



**TDCJ Workforce Committee
Biannual Report
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Introduction

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Workforce Committee continues to support the agency's commitment to Recommendation 2.1 identified in the 89th Legislative Sunset Advisory Commission report. The recommendation emphasized the need for a centralized workforce-focused function dedicated to retention, workforce support, organizational culture, and employee development.

Following the initial biannual report of the Workforce Committee in December 2025, the Committee has continued efforts to strengthen workforce initiatives through strategic collaboration between divisions, leadership engagement, and the development of employee-centered approaches designed to improve retention and organizational effectiveness. Co-chaired by the Human Resources Division (HR) and the Office of Strategic Initiatives and Modernization (OSIM), the Committee serves as a cross-functional body focused on identifying workforce challenges, exploring meaningful interventions to improve recruitment and retention, supporting modernization efforts, and advancing initiatives that improve the employee experience.

This follow-up report provides an overview of the Workforce Committee's initial and second meetings, highlights workforce priorities identified during early collaboration efforts, and outlines ongoing discussions related to onboarding and orientation practices throughout the agency. The report reflects the Committee's continued focus on workforce modernization, employee engagement, and the development of consistent workforce support initiatives across divisions. The Committee recognizes that employee engagement and retention begin during the earliest stages of employment and remains committed to supporting consistent, welcoming, and informative onboarding experiences throughout the agency.

Initial Meeting Overview

Committee Formation and Strategic Direction

The inaugural Workforce Committee meeting served as a foundational step toward establishing a coordinated, agency-wide approach to workforce retention and employee support initiatives. Representatives from all TDCJ divisions participated in discussions focused on workforce challenges, operational barriers, employee development opportunities, and the importance of building a stronger organizational culture.

The meeting reinforced the Committee's role as a collaborative body intended to bring consistency, accountability, and strategic direction to workforce-related initiatives. Members discussed the importance of balancing operational demands with employee wellbeing while

identifying opportunities to modernize processes that directly impact recruitment, retention, professional development, and employee engagement.

As with any significant organizational shift, the collaborative structure and open-discussion format of the Committee represented a new approach for TDCJ. With a history of having looked at the HR Division for guidance on all workforce matters, members correctly made clear the challenges that come with significant operational change. Committee co-chairs acknowledged these concerns and provided clarification regarding the Committee's purpose, expectations, and long-term objectives. Through continued discussion and leadership engagement, members accepted the approach and expressed a shared commitment to supporting and actively participating in the Committee's workforce initiatives moving forward.

Leadership emphasized that workforce initiatives should not exist independently within divisions but instead operate within a unified framework that encourages communication, data-informed decision making, and shared responsibility across the agency. Ultimately, while HR will continue to play a vital role in aiding TDCJ's aspirations relating to workforce, all agency divisions will collaborate to shape the vision, implement new approaches, and be held accountable to the mission.

Workforce Priorities Discussed

Several workforce priorities were identified during the initial and follow-up Committee meetings and subsequent discussions. Key focus areas included:

- Improvement of employee onboarding and orientation experiences;
- Development of mentorship and coaching opportunities;
- Modernization of workforce-related policies and procedures;
- Identification of workforce retention trends through improved data analysis;
- Promotion of a more supportive and less punitive workplace culture; and
- Expansion of professional growth and learning opportunities.

Committee members acknowledged that workforce retention is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including leadership engagement, communication, workplace culture, training quality, and employee support systems. Discussions emphasized the importance of approaching workforce improvement efforts strategically rather than through isolated initiatives.

The Committee also discussed the importance of establishing measurable outcomes that can assist executive leadership in evaluating the effectiveness of workforce initiatives over time. Future meetings will continue focusing on identifying meaningful workforce metrics and improving visibility into workforce trends across divisions.

Coordination Across Divisions

A recurring theme throughout the initial meeting was the importance of collaboration between operational divisions and support divisions. Committee members identified opportunities to reduce duplication of effort, improve consistency in workforce practices, and establish more standardized approaches to employee engagement and development.

The Committee also recognized the importance of creating communication pathways that allow divisions to share successful workforce initiatives and lessons learned. By fostering greater collaboration and transparency, the Committee aims to support sustainable workforce improvements that can be adapted across the agency while still allowing divisions flexibility to address unique operational needs.

The Committee will continue meeting on a recurring basis to review workforce concerns, monitor progress of identified initiatives, and support alignment between agency leadership and workforce-related priorities.

Onboarding

Agency Approach

The Workforce Committee identified onboarding as a foundational component of employee retention, workforce engagement, and long-term organizational success. Early Committee discussions focused on establishing foundational principles that may guide how TDCJ introduces employees to the agency, its mission, workplace culture, expectations, and available support systems.

The Committee recognizes that onboarding practices should balance both an agency-wide approach and division-specific operational needs. While many workforce principles may be standardized across TDCJ, onboarding practices must also remain flexible enough to support the unique operational environments, staffing requirements, and mission responsibilities of individual divisions.

As part of its ongoing efforts, the Committee has begun exploring what a modernized onboarding framework could look like for the agency. Discussions have included opportunities to define consistent workforce principles, identify common expectations for new employee orientation, and evaluate how divisions can tailor onboarding processes to support operational effectiveness while maintaining alignment with broader agency objectives.

The Committee further recognizes that an employee's earliest experiences within the agency can significantly influence long-term engagement, morale, professional development, and

retention. As a result, future workforce discussions will continue focusing on approaches that help employees feel informed, prepared, supported, and connected to the organization from the beginning of employment.

Standardization of Employee Introduction Process

The Committee discussed the potential value of developing a more standardized onboarding framework that establishes common foundational principles throughout the agency. Discussions focused on identifying areas where greater consistency may improve employee understanding of agency expectations, workplace culture, professional conduct, agency history, and available workforce resources.

At the same time, the Committee acknowledged that onboarding approaches must continue supporting the operational realities of individual divisions. Future efforts may include defining which onboarding elements should remain consistent agency-wide, and which should be adaptable to division-specific operational requirements.

Areas identified for continued evaluation and future development include:

- Consistency of new employee orientation materials across divisions;
- Accessibility of onboarding information and training resources;
- Communication of employee benefits and support services;
- Supervisor involvement throughout onboarding activities;
- Delivery methods for orientation materials and workforce messaging;
- Opportunities to strengthen employee understanding of agency culture and mission;
and
- Approaches for introducing employees to long-term career development opportunities.

The Committee acknowledged that onboarding should not be viewed as a single orientation event, but rather as an evolving workforce process that supports employee integration, professional development, and organizational engagement over time. Future workforce initiatives will include the continued development of agency onboarding principles, enhanced orientation resources, standardized workforce guidance, and tools designed to assist divisions in implementing onboarding practices aligned with both agency objectives and operational needs.

Longer-Term Workforce Integration

Beyond initial orientation activities, the Committee recognizes the importance of supporting workforce integration throughout the early stages of employment and beyond. Discussions have focused on the imperative for continued communication, ongoing training opportunities, leadership engagement, and feedback mechanisms for staff.

These ongoing discussions align with the Committee’s broader objective of helping define workforce strategies, principles, and approaches that support employee wellbeing, operational effectiveness, professional growth, and long-term organizational sustainability across TDCJ.

Conclusion

The Workforce Committee remains committed to supporting TDCJ’s workforce modernization and retention objectives through collaboration, strategic planning, and employee-centered initiatives. The Committee’s initial meeting established a foundation for ongoing discussions focused on workforce culture, onboarding practices, employee development, and long-term organizational sustainability.

As workforce initiatives continue to evolve, the Committee will maintain a focus on improving employee experience through consistent communication, supportive leadership practices, and data-informed decision making. Continued collaboration between divisions will remain essential to identifying workforce challenges and implementing meaningful solutions that support both employees and agency operations.

The Committee recognizes that workforce retention and organizational effectiveness require sustained attention and long-term commitment. Through continued evaluation, modernization efforts, and strategic coordination, the Committee aims to support a workplace environment that encourages professional growth, strengthens employee engagement, and contributes to the agency’s long-term success.