



COMMISSIONERS COURT  
COMMUNICATION

REFERENCE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

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DATE: 04/02/2024

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RELATED TO THE REORGANIZATION OF CRIMINAL COURTS ADMINISTRATION, REMOVAL OF APPROVAL OF THE CRIMINAL COURTS ADMINISTRATOR POSITION, AND CREATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COURTS ADMINISTRATION**

**COMMISSIONERS COURT ACTION REQUESTED**

It is requested that the Commissioners Court discuss and possibly take action related to the reorganization of Criminal Courts Administration (CCA), removal of approval of the Criminal Courts Administrator position, and the creation of the Department of Courts Administration.

**BACKGROUND**

Tarrant County has forty-three (43) civil, criminal, family, probate, and juvenile courts; twelve (12) probate, family, and juvenile associate judges; and eleven (11) full time and six (6) part time criminal magistrates. The current organizational structure only provides administrative assistance to the criminal courts.

Tarrant County Commissioners Court, through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 budget process, created the Criminal Courts Administrator position effective November 1, 2005.

Effective on October 1, 2019, the Commissioners Court divided the pretrial department into two (2) sections, supervision, and magistrate support, and transferred the sections from the County Administrator's Office to CSCD (supervision) and CCA (pretrial/magistrate support).

The previous pretrial program in the County Administrator's Office had a total of seventeen (17) positions; currently, CCA has twenty-eight (28) authorized positions or an increase of 64.7 % increase in authorized positions.

The criminal justice system in Tarrant County is composed of twenty-one (21) criminal district and county courts and seventeen (17) magistrates. Section 152.2264(a), Tex. Human Resources Code, allows the criminal court judges, with the approval of the Commissioners Court, to utilize a Criminal Courts Administrator to perform the administrative and operational activities of the criminal courts.

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| SUBMITTED BY: | Administrator's Office | PREPARED BY:<br>APPROVED BY: | Russell Schaffner |
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## Reorganization Plan

Staff has identified three (3) components of the current organization that may need to remain under judicial supervision at this time: attorney appointments, grand jury bailiffs, and the Criminal Courts Administrator (8 authorized positions). Any of these components, if continued to be authorized, would need to remain under the judicial organizational structure and report to the criminal judges. The magistrates and staff counsel already report to the judges.

Staff has developed the following components of the reorganization effective July 1, 2024, unless otherwise noted:

1. *Reorganize Criminal Courts Administration affecting sixty-three (63) authorized positions. All positions reporting to the Criminal Courts Administrator, except for two (2) functions (attorney appointments and grand jury bailiffs) will be reorganized into the Department of Courts Administration and Budget and Risk Management. The Department of Courts Administration will report to the County Administrator. The following positions will be reorganized:*
  - a. *Commissioners Court remove approval of the Criminal Courts Administrator, position number 20006023. This is the only fulltime position requested to be eliminated as part of this reorganization.*
  - b. *Auxiliary Court Coordinators reorganized under the Department of Courts Administration as Court Support Assistants (11 authorized positions) are currently not civil service but are graded. The current positions would be reorganized under the Department of Court Administration without the employees needing to reapply for their positions. These positions will be civil service after the reorganization.*
  - c. *Magistrate Support Officers reorganized under the Department of Courts Administration as Pretrial Caseworkers I (28 authorized positions).*
  - d. *Data and Policy Specialist reorganized into Budget and Risk Management.*
2. *Create Director of Department of Courts Administration. The Criminal Courts Administrator position is authorized by statute and activities are limited therein to administrative functions of criminal courts. A new department director position would be created so that the position will not be limited to only criminal courts. The intent is for the Department of Courts Administration to be available to serve criminal, civil, probate, family, and juvenile judges and courts in the county. This position will be created on May 1, 2024.*
3. *Reclass Magistrate Position to Chief Magistrate. Reclass vacant magistrate position number 20007023 to a chief magistrate to whom all full-time and part-time magistrates will report. An amendment to the Salary Administration Guidelines (SAG) will be brought back to court to address this reclassified position.*
4. *There are five (5) temporary positions in CCA. Four (4) temporary positions will be eliminated as of July 1, 2024. Project Position 20007734 will remain.*



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As a component of the reorganization, the Director of Courts Administration, County Administration, Budget and Risk Management, and Judges and court staff will develop performance metrics and milestones for the first fifteen (15) months of the new department. Staff will provide Commissioners Court and Judges updates related to the performance of the department. During the FY 2026 budget process, the department will be evaluated for performance and efficiency measures.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact is a net savings to the general fund of \$173,805.00