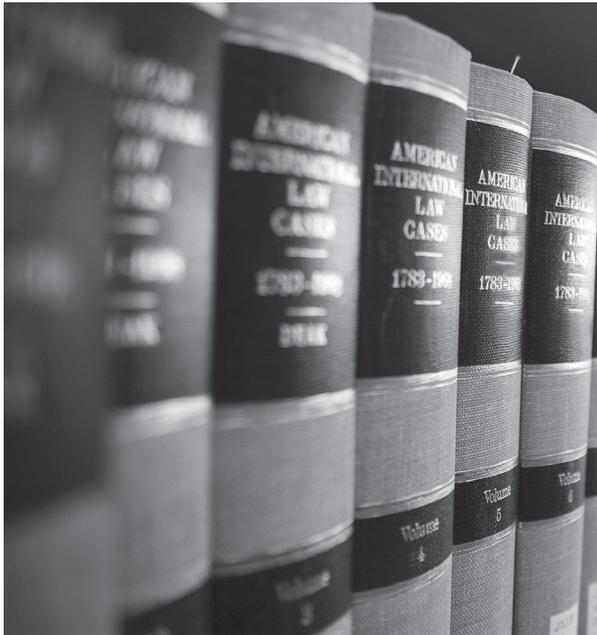


## WHAT INFORMATION WILL I NEED TO FILE A COMPLAINT?

Your complaint must be in writing and include:

- Your name, address, phone number, and email address, if available;
- A description of the facts, including the names of the persons involved, dates of any specific incidents, and the action complained of;
- Any supporting documentation, such as letters to the Chief, Facility Administrator, or juvenile board; and
- A statement that your attempts to resolve the problem locally have been unsuccessful or that you do not wish to contact the local officials.



## WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

Upon receipt, TJJD will review your complaint and attempt to resolve it efficiently. TJJD will advise the juvenile probation department, facility, or juvenile board, as appropriate, about your complaint. If TJJD cannot resolve your complaint but determines that there may be a Code of Ethics violation, TJJD will refer your complaint to the Chief or juvenile board for investigation. TJJD will send you notice that your complaint has been referred and notify you as to its status and resolution.

## WHAT CAN TJJD DO?

TJJD can determine whether a juvenile probation department is in compliance with TJJD minimum standards. If TJJD cites a department or facility for a standards violation, the department or facility must take corrective action. If corrective action is not taken, the department or facility may be cited for an additional failure to adhere to TJJD standards or, in extreme cases, face potential reduction or loss of state funding. Additionally, if it is determined that a person with a certification from TJJD has violated the Code of Ethics, TJJD may take disciplinary action regarding that certification.

## WHAT CAN TJJD NOT DO?

**TJJD has NO legal authority to:**

- Change, modify, or investigate conditions of probation, judgements, or decisions ordered by a court;
- Address complaints regarding attorneys or judges (except as relates to their service on the juvenile board);
- Require that a child be provided any program or services not required by TJJD minimum standards;
- Address employment law issues for employees of a juvenile probation department.

## WHAT IF TJJD CANNOT SOLVE MY PROBLEM?

If you are not satisfied with TJJD's resolution of your complaint, you may elect to pursue any other relief or remedy provided by law.

Prepared by the



TEXAS  
**JUVENILE JUSTICE**  
DEPARTMENT

P.O. Box 12757, Austin, TX 78711  
Phone: 512-490-7130  
tjjd.texas.gov



# A Guide to Filing Complaints Involving Juvenile Probation Programs, Services, or Facilities in Texas

A Publication by the



TEXAS  
**JUVENILE JUSTICE**  
DEPARTMENT

November 2017

## WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF TJJD?

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) provides oversight and funding to local juvenile boards and probation departments. TJJD monitors and sets rules for the operation of juvenile probation departments, secure juvenile detention and correctional facilities, juvenile justice alternative education programs, and other programs operated by or under contract with juvenile boards.



## WHAT KINDS OF COMPLAINTS MAY BE FILED WITH TJJD?

TJJD is responsible for acting on general complaints by or on behalf of a juvenile that relate to juvenile boards and juvenile probation departments, programs, and facilities. Complaints may involve alleged violations of TJJD standards, including the Certified Officer Code of Ethics, or issues regarding the treatment of juveniles. TJJD has no authority to address complaints about court actions or outcomes, including the actions of judges or attorneys, or disagreements with actions or decisions of probation department personnel that do not constitute a Code of Ethics or standards violation. TJJD also investigates complaints including allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation (ANE) of a child under the supervision of a juvenile probation department, program, or facility.

## WHAT IF THE COMPLAINT INVOLVES CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, OR EXPLOITATION?

If you have information that involves possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a child that occurred in any juvenile justice program or facility, you **MUST** immediately report it. To make a report you may:

- Call TJJD at **877-786-7263 (1-877-STOP-ANE)**;
- Call the Child Abuse Hotline at **800-252-5400**; or
- Call your local police or sheriff's department.



## WHO MAY COMPLAINTS BE FILED AGAINST?

In all Texas counties, juvenile probation services are provided by local juvenile probation departments. Probation officers handle caseloads and supervise juvenile offenders. Juvenile supervision officers supervise juveniles in residential detention and correctional facilities in the county. Each probation department has a Chief Juvenile Probation Officer (Chief) who oversees the daily operation of the probation department and who reports directly to the juvenile board. Each facility has a Facility Administrator who oversees the operations of the facility. Some Facility Administrators report directly to the Chief; if the facility is operated under contract with the juvenile board, the Facility Administrator reports to the juvenile board. Juvenile boards typically include district court judges, juvenile court judges, and the county judge. Any of these persons may be the subject of a complaint, although complaints against judges are limited to complaints regarding their conduct as a member of the juvenile board, not their actions in their judicial capacity.

## HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT?

If your complaint involves a juvenile probation department or facility, you are encouraged to first contact the Chief, the Facility Administrator, or the juvenile board to attempt to resolve the complaint locally. If you are unable to resolve the complaint at the local level or if the complaint is about the juvenile board, you may file the complaint directly with TJJD. The county's contact information for the Chief and juvenile board should be available directly from the juvenile probation department, juvenile court, county website, or the public notice sign posted in a conspicuous place in the juvenile probation office or facility. Juvenile probation departments, facilities, and juvenile boards are committed to providing high quality services and should be open and receptive to hearing your concerns and make every effort to resolve your issues locally without TJJD involvement.



## WHAT IF I CANNOT RESOLVE THE PROBLEM LOCALLY OR MY COMPLAINT INVOLVES THE CJPO OR JUVENILE BOARD?

If you and the Chief, Facility Administrator, or juvenile board are unable to resolve the matter or your complaint involves the Chief, Facility Administrator, or juvenile board and you feel you cannot resolve it locally, you may file a written complaint with TJJD. Mail, fax, or email your complaint to:

Texas Juvenile Justice Department  
Attention: Office of General Counsel  
P.O. Box 12757  
Austin, TX 78711  
legalhelp@tjjd.texas.gov  
Fax: 512-490-7930