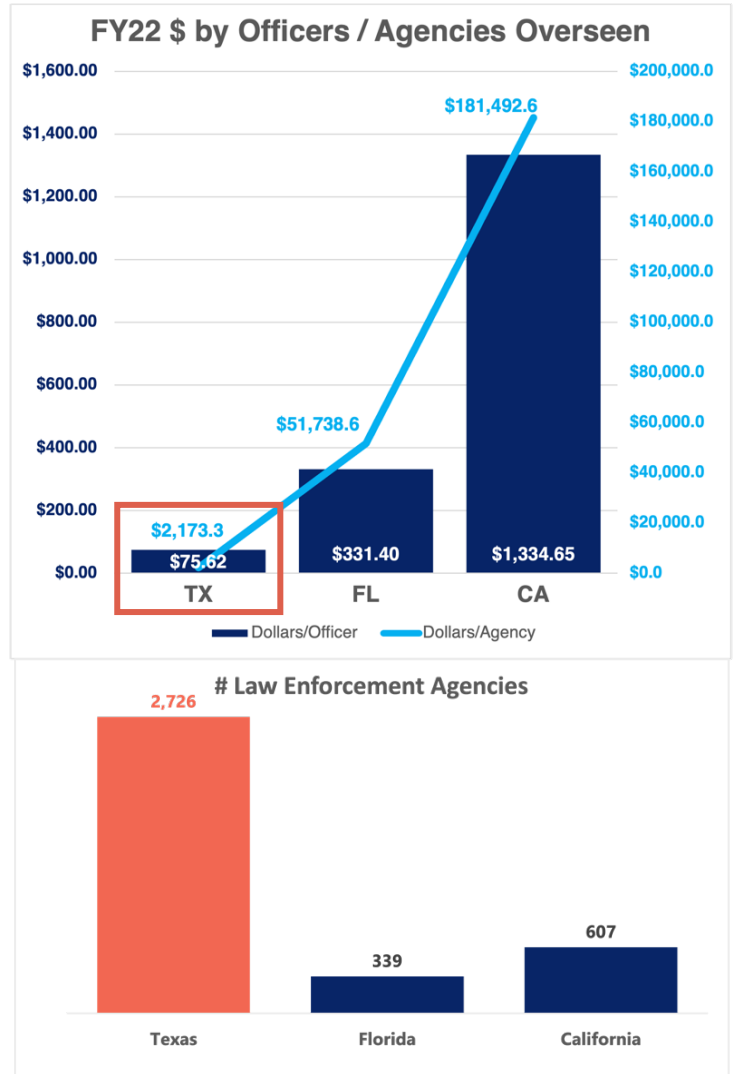
A public-facing database of officers, among the Sunset Commission’s adopted recommendations, would benefit from additional IT capacity. TCOLE’s improved collection and management data. Similarly, ongoing improvements to Texas Secure Share established by SB 24 (87-R) will require ongoing support an maintenance.

Lastly, TCOLE’s collection of motor vehicle stop data has significant data quality problems. Examples of such problems include obvious errors and inconsistent reporting methodologies from departments. These make otherwise normally operating agencies look like outliers or bad actors, and simultaneously obscures those agencies that warrant assistance or scrutiny.

Proposed Action & Cost Estimate:

Adopt TCOLE exceptional Items 1, 2, and 4 into the budget.

- TCOLE Data Infrastructure (EI #1):
 - **\$1,238,459 (FY2024) \$1,037,409 (FY2025)** for two FTE positions, a Cybersecurity Officer and a Data Officer to better manage sensitive licensee information, enhance licensee and constituent experiences with publicly available data, and a complete redesign of TCOLE’s public facing website.
- TCOLE Staff Retention & Support (EIs #2 & #4):
 - **\$2,060,689 (FY2024) \$2,060,679 (FY2025)** to provide for targeted raises to keep up with increased cost of living and competition from other-agency salary levels.
 - **\$590,766 (FY2024) \$584,194 (FY2025)** to provide additional support staff for TCOLE’s human resources and legal needs.



Supporting the Staff, Data, and Infrastructure for TCOLE, TDCJ, & TCJS

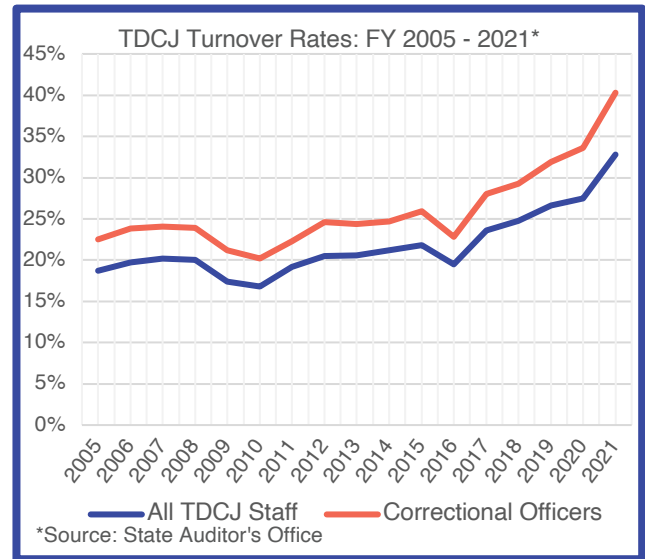
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE (TDCJ)

Key Takeaways:

- Historic TDCJ staff turnover makes a hard job even harder for remaining correctional/parole staff.
- 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.



Of the roughly 133,000 beds in TDCJ facilities housing more than 121,000 inmates, only 41,000 beds are “air conditioned.” The lack of AC has historically led to illness, death, along with ensuing litigation against the state. The extreme heat in 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 & Cost Estimate:

Alongside increased salaries already adopted into the base budget, the Legislature should strongly consider investing in climate control systems. 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, appropriators should support a phased installation of climate control systems in inmate housing facilities.

- 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.

TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS (TCJS)

Background:

TCJS has the unique responsibility of regularly reporting data from all county jails in the state. Recent data reporting has seen challenges – the most “current” report on jail populations is from August 1, 2022, now more than half a year out of date. In the last biennium, the Sunset Commission emphasized the need to improve TCJS’s poor data practices.

Proposed Action & Cost Estimate:

Adopt TCJS’s Exceptional Item 2 into the budget.

- TCJS Data Analyst (EI #2):
 - **\$142,534** (FY2024-25) to prepare reports and review trends in jail populations, review historical performance, evaluate jail staff turnover, compile and review complaint data.