



TEXAS CRIMINAL
JUSTICE COALITION

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House Committee on Corrections

Study and review the correctional facilities and processes within Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, and Texas Juvenile Justice Department with emphasis on efficiencies, effectiveness, and recidivism. Examine the existing programmatic approach per facility in the areas of the vocation, education, visitation, rehabilitation, health and mental health services, parole supervision, and reentry initiatives. Evaluate opportunities for partnerships between facilities and private industries to offer education, job training, and potential employment for offenders during incarceration, parole, and final release.

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Jorge Renaud and I am a Policy Analyst for Texas Criminal Justice Coalition. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to present testimony on current visitation policies in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

VISITATION

Hundreds of thousands of Texans have a loved one incarcerated in TDCJ facilities. Consequently, visitation policies and practices impact many Texans and directly affect the ability of families to stay connected during incarceration. Visitation plays an important role in maintaining positive connections between incarcerated individuals and their families and friends.¹ **A recent robust study on the effects of prison visitation on recidivism found that visitation can help reduce recidivism by up to 25 percent.**² Furthermore, the study found that **“visitor friendly” policies “could yield public safety benefits by helping offenders establish a continuum of social support from prison to the community.”**³

It is critical to ensure that visitation policies facilitate the following: safe contact between adults, child-friendly areas, an atmosphere that is conducive to maintaining family relationships, and environments that reduce noise and allow for adequate space.

Key Findings

- Visitation during incarceration has been shown to **reduce recidivism** by up to 25 percent.⁴
- Denying the parent-child connection can lead to behaviors by youth that can spur involvement with the juvenile justice system.⁵ As of 2011, **nearly 95,000 individuals incarcerated in Texas prisons self-reported as having children.**⁶
- Appropriate play with children in a developmentally appropriate setting positively impacts attachment, increasing the probability of establishing stable, healthy relationships and in turn **contributing to the safety and security of the unit.**⁷

VISITATION STUDY MANDATED BY BUDGET RIDER 61

The 83rd Legislative Session mandated TDCJ to perform or commission a study examining the system's visitation policies, with an eye toward "expanding areas that are child-friendly."⁸ The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition invited individuals incarcerated in TDCJ, as well as those who visit individuals incarcerated in TDCJ, to respond to surveys designed to elicit their concerns and feedback about visitation. Below we have summarized various preliminary findings from our survey of visitors.

Key Findings

- Eight hundred twenty-three (823) visitors to Texas prisons responded to our survey. Of those, 84 percent were women, and 35 percent **traveled more than four hours** to visit their loved ones.
- At least one-fourth (25%) of all respondents reported having been turned away and denied visitation for one reason or another **after** having arrived at the TDCJ unit for their visit.
- At least 60 percent of respondents brought children to visit incarcerated individuals; 30 percent of those children were under three years old.
- However, 88 percent of respondents said the facility they visited made no effort to provide children with any type of activity, and 85 percent said there was no separate area for smaller children so they could interact with their incarcerated parent.

IMPORTANT QUOTES FROM OUR SURVEY OF FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Respondents Speak About Children

"There is NO place for the child have any interactions with the inmate, try holding two year old child on your lap for four hours and tell me how you feel."

"Maybe a separate area for children and inmates? It's hard for small children to wait and then be expected to 'behave' for a 2-hr visit. No place to play and run around."

"Toys, books, coloring activities would be great where inmate could interact in a child friendly way. A play area for inmates with children. It was very hard to get food because I could not leave children with inmate when I went to get food. Very unpleasant experiences with children. They were often told to be "quiet". We would have to make up word games etc."

"Playing on the floor would be great. Maybe some books so the offender could read to the child. The biggest problem I see is the guards. They can be so hateful to the offender in front of their kids. Also I have started a push to have diaper changing stations in all the restroom. There is not one at Lewis Unit I was told to sit on the commode and put him across my lap. That is just unacceptable. I think we all just want the time the offender gets to spend with the children to be positive. I don't think laughing loudly or even crying is that offensive to anyone in the visitation area. I know it would be next to impossible but maybe separate areas for child visits."

"The officers should also take some social and psychological training on how to appropriately interact with men and their children that is not more emotionally harmful. I once saw an officer yell at an inmate because a baby screamed. I realize that we all don't like hearing a baby scream, but there were other families around that saw that, it was not the inmate's fault that happened and yet he was being blamed in front of everyone in the

visitation area, and there is nothing he could do or say in return - because as a family member we all know our visits are threatened to be terminated at any second...and our loved one will lose visiting privileges, or risk getting a case should he disagree with the officer. Shaming and humiliating families for the actions of a child is unnecessary."

"Children in supervised designated area, communication modules where there is privacy of communication, and you can hear what each other is saying....children are able to hear inappropriate, obscene, profanity, racial slur comments...extreme exposing children to offensive and provocative language....provide a separate child friendly supervised environment not to impose on taxpayers, but to tell visitors, in order to bring children, must have designated visitor brought with children, min. of 2 visitors with children visitation."

Respondents Speak About Being Denied Visits

"I was told it was a holiday. I asked what holiday at the gate and the guy did not know."

"The dress I wore that day was sleeveless, and I was instructed where I could buy a sweater. After returning with a sweater, 104 degrees, I was told the visitor card had not been processed and he would not be able to have visitors that day."

"I called on Saturday morning before my Sunday visit. The person who answered said "Well, my computer shows that he's here." When I arrived on Sunday the Warden came out to tell me my brother had been sent to Galveston the previous Thursday!"

"I have had to go back and sit in the car but it was the way they turn you away, they degrade you, humiliate you, yell at you, like you are a dog. Henley Unit."

"I had been in the hospital and was required to have a picc line in my arm for antibiotic. I called to make sure it was ok to visit and was told yes so I drove the three hours to get there only to be told I had to have a doctor's note stating why I needed it."

"Twice I was told that I was dressed inappropriately; however, my clothing has always been within the guidelines of the instructions provided online and posted on the gate at the prison. The guards did not follow the appropriate protocol of contacting the supervisor, having the supervisor make the determination and then offer me a "gown" provided by TDCJ. Their own rules were not followed. And, I was not dressed inappropriately or outside of the rules."

"Different Units have different policies. My husband was transferred from one unit to another. My open toe shoes that I had worn for over a year at one unit, was not acceptable at this unit without pantyhose. I was instructed to go approx 5 miles out to a chevron to purchase pantyhose. (Ramsey Unit) Another instance happened, where my bra beeped. I was told that I either have to sign a waiver and lift my bra to show my breasts to a female officer or "go buy a padded bra at wal-mart". (Officer's words at Darrington Unit) Another time I took my husband's niece to visit. She was a baby at the time (4 months), I was told she could not wear her bib. That time I protested because in that visitation area, they do NOT offer napkins, and when they do give you something to wipe your hands with it is a section from a roll of toilet paper. I refused to leave until the officer called the warden, she did and "he approved it this time" (Stevenson Unit) My mother in law went to visit my husband with me and she was turned down because her pants were too tight. However she had a long shirt that went well pass private areas. There was nothing revealing or bulging with her outfit. (Stevenson Unit)"

Respondents Speak About General Visitation Issues

"I wanted to write letters and complain about many things during visitation, but because I was afraid it would be taken out on my friend, I kept my mouth shut. This was the prevailing attitude among most of the other visitors. The prison staff made the visitation unnecessarily stressful, and because of the staff's attitudes and overall dispositions, it made it harder for me to leave my loved one in their care. It was an all day trip, 4 hours there and back. I usually cried or threw up most of the way home. As a whole, these men and women, were the most unhelpful, unkind and downright mean people I have ever had dealings with. I'm sure there must have been a pleasant officer or two, but the others were so horrible, that the decent ones were quickly forgotten. Visiting at prison is a bad situation to begin with but Correctional Officers did everything in their power to make it the absolute worst! I can think of nothing good to say about them. I remember standing/waiting on the asphalt on a hot humid day, and having to listen to officers who were sitting and protected from the sun with their large iced drinks, complaining about the heat. No age discrimination at all -- the young as well as the elderly stood waiting -- all of us dripping with sweat and all of us, were too afraid to complain."

"I would like to hug and kiss my son as much as I want to in my little 2 hour visit. I would like to be able to sit beside him so I can touch him. I would like to be able to get a picture when we visit instead of if with happen to hit the right weekend. I would like to have a meal with my son. I would like to be able to get up and move around, take the children walking. Anything besides the sitting across a table for 2 hours."

"Do the visits have to remain on Saturday and Sunday? I mean some of us work or are able to take certain days off and we lose money when our jobs require us to work on weekends but give us off Monday and Tuesday. Consider the children's perspective. And allow family visits. Increase the allotted amount of time at visits. Encourage more interaction on behalf of the prison, it is always the ministries who run family events, like marriage seminars, a picnic day, etc...TDCJ should do the same, maybe not every visit, but what is wrong with a handful of times a year?"

Citations

¹ Texas Department of Criminal Justice, *General Information Guide for Families of Offenders*, December 2012.

² Minnesota Department of Corrections, *The Effects of Prison Visitation on Offender Recidivism*, November 2011.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Charlene Wear Simmons, Ph.D., *Children of Incarcerated Parents*, Prepared at the request of Assemblymember Kerry Mazzone, California Research Bureau (CRB) Note Vol. 7, No. 2, March 2000, p. 1; with regards to "children whose parents have been arrested and incarcerated [...] the behavioral consequences can be severe, absent positive intervention – emotional withdrawal, failure in school, delinquency and risk of intergenerational incarceration."

⁶ Data gleaned from a TDCJ information request, 2011; actual number: 94,635. Note additionally: 8,150 inmates in state jails self-reported children, while 2,160 individuals in Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facilities self-reported children; *information available upon request*.

⁷ S. Pollack, "Parent-child connections: The essential component for positive youth development and mental health, safe communities and academic achievement," *New Directions for Youth Development*, vol. 2004 (103), 2004, pp. 17-30; information also taken from: Perry, B.D. (n.d.) Bonding and Attachment in Maltreated Children: Consequences of emotional neglect in childhood.

⁸ http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/GAA/General_Appropriations_Act_2014-15.pdf



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PRELIMINARY REPORT FINDINGS

A SURVEY OF INMATES AND VISITORS ON TDCJ VISTATION POLICIES

Submitted to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, April 9, 2014

BACKGROUND

The 83rd Legislature passed Budget Rider 61, mandating the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to either perform or commission a study examining the prison system’s visitation policies, with an eye toward expanding areas that are child-friendly. In order to support the mandated study, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) conducted independent surveys of inmates and visitors on TDCJ visitation policies. The preliminary findings of those surveys are included below.

METHODOLOGY

TCJC surveyed both individuals who are currently incarcerated and visitors to those who are currently incarcerated. The surveys of those currently incarcerated were distributed by mail to various TDCJ facilities, while surveys of visitors were completed online on SurveyMonkey. TCJC received 323 responses from individuals who are currently incarcerated and received 823 responses from visitors (714 full responses, 109 partial responses).

Due to the preliminary nature of this report, no recommendations are set forth. TCJC will analyze the open-ended responses from the survey, which are not included in this report, and further analyze the data from the closed responses (provided below) to develop recommendations.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: INCARCERATED PERSONS

Demographics

| Age | |
|---------|--------|
| 18-25 | 1.55% |
| 26-35 | 15.17% |
| 36-45 | 28.79% |
| 46-60 | 43.34% |
| Over 60 | 11.15% |

| Gender | |
|--------|--------|
| Female | 7.43% |
| Male | 92.57% |

| Ethnicity/Race | |
|--------------------|--------|
| White/non-Hispanic | 48.30% |
| Hispanic | 17.96% |
| African American | 30.96% |
| American Indian | 2.17% |
| Asian American | 0.62% |

Relationship to Visitor(s)

| Relationship | Received Visits From (all) | Received Most Visits From (one) |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Spouse | 29.72% | 20.43% |
| Child(ren) | 38.39% | 10.84% |
| Mother | 54.49% | 26.93% |
| Father | 29.41% | 3.10% |
| Sibling | 55.42% | 13.31% |
| Aunt | 16.72% | 0.93% |

| Relationship | Received Visits From (all) | Received Most Visits From (one) |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Uncle | 14.24% | 0.31% |
| Grandparent | 11.76% | 0.62% |
| Friend | 40.87% | 6.81% |
| Attorney | 17.03% | 1.55% |
| Other | 32.20% | 15.17% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: INCARCERATED PERSONS (CONTINUED)

Visit Frequency

| How often do you receive visitors? | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| 0-3 times/year | 50.15% |
| 4-6 times/year | 22.60% |
| 7-9 times/year | 6.19% |
| 10 or more times/year | 21.05% |

Notification Time

| On average, how long does it take for your visit to begin from the time you are notified that a visitor has arrived? | |
|--|--------|
| 0-15 minutes | 29.81% |
| 15-30 minutes | 46.27% |
| 30-60 minutes | 21.43% |
| 60 or more minutes | 2.48% |

Visit Conditions

| How much of a barrier has the wire and mesh presented to your ability to communicate with the person who is visiting you? | |
|---|--------|
| Not a barrier | 16.77% |
| Somewhat of a barrier | 14.91% |
| Moderate barrier | 17.70% |
| Extreme barrier | 21.43% |
| Not applicable | 29.19% |

| How would you describe the noise level during a normal visit? | |
|---|--------|
| Not at all loud | 10.56% |
| Not very loud | 28.26% |
| Somewhat loud | 36.65% |
| Very loud | 20.50% |
| Not applicable | 4.04% |

| If you have not been allowed "contact" visits with the person who is visiting you, which of the following methods of conversation would you prefer? | |
|---|--------|
| Telephone through glass | 40.41% |
| Talking through mesh | 41.52% |
| Other | 18.34% |

| Have you had to sit outside on a hot day without cover during an outside contact visit? | |
|---|--------|
| Yes | 18.07% |
| No | 60.75% |
| Not applicable (not allowed contact visits) | 21.18% |

| If you have had to sit outside on a hot day, have you been allowed to drink cold water? | |
|---|--------|
| Yes | 27.27% |
| No | 30.83% |
| Not applicable | 41.90% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: INCARCERATED PERSONS (CONTINUED)

Visit Termination

| Have you ever had a visit terminated after it began? | |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 8.41% |
| No | 81.59% |

| If you have ever had a visit terminated, were you given a warning? | |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 22.22% |
| No | 77.78% |

| If you have ever had a visit terminated due to misbehavior, do you feel that you were given a sufficient amount of time to change the behavior in question? | |
|---|--------|
| Yes | 11.11% |
| No | 88.89% |

Disability Issues

| Are you disabled? | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Yes | 8.41% |
| No | 81.59% |

| Overall, how satisfied are you that the TDCJ visitation areas are the best they can be, given the age of the unit(s) and the limited space available? | |
|---|--------|
| Very satisfied | 4.67% |
| Somewhat satisfied | 23.99% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 28.04% |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 26.79% |
| Very dissatisfied | 16.51% |

| If you are disabled, how satisfied have you been with the accommodations in the visitation area? | |
|--|--------|
| Very satisfied | 5.49% |
| Somewhat satisfied | 16.48% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 27.47% |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 27.47% |
| Very dissatisfied | 23.08% |

Children

| In general, how many children do you expect to see in a single visit? | |
|---|--------|
| 1 | 11.84% |
| 2 | 21.18% |
| 3 | 8.41% |
| 4 | 2.18% |
| 5 | 0.62% |
| More than 5 | 0.93% |
| N/A | 54.83% |

| What were the ages of these children at the time of your most recent visit? (check all that apply) | |
|--|--------|
| One month-3 years | 24.46% |
| 4-7 years | 34.53% |
| 8-11 years | 41.73% |
| 12-17 years | 34.53% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: INCARCERATED PERSONS (CONTINUED)

Visitation Policies

| If you have had visits on more than one unit, how consistent are the visitation policies from unit to unit? | |
|---|--------|
| Very consistent | 7.17% |
| Somewhat consistent | 24.92% |
| Not very consistent | 22.74% |
| Not at all consistent | 11.84% |
| Not applicable | 33.33% |

| In your experience, how frequently have officers followed stated visitation policy? | |
|---|--------|
| Never | 7.21% |
| Rarely | 16.93% |
| Sometimes | 41.38% |
| Often | 27.27% |
| Always | 7.21% |

| How helpful have the following resources been in providing information about visitation policies? | | | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| | An officer | Another incarcerated individual | A visitor | Offender orientation handbook | Brochure | Bulletin board in visitation area |
| Very helpful | 6.85% | 34.89% | 18.07% | 18.07% | 4.67% | 4.98% |
| Somewhat helpful | 29.28% | 40.50% | 29.28% | 38.94% | 13.71% | 14.64% |
| Not very helpful | 28.97% | 6.85% | 14.02% | 21.50% | 9.35% | 13.08% |
| Not helpful at all | 23.36% | 5.30% | 9.97% | 9.03% | 13.71% | 20.25% |
| Unsure/Not applicable | 11.53% | 12.46% | 28.66% | 12.46% | 58.57% | 47.04% |

| How satisfied are you that the visitation policies are fair? | |
|--|--------|
| Very satisfied | 4.67% |
| Moderately satisfied | 22.43% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 22.43% |
| Only slightly satisfied | 28.04% |
| Not at all satisfied | 22.43% |

| When an officer has taken the time to explain a policy to you, how clear has the explanation been? | |
|--|--------|
| Very clear | 12.46% |
| Somewhat clear | 27.41% |
| Somewhat unclear | 23.68% |
| Very unclear | 10.28% |
| Not applicable | 26.17% |

Interaction with Officers

| In general, how respectful have the correctional officers been to you during the entire visitation process? | |
|---|--------|
| Very respectful | 18.07% |
| Somewhat respectful | 34.58% |
| Neither respectful nor disrespectful | 24.61% |
| Not very respectful | 17.76% |
| Not at all respectful | 4.98% |

| In general, how respectful have the officers been to your visitors? | |
|---|--------|
| Very respectful | 22.74% |
| Somewhat respectful | 38.01% |
| Neither respectful nor disrespectful | 19.00% |
| Not very respectful | 16.20% |
| Not at all respectful | 4.05% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: INCARCERATED PERSONS (CONTINUED)

| How frequently do you think that officers do all they can to facilitate a good visit? | |
|---|--------|
| Always | 4.67% |
| Usually | 24.61% |
| Sometimes | 37.07% |
| Rarely | 22.43% |
| Never | 11.21% |

| If you have asked to see higher-ranking officers (majors or wardens) to resolve a problem directly related to a visit, have those requests to see an officer always been fulfilled? | |
|---|--------|
| Yes | 14.67% |
| No | 44.55% |
| Not Applicable | 40.81% |

| In general, how helpful have the higher-ranking officers (majors or wardens) been about resolving visitation problems? | |
|--|--------|
| Very helpful | 11.84% |
| Somewhat helpful | 21.50% |
| Not very helpful | 19.63% |
| Not at all helpful | 13.40% |
| Not applicable | 33.64% |

| How frequently have the officers been professional and courteous when searching you before or after visits? | |
|---|--------|
| Always | 20.25% |
| Usually | 33.96% |
| Sometimes | 26.48% |
| Rarely | 11.21% |
| Never | 8.10% |

| How willing would you be to accept more stringent measures if you were allowed more contact visits? | |
|---|--------|
| Very willing | 54.83% |
| Somewhat willing | 15.89% |
| Indifferent | 18.69% |
| Not very willing | 5.61% |
| Not at all willing | 4.98% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: VISITORS OF INCARCERATED PERSONS

Demographics

| Age | |
|---------|--------|
| 18-25 | 5.10% |
| 26-35 | 16.16% |
| 36-45 | 19.08% |
| 46-60 | 33.54% |
| Over 60 | 26.12% |

| Gender | |
|--------|--------|
| Female | 84.81% |
| Male | 15.19% |

| Ethnicity/Race | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| White/non-Hispanic | 65.49% |
| Hispanic | 20.78% |
| African American | 11.79% |
| American Indian | 1.09% |
| Asian American | 0.49% |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 0.36% |

Relationship to Incarcerated Person

| | | | |
|---------|--------|-------------|--------|
| Mother | 23.45% | Uncle | 0.49% |
| Father | 3.40% | Grandparent | 1.46% |
| Child | 3.04% | Spouse | 32.32% |
| Sibling | 7.41% | Friend | 22.99% |
| Aunt | 1.34% | Attorney | 5.10% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: VISITORS OF INCARCERATED PERSONS (CONTINUED)

Children

| Have you brought children to visit? | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Yes | 39.37% |
| No | 60.63% |

| If you did bring children to visit, were these the children of the person you were visiting? | |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 57.98% |
| No | 42.02% |

| How many children did you bring? | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | 38.34% |
| 2 | 37.38% |
| 3 | 14.70% |
| 4 | 6.71% |
| 5 | 1.60% |
| More than 5 | 1.28% |

| What were the ages of these children at the time of your most recent visit? (check all that apply) | |
|--|--------|
| One month-3 years | 30.16% |
| 4-7 years | 40.63% |
| 8-11 years | 35.56% |
| 12-17 years | 39.37% |

| Does the facility make an effort to provide children with any type of activity while waiting for the visit to begin? | |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 4.03% |
| No | 87.63% |
| Not sure | 8.33% |

| Is there a separate area for smaller children who may not interact with the prisoner? | |
|---|--------|
| Yes | 1.64% |
| No | 85.21% |
| Not sure | 13.15% |

Transportation

| How did you get to the prison unit for your most recent visit? (check all that apply) | |
|---|--------|
| Drove myself | 86.64% |
| Carpooled | 12.06% |
| Bus | 0.52% |
| Plane | 8.43% |

| How often have you visited? | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Less than once a year | 7.40% |
| Once a year | 6.76% |
| A few times a year | 27.68% |
| Every month | 23.34% |
| More than once a month | 34.82% |

| What is the average total cost of a visit? Include transportation, food, and lodging costs if necessary. | |
|--|--------|
| \$0-19 | 2.86% |
| \$20-49 | 9.90% |
| \$50-99 | 29.82% |
| \$100-199 | 23.05% |
| \$200-299 | 13.54% |
| \$300-399 | 4.56% |
| \$400-499 | 3.52% |
| \$500-999 | 5.21% |
| \$1000 or more | 7.55% |

| How long has it taken you to get to the facility from your home, on average? | |
|--|--------|
| Less than 1 hour | 7.65% |
| 1-2 hours | 19.39% |
| 2-3 hours | 18.75% |
| 3-4 hours | 19.01% |
| More than 4 hours | 35.20% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: VISITORS OF INCARCERATED PERSONS (CONTINUED)

Visitation Conditions

| What is the average time you have usually waited before being allowed to begin your visit? | |
|--|--------|
| Less than 15 minutes | 8.16% |
| 15-30 minutes | 39.16% |
| 30-45 minutes | 28.32% |
| 45 minutes-1 hour | 14.80% |
| Longer than 1 hour | 9.57% |

| Have you ever been turned away once you have arrived for a visit? | |
|---|--------|
| Yes | 25.00% |
| No | 75.00% |

| Once you notify an officer that you are at the facility to visit someone, where have you normally been asked to wait? | |
|---|--------|
| Parking lot | 14.27% |
| Specific waiting area | 31.57% |
| Actual visitation area | 54.16% |

| If the unit has an actual waiting area, were the seating and restroom facilities adequate? | |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 42.93% |
| No | 22.99% |
| Not applicable—no waiting area | 34.08% |

| How much of a barrier has the wire and mesh presented to your ability to communicate with the person you were visiting? | |
|---|--------|
| Not a barrier | 41.08% |
| Somewhat of a barrier | 18.10% |
| Moderate barrier | 18.63% |
| Extreme barrier | 22.19% |

| How would you describe the noise level during a normal visit? | |
|---|--------|
| Very loud | 26.95% |
| Somewhat loud | 46.63% |
| Not very loud | 21.66% |
| Not loud at all | 4.76% |

| Do you feel that the options in the vending machines have been adequate? | |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 29.19% |
| No | 60.90% |
| No opinion | 9.91% |

| If you have not been allowed “contact” visits with the person you visited, which of the following methods of conversation would you prefer? | |
|---|--------|
| Telephone through glass | 35.54% |
| Talking through mesh | 64.46% |

| Have you had to sit outside on a hot day without cover during an outside contact visit? | |
|---|--------|
| Yes | 24.17% |
| No | 75.83% |

| If you have had to sit outside on a hot day, have you been allowed to buy or drink cold water? | |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 70.00% |
| No | 30.00% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: VISITORS OF INCARCERATED PERSONS (CONTINUED)

Disability Issues

| Are you disabled? | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Yes | 15.23% |
| No | 84.77% |

| If you are disabled, how satisfied have you been with the accommodations in the visitation area? | |
|--|--------|
| Very satisfied | 13.27% |
| Somewhat satisfied | 34.51% |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 28.32% |
| Very dissatisfied | 23.89% |

| Overall, how satisfied are you that the TDCJ visitation areas are the best they can be, given the age of the unit(s) and the limited space available? | |
|---|--------|
| Very satisfied | 7.69% |
| Somewhat satisfied | 45.09% |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 29.44% |
| Very dissatisfied | 17.77% |

Visitation Policies

| If you have had visits on more than one unit, how consistent are the visitation policies from unit to unit? | |
|---|--------|
| Very consistent | 10.68% |
| Somewhat consistent | 37.05% |
| Not very consistent | 31.59% |
| Not at all consistent | 20.68% |

| In your experience, how frequently have officers followed stated visitation policy? | |
|---|--------|
| Never | 5.58% |
| Rarely | 10.18% |
| Sometimes | 31.94% |
| Often | 35.01% |
| Always | 17.29% |

| How helpful have the following resources been in providing information about visitation policies? | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---------|-----------------|----------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Incarcerated individual | Officer | Another visitor | Brochure | TDCJ website | Bulletin board in visitation area |
| Very helpful | 51.52% | 12.47% | 33.24% | 10.80% | 16.90% | 7.62% |
| Somewhat helpful | 31.02% | 41.97% | 41.83% | 29.09% | 45.15% | 22.99% |
| Not very helpful | 7.06% | 24.93% | 5.96% | 15.65% | 15.37% | 20.91% |
| Not helpful at all | 5.54% | 16.34% | 4.02% | 11.50% | 9.42% | 18.70% |
| Unsure/Not applicable | 4.85% | 4.29% | 14.96% | 32.96% | 13.16% | 29.78% |

| How satisfied are you that the visitation policies are fair? | |
|--|--------|
| Not at all satisfied | 22.99% |
| Only slightly satisfied | 33.10% |
| Moderately satisfied | 34.49% |
| Very satisfied | 9.42% |

| When an officer has taken the time to explain a policy to you, how clear has the explanation been? | |
|--|--------|
| Very clear | 20.08% |
| Somewhat clear | 28.95% |
| Somewhat unclear | 13.30% |
| Very unclear | 11.22% |
| Doesn't apply | 26.45% |

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: VISITORS OF INCARCERATED PERSONS (CONTINUED)

Interaction with Officers

| In general, how respectful have the correctional officers been to you when you have visited? | |
|--|--------|
| Very respectful | 24.93% |
| Somewhat respectful | 30.95% |
| Respectful | 20.45% |
| Not very respectful | 17.79% |
| Not at all respectful | 5.88% |

| In general, how respectful have the correctional officers been to the person you have visited? | |
|--|--------|
| Very respectful | 12.89% |
| Somewhat respectful | 33.05% |
| Respectful | 21.85% |
| Not very respectful | 23.11% |
| Not at all respectful | 9.10% |

| How frequently do you believe TDCJ correctional officers do all they can to facilitate a good visit? | |
|--|--------|
| Always | 6.58% |
| Usually | 29.69% |
| Sometimes | 36.83% |
| Rarely | 20.45% |
| Never | 6.44% |

| In your experience, how frequently have the correctional officers been professional and courteous when searching you before or after visits? | |
|--|--------|
| Always | 36.13% |
| Usually | 37.68% |
| Sometimes | 17.93% |
| Rarely | 5.46% |
| Never | 2.80% |

| If you have asked to see higher-ranking officers (majors or wardens), have those requests always been fulfilled? | |
|--|--------|
| Yes | 54.77% |
| No | 45.23% |

| In general, how helpful have the higher-ranking officers (majors or wardens) been during your visits? | |
|---|--------|
| Very helpful | 16.81% |
| Somewhat helpful | 28.71% |
| Not very helpful | 11.62% |
| Not at all helpful | 10.36% |
| Doesn't apply | 32.49% |

| How willing would you be to accept more stringent security measures if you were allowed more contact visits? | |
|--|--------|
| Very willing | 53.78% |
| Somewhat willing | 15.97% |
| Willing | 18.49% |
| Not very willing | 7.42% |
| Not at all willing | 4.34% |