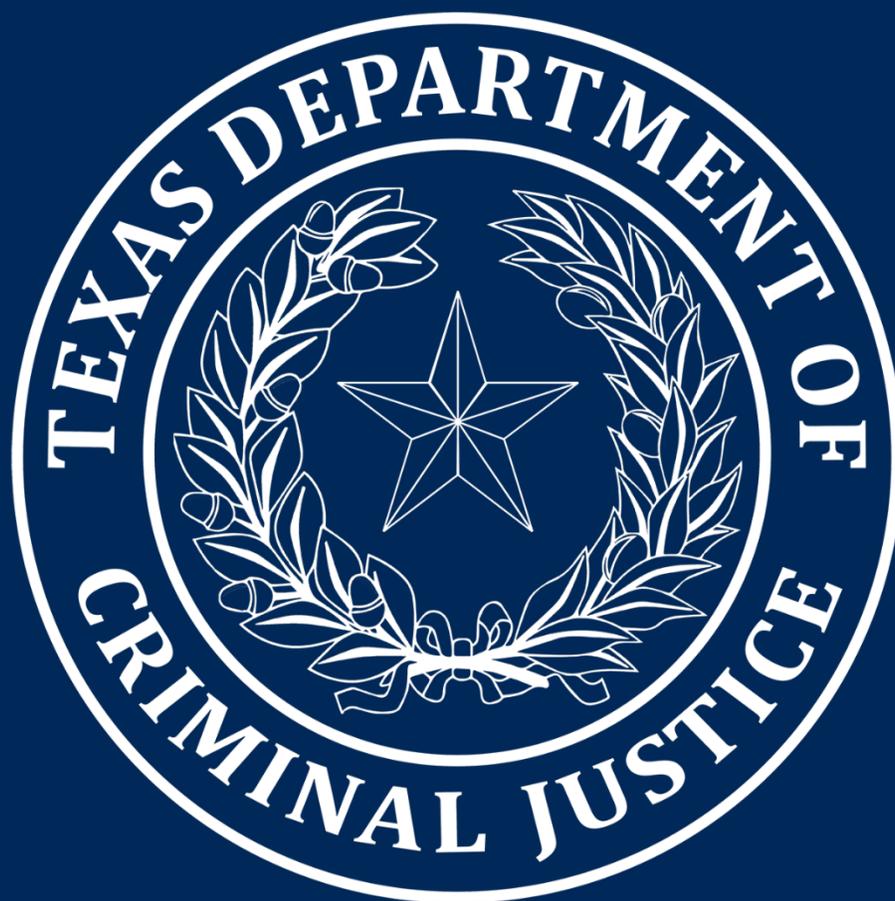


Texas Department of Criminal Justice



**Family Violence Pretrial
Diversion Pilot Program Report**

December 2024

Texas Board of Criminal Justice

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Overview

Texas Government Code § 509.018 requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Community Justice Assistance Division (TDCJ-CJAD) to collaborate with judges in Bexar County to establish a family violence pretrial diversion pilot program for individuals who are charged with an offense involving family violence, and who suffer from a substance use disorder or chemical dependency.

TDCJ-CJAD is statutorily required to review the pilot program and submit a biennial report to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Legislature by December 1, 2024. Texas Government Code § 509.018 expires September 1, 2027.

This report presents the pilot program overview including program status and results, effectiveness, implementation challenges, funding sources, and recommendations.

Pilot Program Overview

The Bexar County Domestic Violence Pilot Program, also known as the “Reflejo Court” in Bexar County, is presided over by County Court 13 Judge Rosie Speedlin-Gonzalez.

Reflejo Court is an intensive twelve-month program consisting of five phases administered by a team that includes the judge, a community supervision officer (CSO), a case manager, treatment providers, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. The program’s goal is to minimize future violence for persons charged with certain family violence offenses.

The Bexar County District Attorney’s office reviews and recommends cases for placement in the program. Defense attorneys can also refer their clients for possible placement in the program.

To be eligible for the program, participants must be charged with a misdemeanor family violence offense and meet the assessment criteria for substance use disorder or chemical dependency. Furthermore, participants cannot have a current felony deferred or adjudicated case. If appropriate for the program based on a screening conducted by the team, those selected are required to attend court, meet with a CSO, and participate in services that address the participant’s criminogenic needs.

These services may include substance use treatment, counseling, cognitive behavioral treatment, and trauma therapy. Reflejo Court requires participants to comply with multiple conditions, including a \$1,000 court services fee. Fees are



waived if a participant is unable to pay or they can be dismissed upon successful completion of the program.

Additionally, the program uses a progressive sanctions and interventions model which rewards participants who comply with program requirements and sanctions participants who are not compliant with requirements. Incentives for program compliance include recognition by the judge, decreased court appearances, and gift cards. Sanctions include increased drug testing, increased court appearances, admonishment by the judge, and jail time. Other conditions may be required as determined by the team. Responses to non-compliance are dependent on the reasons for non-compliance.

Participants who successfully complete the program will have their case dismissed and expunged.

Pilot Program Status and Results

The first participants were placed in the program July 31, 2020. At full capacity, the program projects to serve 100 participants a year. At the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, 81 participants have been served since the program began. There were 20 participants in the program at the close of FY 2024.

PROGRAM STATISTICS BY FISCAL YEAR		
Fiscal Year	Placements	Discharges
2020	3	0
2021	22	8
2022	19	17
2023	20	16
2024	17	20
TOTAL	81	61

The program discharged 36 participants during FY 2023-2024; 25 participants successfully completed the program, seven participants were unsuccessful, and four were discharged for reasons excluded from the TDCJ-CJAD's success rate methodology. The success rates were 83.3% in FY 2023 and 75.0% in FY 2024.



Effectiveness

The program was projected to serve 200 participants in FY 2023-2024. The program did not meet that projection.

Because of the brief period of time since participants have been discharged from the program and the limited number of discharges, TDCJ-CJAD was unable to analyze re-arrest and incarceration rates of participants as a measure of effectiveness in deterring family violence. Recidivism study methodologies are typically calculated using three-year post discharge data. Recidivism outcomes for participants who meet this criterion will be included in the December 2026 report.

Implementation Challenges

Program staff indicated difficulty in finding persons eligible for the program due to its dependence on prosecutors and defense attorneys for referrals. Program staff also indicated many in the criminal justice system are not yet familiar with the program. To address this challenge, in FY 2024, the Reflejo Court program developed a video that is shown during regular court dockets. Program staff further indicated that the intensity of the program has deterred potential candidates from participation in the program.

Funding Sources

For FY 2023-2024, the program received funding from the following sources:

- TDCJ-CJAD provided Bexar County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) a grant of \$374,628.
- The program received \$100,000 from Bexar County.
- The program was given \$54,000 for outpatient treatment from Bexar County diversion funds.
- The Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) provided \$75,000.

The report is required to include “sources of funding available to extend the pilot program to other counties or for a longer period of time, including available, local, state, and federal funding sources.”



Local Funding

Counties considering similar programs should inquire about funding through local government and local regional councils of government. Local philanthropic and business organizations also provide grants.

State Funding

The Office of the Governor, Public Safety Office, Criminal Justice Division, provides funding for specialty courts. TDCJ-CJAD provides diversion program grants and formula funding that is used to support community supervision officers, other court staff, and treatment or other services that are provided through specialty courts. The Health and Human Services Commission provides grants for providing substance use and mental health treatment.

Federal Funding

The United States Department of Justice has multiple grant programs to support criminal justice programs. These programs include the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant and the Violence Against Women Justice and Training Program. Organizations may need to apply through regional councils of government to request funding. Federal drug court funding cannot be spent on violent offenders.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has multiple grants for providing substance use and mental health treatment and services. Two possible grants are the Targeted Capacity Expansion: Special Projects and the Grants to Expand Substance Use Disorder Treatment Capacity in Adult and Family Treatment Drug Courts. Other types of specialty courts addressing substance use disorders are eligible for drug court grants.

Counties should also consider private foundations or large corporations that provide grants; some specifically award grants for criminal justice initiatives.

Recommendations

There are no legislative or other recommendations at this time.



Acknowledgements

TDCJ-CJAD would like to thank Judge Rosie Speedlin-Gonzalez, the Reflejo Court staff and the Bexar County CSCD for their assistance with this report.



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