



INCARCERATED PERSONS QUESTIONNAIRE

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUNSET REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

To obtain more information on how to get involved in the Sunset Process, please contact us at: tleete@criminaljusticecoalition.org, (512) 441-8123 ext. 106, or mail us at the address below.*

Sunset Review Questionnaire

Presently, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and other criminal justice-related agencies, such as the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP), are undergoing an intense evaluation process called Sunset Review. Sunset provides a unique opportunity for the Texas Legislature, and the public, to review various government agencies, offer opinions, and raise concerns about the agencies under review. The Sunset Advisory Commission and staff members will examine an agency and recommend ways it can improve. As part of this evaluation, the Sunset Commission seeks public input. If you are interested in voicing your concerns, please complete the questionnaire below. Your information is important to us because it increases our understanding of the real-life impact of incarceration in Texas and helps our efforts to advocate for much needed reforms.

Please answer the questions provided below if you have experience with TDCJ, or other criminal justice-related agencies (e.g., the Community Justice Assistance Division (CJAD), the Board of Pardons and Paroles, Windham School District, Correctional Managed Health Care, etc.), and you wish to offer input as to how these entities may improve their operations and functions. **Your contact information and name will remain confidential unless you consent to its use below.**

The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) prepared the following questionnaire and TCJC is not affiliated directly with the Sunset Advisory Commission. In order for us to process your input for consideration in our report, we strongly encourage you to complete this questionnaire and return it to us within two weeks of receiving it. **Responses received after January 1, 2012 may not be included in our report;** however, we may still use these responses in other aspects of the Sunset Review process and for further policy considerations.

- ❖ Please mail your completed questionnaire to: **Texas Criminal Justice Coalition**
510 S. Congress, Suite 104
Austin, TX 78704

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in this questionnaire may be shared with legislators, potential media sources, members of the Sunset Commission and their staff, the agencies under review, and members of the public. **Please let us know what you want us to do with your personal information (your name, address, phone, etc.) by checking one of the boxes below.**

- Please keep all my personal information, such as my name, secret.
- You may use my name,* but do not share my personal contact information – email, address, phone, etc.
- You may use my personal information.*

* This information may be shared with legislators, media, the Sunset Commission and their staff, the agencies under review, and members of the community.

QUESTIONS

There may be some questions below that do not apply to you or your situation. To the best of your ability, please answer all the questions that apply to you.

1. Please provide:

Name & TDCJ #:	
Home County:	
Date of Birth & Age:	
Unit/Facility:	
Mailing Address:	

2. If you have family or friends that may want to participate in this questionnaire or get involved in the Sunset Review process, and you would like us to contact them, please provide your family or friend's contact information below (*if you need more room for additional names, please write in below or attach a sheet and write "Question 2"*):

Name	Mailing Address	Email	Phone(s)

3. Please specify the organization(s) on which you wish to provide input (*mark all that apply*):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Texas Department of Criminal Justice and/or the Community Justice Assistance Division | <input type="checkbox"/> Windham School District |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) | <input type="checkbox"/> Correctional Managed Health Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>) _____ | |

4. In the space provided, please tell us how long your current sentence is: _____

5. In the space provided, please tell us how much time you have served on your current sentence: _____

6. Were you employed before you were incarcerated? Yes No

7. Were you in school before you were incarcerated? Yes No

If yes, please tell us what level of education and what you were studying: _____

8. Are you currently enrolled in any education program? Yes No

9. If you are scheduled for release, do you have a reentry plan in place? Yes No

10. Have you ever had problems with substance abuse or addiction? Yes No

If yes, please describe: _____

If yes, have you ever received treatment or assistance while incarcerated? Yes No

11. Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental illness? Yes No

If yes, are you currently taking any medication related to the treatment of your symptoms/illness? Yes No

12. Have you spent time in more than one secured facility or unit (e.g., state jail, prison, etc.)? Yes No

If yes, please tell us how many facilities you have been in: _____

13. Have you spent time in a private facility (run by an organization other than the State of Texas)? Yes No

If yes, please write which facility(s): _____

14. If you have spent time in more than one unit or facility (private or state run), please describe any major differences (good or bad) between the various units or facilities in the space provided below. Please indicate which facility or units that you have been in and are discussing. For example, if one unit uses a different disciplinary system than another, or one unit is stricter in taking away privileges, please describe what you observed and/or experienced.

Unit or Facility	Describe your observations and experiences. (<i>If you need more space, attach a separate page and write "Question 14."</i>)

15. Please indicate the most important issues that you would like to see improved by ranking the topics listed below each lettered category in the order of their importance (1 means the issue is most important, higher numbers mean the issue is less important). For example, if you consider access to medication to be the most important issue within the “Health Care” category, please write a number 1 next to “Access to medication” below “**HEALTH CARE.**” **You will have an opportunity in question 16 to give a more detailed description of the specific problem(s) and solution(s) that the Sunset Advisory Commission should consider in their review.**

I. ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

A. PUBLIC INPUT & INTERACTION - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Transparency, which means how much information the agency shares with the public.
- Public access, which means how clear the agency’s policies and rules are, whether the public has access to them and whether the agency accepts public input in policy and rule development.
- Availability of staff or administration – for questions, assistance, etc.
- Responses to questions and problems – how quick the agency responds to question, issues, problems and complaints from inmates or other members of the public, and how meaningful the agency’s responses are.
- Amount of public participation in the agency’s open meetings and/or board meetings.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Public Input & Interaction issue that should be added to this list.)

B. AGENCY EVALUATIONS & MONITORING - Rank the following in the order of their importance, [1 = most important]

- Need for more evaluations and meaningful reviews of the agency, including self-evaluations.
- Need for an independent group, one that is not part of the agency, to evaluate and monitor the organization – including unannounced visits.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Agency Evaluations & Monitoring issues that should be added to this list.)

C. STAFF - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Agency’s staff training – quality, amount of trainings, etc.
- Number of staff in agency – not enough guards, administration, personnel, etc.
- Poor treatment or abuse by agency staff – for instance, excessive use of force.
- Lack of staff protection from other individuals.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Staff issue that should be added to this list.)

D. TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATION - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Communication between departments, divisions, or other organizations/agencies.
- Problems or lack of communication with the public – for example, the agency’s website is unclear or too hard to use.
- Issues with the record keeping practices of the agency, including receiving important documents, files and records, when transferring or after discharge.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Technology and Communication issue that should be added to this list.)

E. MAILING - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Problems with the mailing process.
- Access to mail and delivery issues.

___ Personal mail being opened and read.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Mailing issue that should be added to this list.)

F. VISITATION - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Frequency, duration, flexibility with family and friend's schedules, etc.

___ Accommodations and special considerations for children.

___ Considerations for people with disabilities.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Visitation issue that should be added to this list.)

G. CLASSIFICATIONS & DESIGNATIONS - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Problems with identification of security threat groups and designation of security threat groups.

___ Issues with sexual predator status/identification.

___ Problems with disciplinary status, including discrepancies with security designation or level.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Classifications & Designations issue that should be added to this list.)

H. TRANSFERS - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Issues with the agency's transfer policies and procedures.

___ Special considerations – for family, ability for family and friends to visit, health issues, access to programs or educational opportunities, etc., when determining where and when to transfer.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Transfer issue that should be added to this list.)

I. GRIEVANCE PROCESS - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Accessibility of grievance process – ease in bringing up a complaint or problem with the agency.

___ Clarity in process and how useful it is in actually addressing problems raised.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Grievance Process issue that should be added to this list.)

II. GENERAL CONDITIONS

A. UNITS & FACILITIES - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Inconsistencies in **conditions and accommodations** in each different unit or facility, including different types of food, different housing, exercise facilities, or other things in each unit.

___ Inconsistencies and discrepancies in **treatment** in each facility or unit – policies and practices are different from unit to unit; people are treated differently in different units.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Units & Facilities issue that should be added to this list.)

B. GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Space and overcrowding.

___ Access to adequate heat during cooler months and/or adequate fans or cooling ventilation during times of extreme heat – also include any issue with heat, such as access to ice during extreme heat.

- ___ Access to adequate drinking water, and quality of drinking water.
- ___ Basic personal health needs – access to showers (especially during hotter months), tooth brush, tooth paste, dental floss, soap, tampons, other women’s products, sun protection for working outside, etc.
- ___ Cleanliness of the facility.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other General Conditions of Confinement issue that should be added to this list.)

C. SAFETY CONDITIONS - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- ___ General feelings that facility and individuals are safe.
- ___ Safety precautions and procedures that are implemented by the agency.
- ___ Dangerous or threatening conditions in the construction and structures in the facilities themselves.
- ___ Racism – among inmates, guards, or personnel.
- ___ Dangerous or threatening conditions from the people, hostile environment, fighting, violence, etc.
- ___ Protection issues from other individuals.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Safety Conditions issue that should be added to this list.)

D. GANGS - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- ___ Identification or misidentification of gangs and gang members.
- ___ Threats, pressure, coercion to join, and general danger from gangs.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Gang issue that should be added to this list.)

E. DISCIPLINE - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- ___ Issues with discipline procedures and administration – what is used for sanction and punishment, etc.
- ___ Inconsistencies in discipline criteria.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Discipline issue that should be added to this list.)

F. ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION (ad. seg.) - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- ___ Criteria for placement and/or removal into and/or out of ad. seg.
- ___ Duration in ad. seg. and frequency of its use.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Administrative Segregation issue that should be added to this list.)

G. PRIVILEGES - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- ___ Granting or revoking privileges – issues with how privileges are earned or taken away.
- ___ Access to privileges and resources like libraries, including access to updated books, law books, resource guides, types of books available, types of other resources available.
- ___ Access to recreation, exercise and entertainment.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Privileges issue that should be added to this list.)

H. COMMISSARY - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Options in goods and services, variety, and quality.

___ Availability and expenses of goods.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Commissary issue that should be added to this list.)

I. PROPERTY - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Storage – where property is kept and whether it is allowed in cell or housing facility.

___ Issues of confiscation – property being taken away by staff.

___ Problems with trying to donate or give property away to family, friends, or other inmates.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Property issue that should be added to this list.)

III. FAMILY & FRIENDS

A. KEEPING FAMILY TOGETHER - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Emphasis or assistance in keeping loved ones together, including accommodations for family visits, allowing phone calls or communication between family and friends, keeping individuals close to where their family lives, etc.

___ Including family and friends in the reentry process, involving them in the reentry plans so that they can be a resource or can help assist in the transition back into the community.

___ Efforts by the agency to keep families informed on the status and condition of incarcerated loved ones, or to allow individuals communicate with family members.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Family & Friends issue that should be added to this list.)

IV. HEALTH & WELL-BEING

A. HEALTH CARE - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Assessment instruments and screening tools – things used to evaluate and decide what types of health issues a person has or may have had.

___ Frequency of health assessments and evaluations (see above) – how often is a person evaluated for health issues.

___ Access to proper medications, including prescription and over the counter medicine.

___ Type and amount of doctor visits, including regularity of women's exams.

___ The quality of health care provided.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Health Care issue that should be added to this list.)

B. MENTAL HEALTH & DISABILITIES - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

___ Lack of resources or services for mental health or disability needs.

___ Accommodations/considerations for mental health or disability issues.

___ Treatment and assistance programs available and tailored to mental health and disability needs.

___ Problems with screening and assessments – tools used to identify/evaluate a disability or mental health issue.

___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Mental Health & Disabilities issue that should be added to this list.)

C. SUBSTANCE ABUSE - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Lack of resources or services for people with substance abuse problems.
- Accommodations/considerations for people suffering with substance abuse.
- Problems with screening and assessments – tools used to evaluate and determine whether someone has a substance abuse problem.
- Access to treatment – criteria and restrictions to participate in treatment and/or programs.
- Availability of substance abuse programs or treatment.
- Usefulness of programs and quality of the programs – do they help and have a positive impact.
- Drug use in prison and difficulties with addiction.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other issue Substance Abuse issue that should be added to this list.)

D. PHYSICAL HEALTH/WELL-BEING - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Availability and frequency of exercise opportunities.
- Variety and options in exercise opportunities, including accommodations for people with disabilities, age appropriate exercise, etc.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Physical Health/Well-being issue that should be added to this list.)

E. FOOD & NUTRITION - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Availability of alternative meals, including issues with dietary restrictions, health issues or food allergies, vegetarian meal options, etc.
- Nutrition and quality of food.
- Inmates served different food than guards.
- Not enough food.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Food & Nutrition issue that should be added to this list.)

V. EDUCATION, TREATMENT & PROGRAMING

A. VOCATIONAL TRAINING & EDUCATION - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Types and variety of programs and education available, including GED or college courses.
- Access issues – how often vocational and educational training programs are available, restrictions to participation, criteria to participate, etc.
- Quality – are the programs helpful, do they need to be improved, and do they produce positive outcomes.
- Importance of volunteers from the community, including how well the agency includes and uses community-based groups or volunteers, and how often the agency gets community involvement.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Vocational Training & Education issue that should be added to this list.)

B. REHABILITATION & TREATMENT PROGRAMS - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Types and variety of rehabilitation and treatment programs available.
- Access issues, how often rehabilitation and treatment programs are available, restrictions to participation, criteria to participate, etc.

- ___ Quality – are the programs helpful, do they need to be improved, and do they produce positive outcomes.
- ___ Taking away the privilege to participate as a tool of discipline.
- ___ Importance of volunteers from the community, including how well the agency includes and uses community-based groups or volunteers, and how often the agency gets community involvement.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Rehabilitation & Treatment Program issue that should be added to this list.)

VI. COMMUNITY SUPERVISION, PAROLE & REENTRY

A. PROBATION/COMMUNITY SUPERVISION - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- ___ Oversight issues, including accessibility of supervisors, communication with supervisors, relationship with supervisors or officials, willingness of supervisors to help and work with individuals.
- ___ Conditions of probations, violations, including administrative or technical violations, etc.
- ___ Access to and variety of treatment, rehabilitation, and education programs, including availability issues or problems.
- ___ Access to programs and additional services outside of just rehabilitation or treatment, like computers or job placement resources, help with resumes, etc.
- ___ Quality of programs, they help and have had a positive impact – they work.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Probation/Community Supervision issue that should be added to this list.)

B. PAROLE BOARD - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- ___ Any problems with communication or relationship with institutional officers, officials, supervisors, parole board, and potential parolee.
- ___ Transparency in the process, how much information family or inmates are provided, wrong information in the parole files, problems understanding the process and how clear the process is.
- ___ Problems with conditions and requirements placed on person on parole or supervision, etc.
- ___ Approval and denial rates and decisions.
- ___ Revocations – inconsistencies, process is unclear, technical or administrative violations, or any other problems.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Parole Board issue that should be added to this list.)

C. PAROLE - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- ___ Oversight issues, including accessibility and communication with supervisors, relationship with supervisors or officials.
- ___ Parole conditions and requirements placed on parolees, revocations, and violations.
- ___ Access to and variety of treatment, rehabilitation, and education programs, including availability issues or problems.
- ___ Access to programs and additional services outside of just rehabilitation or treatment, like computers or job placement resources, help with resumes, job assistance, housing assistance, etc.
- ___ Quality of programs, they help and have had a positive impact – they work.
- ___ Other: _____
(Write in any other Parole issue that should be added to this list.)

D. REENTRY ISSUES - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- Significant barriers to employment and housing – discrimination based on record or other issues.
- Assistance in transitioning to community, general preparation for “reentry,” lack of reentry plan and assistance with making a reentry plan, including guide to resources, availability of recourses and services.
- Access to programs and treatment, continuity of care – after care after leaving a facility, any follow up care provided.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Reentry issue that should be added to this list)

VII. OTHER CATEGORIES

A. VETERANS - Rank the following in the order of their importance [1 = most important]

- No special considerations and a lack of services, resources, or assistance.
- Issues related to Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD), or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), including the evaluation process used to determine whether someone suffers from one of these.
- Issues with substance abuse, including the evaluation tools to determine if individual has a substance abuse problem.
- Mental Health issues.
- Other: _____
(Write in any other Veterans issue that should be added to this list.)

B. OTHER – If there is/are any issue(s) not included in the list above that you think needs to be addressed and explained, please use the space provided below and rank the level of importance as you did in the items above *(if you need more space, attach separate page, write “Question 15,” and indicate which question you are discussing):*

- Your Concern(s): _____
- _____
- _____

16. Based on the issues you identified in question 15 above, please provide a brief description of the specific problem(s) with your **top six** concerns. For instance, if you identified **Health Care** as one of the most important areas to be improved because access to medication is a major problem, please describe your concern(s) and experience in more detail and offer any potential solution(s).

List of Concerns (1 st – 6 th)	Please provide a brief description of the problem(s) and potential solution(s). <i>(If you need more space, attach a separate page write “Question 16,” and indicate which concern you are discussing.)</i>
1st Concern:	Description & Solution:
2nd Concern:	Description & Solution:

3 rd Concern:	Description & Solution:
4 th Concern:	Description & Solution:
5 th Concern:	Description & Solution:
6 th Concern:	Description & Solution:

17. In the space provided below, please provide a few examples of individuals, programs, or experiences with one of the agencies that had a positive impact on you. If a particular officer, case manager, treatment program, educational program, etc., had a positive impact on you, please explain.

What/who positively impacted you?	Please provide a brief description of the positive impact of the person, experience, program, or treatment identified in the left column. <i>(If you need more space, attach a separate page and write "Question 17.")</i>

THANK YOU!

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. We appreciate your willingness to take the time to provide us with this valuable information. Please contact us if you have any additional questions or would like more information. We strongly urge you to get involved and share your knowledge and insight with policy makers. There are many opportunities to voice your concerns during and after the Sunset Review process, and your voice matters!