



# COVID-19 IN TEXAS SECURE JUVENILE FACILITIES

JANUARY 2021  
TEXAS JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION CENTER



## COVID-19

is an infectious disease caused by the novel coronavirus. At this time, there have been over 22 million confirmed cases and over 370 thousand Covid-19 related deaths in the United States since the outbreak began.

## RESPONSE

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) has been actively working to protect the youth remaining in their care by taking steps such as staying informed and engaging in preventative measures in the quickly changing environment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## PRECAUTIONS

TJJD has implemented proactive protective measures including screening all youth and adults entering/in the facility, installing hand-washing stations, requiring masks, reducing group sizes, restricting visits, halting new admissions, routine cleaning, social distancing during education and recreation, restricting travel, permitting telework when possible, and setting aside designated space for medical quarantine.

## YOUTH AND STAFF CASES

**352**

total TJJD staff who have tested positive for COVID-19

**293**

total youth in TJJD secure facilities who have tested positive for COVID-19

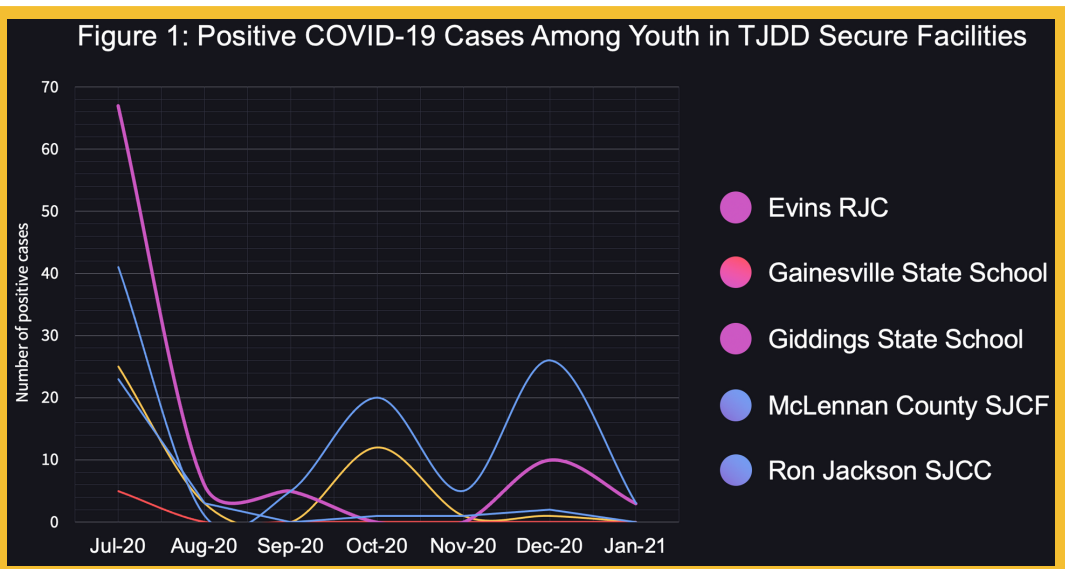
**2,736**

total COVID-19 tests administered to TJJD youth (secure facilities & halfway houses)

\*An additional 22 youth and 41 staff in TJJD halfway houses tested positive for COVID-19.

As of January 13, 2021 - TJJD reported having a total of 315 TJJD youth and 393 staff members who have tested positive for COVID-19. Facility data show that 45 youth and 80 staff who tested positive are from Evins Regional Juvenile Center; 13 youth and 28 staff are from Gainesville State School; 104 youth and 75 staff are from Giddings State School; 101 youth and 93 staff are from McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility; 30 youth and 76 staff are from Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex; and 22 youth and 41 staff are from halfway houses.

Figure 1 below shows monthly rates of positive COVID-19 cases from July 2020 to January 9, 2021. Highest rates were recorded during July 2020 and reduced significantly thereafter. Note that January 2021 is incomplete.



# HOW DO THESE RATES COMPARE?



## COVID-19 IN JUVENILE FACILITIES

COVID-19 infection rates in juvenile facilities across the U.S. consistently climbed in 2020 ([The Sentencing Project](#)), despite efforts to release youth and implement precautions.

Given rising rates, recommendations have been made to further limit incarceration, improve current facility conditions (e.g., supervising isolation by medical personnel), and implementing widespread testing with public data transparency ([The Sentencing Project](#)).

Further, Black youth may be more likely than White youth to contract COVID-19, thus, addressing the unique needs of Black youth must be prioritized ([The Black Perspective Monograph 3](#)).

## COMPARISON WITH TX AND TX PRISONS

Concerns have risen regarding the potential impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations in incarcerated settings. As of January 2021, there were approximately 2,149 known cases per every 10k prisoners, which is 316% the current rate in Texas overall (679.1 cases per 10k). [A recent data report](#) indicates that the state of Texas has experienced more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in prisoners and staff compared to any other state or the federal prison system.

Using the monthly Average Daily Population (ADP) rate within TJJD secure facilities, ratios were calculated for each month from July 2020 to November 2020. (ADP was not yet publicly available for December 2020 or January 2021). The purpose of these calculations is to assess how TJJD has fared in comparison to Texas and Texas prisons.

Consistent with Figure 1 data, Figure 2 below shows the rate of positive cases was particularly high during initial testing. During initial testing in July 2020, there was an approximate rate of 2,396 positive cases per every 10k youth. Thus, in July 2020 TJJD secure facilities reported a positive COVID-19 case rate amongst youth which was 353% of the current rate reported in Texas overall and 111% the rate reported in Texas prisons.

However, as additional precautions were taken and those who tested positive were quarantined, rates quickly declined. The July 2020 rates are a stark difference from what was reported during the last month with complete data available, November 2020, which had a rate of 118 positive cases per every 10k youth. Accordingly, TJJD secure facilities reported a positive COVID-19 case rate amongst youth during November 2020 that is 17% the current rate reported in Texas overall and 5% the rate reported in Texas prisons. It is also notable that the population rate declined during this period from an ADP of 672 in July to an ADP of 590 in November.

## RESOURCES

- [Texas Juvenile Justice Department](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control | COVID-19](#)
- [World Health Organization | Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)
- [Texas Department of State Health Services | Texas COVID-19 Data](#)

## OUR CENTER

The [Texas Juvenile Crime Prevention Center](#) is committed to the reduction of juvenile delinquency and crime in the state of Texas. Through the creation of the Center and the College, Prairie View A&M University supports this mission as it strives to attain national recognition in the areas of education, research, and service. For more information go to: <https://www.pvamu.edu/cojjp/texas-juvenile-crime-prevention-center/>

Figure 2: Rates of Positive COVID-19 Cases in TJDD Secure Facilities

