



Cameron County Cost Stabilization and Effectiveness Study

FINAL REPORT

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Introduction

Cameron County engaged MGT of America, Inc. to conduct a review of the operations of four of its departments/functional areas: building maintenance, the tax assessor-collector's office, courthouse security, and jail operations.

The economic downturn of recent years has had a large impact on the county's fiscal condition. The commissioners' court has found itself in the position of having to choose from numerous options in making difficult decisions on where to cut costs in county government while still striving to maintain a high standard of public services to the residents of Cameron County.

In addition to the economic downturn, other current events have transpired that have adversely impacted the county's financial state. The ongoing Mexican drug war violence occurring right across the county's border has had a financial impact on the customary revenues from border crossings on the county's three international bridges, the county seeing up to approximately a 50 percent decrease in these revenues of late. While the county had to make the very difficult decision of raising its tax rate this fiscal year, reviews such as the one undertaken for this report are a step in beginning to look at the efficiency of certain county operations, with an eye toward possible changes that could bring about cost savings and cost reductions, to help the county's financial health moving into the future.

The assessments of the four areas that follow in the report reflect the consultants' review of Cameron County's operations in building maintenance, the tax assessor-collector's office, courthouse security and jail operations.

In performing these assessments, the MGT consulting teams:

1. Gathered and analyzed data made available by the four areas reviewed, as well as from the county auditor's office.
2. Collected and analyzed "peer" data, to provide a comparative analysis of key elements of operations with select other Texas counties.
3. Conducted on-site visits to each of the four areas, to view operations first hand.
4. Conducted interviews with key county personnel of each of the four areas.
5. Prepared an assessment report, with findings and recommendations based on the review and analysis of the four areas.

Organization of Report

The report consists of an introduction, four chapters comprising the assessments, and appendices:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Building Maintenance
- Chapter 3: Tax Assessor-Collector's Office
- Chapter 4: Courthouse Security
- Chapter 5: Jail Operations
- Appendices

Building Maintenance

This chapter presents the results of the review of the Cameron County Building Maintenance Department. The chapter is organized in the following sections:

- Organizational structure and planning;
- Staffing and funding;
- Custodial services; and
- Energy management.



An effective building maintenance program is a key element in the efficient management of a governmental agency. The maintenance of public facilities protects the public resources and enhances the operations of the agency's departments.

Organizational Structure and Planning

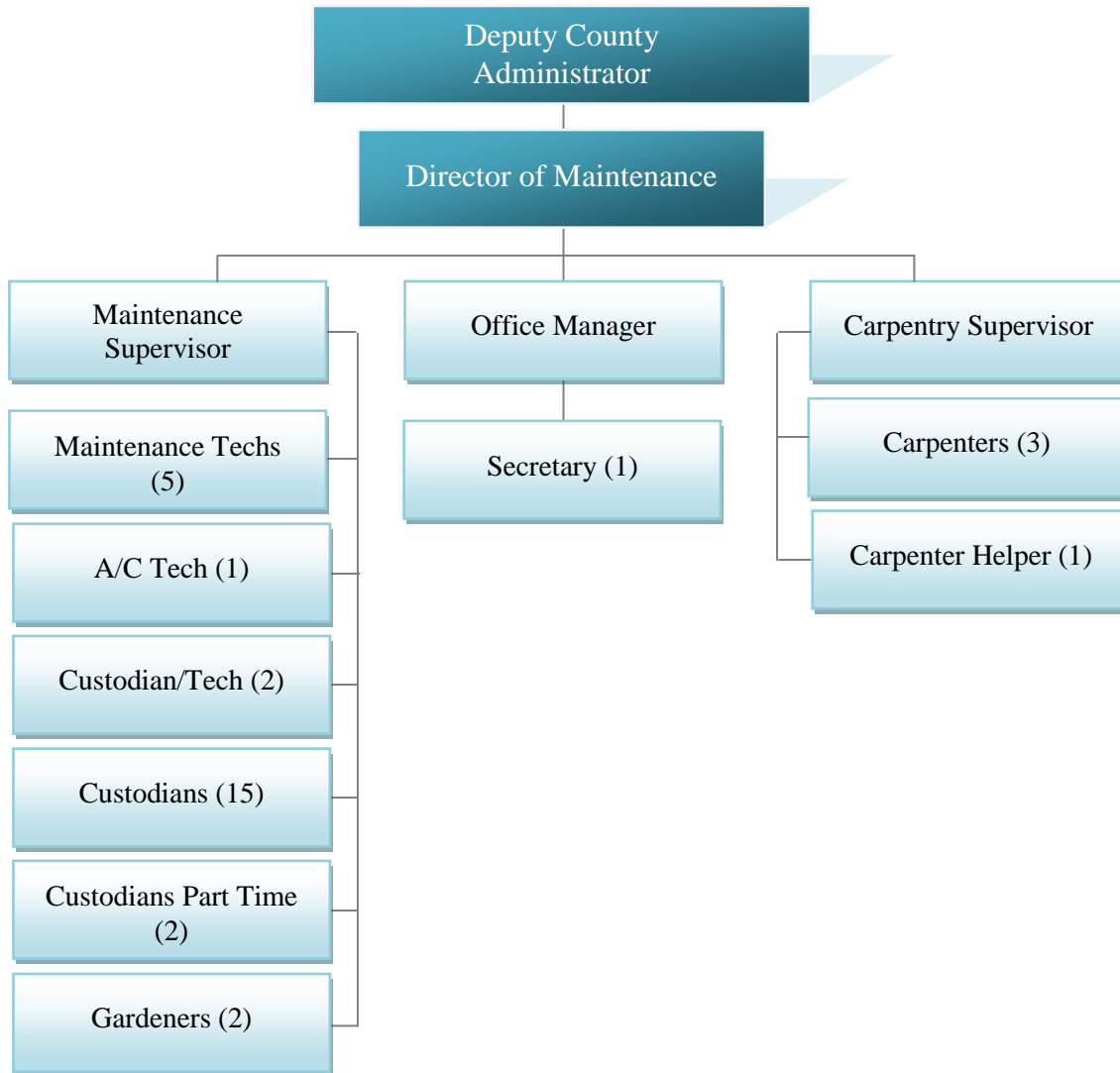
The Cameron County Building Maintenance Department is responsible for operating, maintaining, and cleaning the county's facilities which encompass more than 460,000 gross square feet. The department is organized into three basic groups: the office staff, the maintenance and custodial staff, and the carpentry staff.

FINDING

The Building Maintenance Department's organizational structure separates the carpenters from the maintenance technicians with an additional supervisor.

Exhibit 1 presents the organization chart for the department. The department is under the leadership of the Director of Maintenance who reports directly to the Deputy County Administrator. The director is supported by an office manager and secretary, and supervises the maintenance supervisor and the carpentry supervisor.

**Exhibit 1
Building Maintenance Department
Organization Chart 2011**



Source: Cameron County Building Maintenance Department, 2011.

The maintenance supervisor is responsible for the maintenance technicians, the custodians, and the gardeners. The carpentry supervisor oversees the four carpenters who provide carpentry/cabinetry services but also do maintenance tasks. One supervisor for four staff is a low supervisor-to-staff ratio, especially when the carpenters perform maintenance tasks.

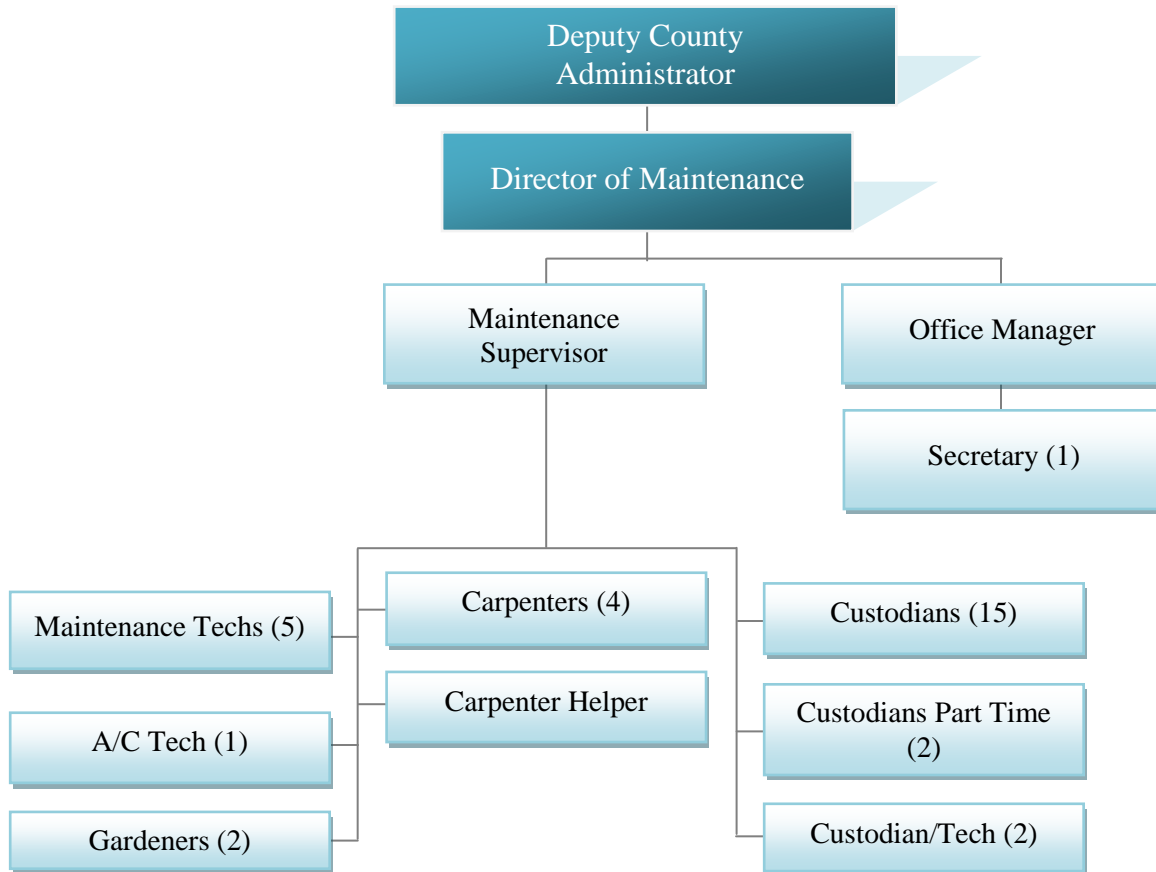
The separation of trades is an historical custom arising out of the fact that each trade would work out of its own shop and never performed duties out of their trade. This separation of the trades is no longer the case, especially in small maintenance operations like Cameron County.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Eliminate the carpentry supervisor position and have one maintenance supervisor over all maintenance staff.

The elimination of the carpentry supervisor position will put all maintenance staff under one supervisor and ensure there are no conflicting goals for establishing the priorities to complete the work orders. **Exhibit 2** presents the chart for this reorganization. The carpentry supervisor position will become a carpenter position.

**Exhibit 2
Proposed Building Maintenance Department
Organization Chart 2011**



Source: MGT of America, 2011.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation will be the savings realized by changing a carpentry supervisor position to a carpenter position.

FINDING

Cameron County does not have a long-range facility master plan.

Once a year, the Maintenance Director develops a list of maintenance needs including equipment replacements and submits this list for budget approval. The county has not looked at the long range needs of its facilities in a year-by-year, structured manner. Priorities are established yearly with no long term guiding goals.

Long term planning is necessary for the effective management of facilities. Buildings take several years to plan and build, they are usually in existence for 50 or more years, and they affect the delivery of services to all stakeholders for years. It is just not feasible to reestablish goals and priorities for long term resources with short term planning.

The best practice for entities that operate and maintain a number of facilities is to develop a long range (10 year) facility master plan. The master plan should be tied to the goals and mission of the entity, in this case a county government, and ensure that the facilities will provide a safe and healthy environment for the services provided by the county government. The plan will identify projects such as new buildings, additions, renovations, and closures on an annual basis with the associated budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Develop a long-range (10 year) facility master plan.

An effective long-range facility master plan will be based on the goals and mission of the county and will include stakeholder input. Elements of a facility master plan will include:

- An examination of the county’s mission and goals, and the facility implications of the current and future services and service delivery methods.
- A stakeholder input plan that allows all stakeholder groups an opportunity to express their concerns and priorities for current and future facility needs.
- A demographic analysis which projects future (10 year) populations.
- A current and future capacity and utilization analysis.
- An assessment of the physical condition, the functionality, and the technology readiness of the facilities.
- The establishment of capital improvement budgets for the period of the master plan.
- A master plan strategy that:
 - Utilizes existing resources to the maximum potential.
 - Utilizes non-construction strategies to meet facility needs to the extent possible.
 - Provides equity of access to services throughout the county.



FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of implementing this recommendation will be the cost of preparing the facilities master plan. If the county contracts with an outside consultant to prepare the plan, the cost could be approximately \$150,000 to \$250,000. While the initial cost of the plan may be difficult for the county to afford, the value received over the period of the plan will be invaluable. A facilities master plan that is based on the county's strategic goals, that incorporates stakeholder input, and that looks to future changes in the delivery of services, will help ensure that capital and operating funds are expended in the most effective manner.

Staffing and Funding

Funding and staffing levels of maintenance departments have a great effect on the ability of the operation to perform its responsibilities and provide good service to the building users. The Cameron County Maintenance Department has an annual budget of \$3.2 million and 36 staff.

FINDING

The maintenance department is funded and staffed at a relatively high level.



The maintenance department is responsible for maintaining 16 county facilities which comprise 405,366 square feet of building space. In addition, the maintenance department provides assistance to other county agencies in 25 facilities which comprise at least an additional 55,000 square feet of building space. **Exhibit 3** lists the facilities and their square footage.

**Exhibit 3
County Facilities and Square Footage
2011**

Facility	Square Footage
Judicial Complex	174,600
Dancy Courthouse	52,500
Constantino Zarate	16,080
Juvenile Probation 35 Orange	5,500
Mary Lucio Clinic	20,250
Port Isabel Annex	5,375
Father O'Brien Clinic	6,000
Los Fresnos Annex	2,924
Rio Hondo Annex	5,162
San Benito Annex	64,000
Darrell Hester	10,222
La Feria Annex	5,475
Harlingen Clinic	8,588
Harlingen Annex	12,450
Arroyo City Fire Station	3,000
S. B. Adult Probation	13,240
Total	405,366
Additional Facilities	
Social Service Center	17,160
Centro Cultural Building	2,145
Bridge System	
Park System	
Darrel Hester Boot Camp	8,132
Health WIC Clinic	1 Clinic
Family Learning Centers	4 Centers
Tick Eradication Stations	3 Stations
Restitution Center	6,500
Santa Maria Center	4,400
Public Works Buildings	4 Buildings
Vehicle Fleet Maintenance	8,450
Public Works Offices	2 Offices
Goolsby Building	5,200
Total	51,987
Grand Total	> 460,000

Source: Cameron County Building Maintenance Department, 2011.

The annual budget for the maintenance department is approximately \$3.2 million and it has a staff of 36. This equates to approximately \$6.98 per square foot on an annual basis for maintenance, operations (custodial) and utilities. In regard to just the maintenance function, the department has 12 maintenance staff/technicians for approximately 460,000 GSF or about 38,333 GSF per technician.



American School and University Magazine conducts an annual survey of maintenance costs for school districts and colleges. While there are differences between county government facilities and educational facilities, the survey data is useful in establishing reasonable cost and personnel benchmarks. According to its 2009 38th annual survey, the median costs for maintenance functions, including utilities and custodial functions, is \$4.42 per square foot. One can argue that the demand for maintenance and cleaning of schools is less than local government facilities, since schools typically only operate nine months of the year. If this operational difference is factored in, the median would then become \$5.89 per square foot. ($\$4.42 / 75\% = \5.89)

The same survey reports staffing of maintenance departments at square footage per technician. The median square footage maintained per maintenance employee ranges from 80,000 to 90,000 square feet.

Several county maintenance departments that are considered peer counties were contacted with regard to funding and staffing levels. **Exhibit 4** compares the figures for Cameron County, the national medians for educational institutions, and the peer counties. As the exhibit shows, Cameron County appears to spend more per square foot for maintenance than its peers and the national median for schools. At the same time, it has a lower ratio of square footage per staff than the average of the comparison entities.

Exhibit 4
Comparison of Funding and Staffing Levels
2011

Entity	Maintenance \$/SF	SF per Maintenance Staff
Cameron County	\$6.98	38,333
National Median for Schools/Colleges	\$5.89*	85,000
El Paso County	\$1.18	100,000
Hidalgo County	\$4.68	23,255
Webb County	\$3.59	26,570
Average	\$4.28	61,647

Source: Cameron County Building Maintenance Department, MGT of America, American School and University Magazine, 2011.

**Rate with operational difference factored in (see p.8).*

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Cameron County should evaluate the level of funding for the maintenance department.

While the comparison data suggests that the county is at the high end of funding for the maintenance functions, further investigation should be completed prior to adjusting the budget or staffing levels. Additional steps could include:

- A “customer satisfaction” survey should be completed of all administrative personnel.
- An assessment of the buildings should be conducted to determine if they are being well maintained.
- Other county maintenance departments should be contacted to obtain greater detail on funding and staffing levels as well as performance levels.

FINDING

The maintenance department does not regularly evaluate the performance of the staff.

The director of maintenance does not have a formal procedure to conduct annual employee performance evaluations. Based on data from the 2010 fiscal year, the maintenance department received 1,638 work orders and completed 1,357. This leaves 281 work orders open, which amounts to an 83 percent completion rate.

In FY 2010-11 the maintenance staff acquired more than 1,200 compensatory (comp.) time hours. Several employees claimed as much as 130 hours, while one employee claimed 179 hours. This is a significant amount of comp. time and when the staff takes this time off, it affects the ability of the department to provide services during the normal work hours.

Given this mediocre work order completion rate, and the high comp. time levels, it is imperative that the director evaluate the performance of the staff to ensure that the completion rate of work orders is not due to low performing staff, and that the comp. time levels are legitimate. Annual employee performance evaluations are a standard industry practice for both the public and private sector.



In addition, the director of maintenance should regularly survey the building users about the performance of the maintenance department. An annual “customer satisfaction” survey helps to identify where improvements can be made in the delivery of maintenance services.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Perform annual employee evaluations and a “customer satisfaction” survey.

The director of maintenance should contact the personnel department for an employee evaluation form and procedure. The director should develop a 4-6 question survey and email it out to all department administrators in the buildings for which he provides maintenance and custodial services.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented within the existing resources of the county.

Custodial Services

The maintenance department provides custodial services to 17 buildings in the county. The custodians are supervised by the maintenance supervisor. Custodians receive minimal training that includes which cleaning chemicals to use in which circumstances, and how to operate the cleaning equipment. The training is provided by the chemical or equipment vendors.

FINDING

Cameron County is staffing its custodial services in line with the national median for public education facilities.

American School and University Magazine conducts an annual survey of maintenance and operations costs for school districts and colleges. According to its 2009 38th annual survey, the median amount of square feet cleaned per custodian was 32,100 SF.



Exhibit 5 compares the Cameron County custodial staffing levels with this median. The comparison incorporates FTE positions and rounds off the positions to the nearest 0.5 FTE. As the exhibit shows, Cameron County custodial staffing is within 0.5 FTE of the national median.

**Exhibit 5
Comparison of Custodial Staffing Levels
2011**

Facility	Gross Square Feet	FTE Custodians	SF per Custodian	Number per National Norm	Difference
Judicial Complex	174,600	5.0	34,920	5.5	-0.5
Dancy Courthouse	52,500	2	26,250	1.5	0.5
Juvenile Probation 35 Orange	5,500	0.5	11,000	0.5	0.0
Mary Lucio Clinic	20,250	1	20,250	1.0	0.0
Port Isabel Annex	5,375	0.5	10,750	0.5	0.0
Father O'Brien Clinic	6,000	0.5	12,000	0.5	0.0
Los Fresnos Annex	2,924	0.5	5,848	0.5	0.0
Rio Hondo Annex	5,162	0.5	10,324	0.5	0.0
San Benito Annex	64,000	2	32,000	2.0	0.0
Darrell Hester	10,222	0.5	20,444	0.5	0.0
La Feria Annex	5,475	1	5,475	0.5	0.5
Harlingen Clinic	8,588	0.5	17,176	0.5	0.0
Harlingen Annex	12,450	0.5	24,900	0.5	0.0
S. B. Adult Probation	13,240	0.5	26,480	0.5	0.0
Total	405,366	15.5	26,153	15.0	0.5

Source: Cameron County Building Maintenance Department, MGT of America, American School and University Magazine, 2011.

Informal tours of the county's facilities by the MGT team found them to be acceptably clean.

COMMENDATION

Cameron County is commended for staffing custodial services in line with national medians.

Energy Management

Local governments have established numerous and varied policies, procedures, and methods for increasing efficiencies in energy consumption and reducing operating costs. Policies typically describe the entity's specific desire to ensure that maximum resources are available for providing governmental services.

Energy management at Cameron County is overseen by the Maintenance Director. The Dancy Courthouse and the Judicial Complex have computer controlled maintenance systems (CCMS) which control the HVAC systems throughout the buildings. Each facility has a separate computer, but at the time of the consultants' review the computer for the Dancy Courthouse was not working. The county has begun installing energy efficient lighting in the Judicial Complex and is about 85 percent complete.

The county applied for and received a grant in 2010 to install solar panels on two buildings. The panels were installed on the San Benito Annex and the Harlingen Annex for a total cost of \$2,140,658.00. The county's portion of the cost was \$428,331.60.

FINDING

Cameron County began a process of entering into a performance contract for energy management but has not completed the process.



Many public entities enter into performance contracts with private contractors to manage energy use. The private contractor installs energy efficient systems, like computer controls on HVAC systems, and the governmental entity pays for the equipment out of the savings realized from lower energy use. Typically, a third entity finances the transaction and the private contractor guarantees a level of savings.

In early 2010, Cameron County issued a Request for Information (RFI) for *Energy Conservation – Feasibility Assessment/Preliminary Audit*. This was the first step in inviting private contractors to do an initial survey of the facilities and submit their qualifications. Two companies completed the initial surveys, but the county did not follow through with the process, apparently due to a change in leadership.

Exhibit 6 lists the utility expenses by building on an annual basis for FY 2009. As shown, the county spent approximately \$1,159,378 per year for utilities including electricity, water, gas, sewage, and garbage.

**Exhibit 6
Cameron County Utility Costs
2009**

Facility	Electricity	Natural Gas	Water	Sewage and Garbage
Judicial Complex	\$ 338,170	\$ -	\$ 43,346	\$ 98,712
Dancy Courthouse	\$ 111,750	\$ -	\$ 7,510	\$ 3,057
Cameron Park Law Enforcement	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 158	\$ 153
Juvenile Probation 35 Orange	\$ 3,364	\$ -	\$ 688	\$ 2,716
Mary Lucio Clinic	\$ 35,490	\$ -	\$ 1,266	\$ 5,304
Port Isabel Annex	\$ 11,782	\$ -	\$ 1,401	\$ 2,056
Father O'Brien Clinic	\$ 17,907	\$ -	\$ 968	\$ 2,121
Los Fresnos Annex	\$ 6,700	\$ -	\$ 373	\$ 1,126
Rio Hondo Annex	\$ 6,557	\$ -	\$ 587	\$ 873
San Benito Annex	\$ 140,092	\$ -	\$ 4,925	\$ 14,830
Darrell Hester	\$ 112,466	\$ 2,330	\$ 5,333	\$ 14,662
La Feria Annex	\$ 9,674	\$ -	\$ 1,004	\$ 2,334
Harlingen Clinic	\$ 60,656	\$ -	\$ 465	\$ 2,793
Harlingen Annex	\$ 17,515	\$ -	\$ 408	\$ 2,199
Arroyo City Fire Station	\$ 2,731	\$ -	\$ 874	\$ -
S. B. Adult Probation	\$ 39,661	\$ -	\$ 702	\$ 1,419
Records Warehouse	\$ 13,295	\$ -	\$ 715	\$ 1,664
Tick Eradication	\$ 1,290	\$ -	\$ 1,206	\$ -
Total	\$ 929,100	\$ 2,330	\$ 71,929	\$ 156,019
Total All Utilities	\$ 1,159,378			

Source: Cameron County Building Maintenance Department, 2011.

The energy efficiencies realized from performance contracting will vary depending on the efficiency of the existing systems and the type of measures performed under the contract. Cameron County's facilities, with the exception of the newer buildings, have had few energy saving upgrades. Industry projections for energy savings can range from 10 percent to 30 percent of existing utility costs.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Finish the initiative to enter into a performance contract for energy conservation.

The county can issue a request for proposals for a performance contractor or enter into an agreement with a contractor that is listed on one of the county's buy board cooperatives. The contractor would then conduct an investment grade audit (IGA) to determine the savings that would be guaranteed. On the average, the county could potentially save approximately 20 percent of its current cost of utilities, or \$230,000 per year after the payback period. (20% of \$159,378 = \$231,187)

Tax Assessor-Collector's Office

Background

The Cameron County Tax Assessor-Collector is a state of Texas constitutional officer elected by and accountable to the voters and residents of Cameron County. Tax assessor-collectors are elected to four-year terms with no limit on the number of terms. The Cameron County Tax Assessor-Collector has held the office since January 1989.

The county Tax-Assessor-Collector's office (TAC or tax office) collects property taxes for most taxing entities in Cameron County and is designated by statute as the agent for the State of Texas Department of Transportation (now the Department of Motor Vehicles) for the collection of motor vehicle registration taxes. Under the vehicle registration statutes, every motor vehicle owner is required to register his or her vehicle with the TAC in the county in which he or she resides. The office also collects several other taxes and fees for the state. Based on the nature and diversity of the duties performed by the tax office, it is most likely the county governmental department that has the most interaction with taxpayers and other residents of the county.

As of September 2011, the TAC, through interlocal agreements, was collecting property taxes for more than 30 of the taxing authorities and special districts located in Cameron County. This includes the cities or towns of Brownsville, San Benito, Combes, Palm Valley, Los Fresnos, and Primera among others. It also collects taxes for five school districts, one college, and other taxing authorities such as MUDs, drainage districts, and light districts. The 2010-11 certified tax levy for all authorities served by the Cameron TAC was more than \$198 million. For providing the services of assessing and collecting taxes on property for the taxing authorities, the TAC charges the taxing jurisdiction one percent of what is actually collected (including taxes, penalty and interest), which is, according to the Texas Property Tax Code, an amount not in excess of the actual costs incurred. To the extent possible, collections are remitted to the taxing unit within 24 hours of collection from a taxpayer.

The consolidation of tax collections into a single collector's office saves all county taxpayers money by minimizing duplication of effort and maximizing human and technological resources. This benefit becomes very clear when looking at the size of some of the entities for which the Cameron TAC collects taxes. Ten of the taxing entities collect less than \$1 million annually, with five of those collecting less than \$100,000. It is quite unlikely that collection functions for those entities can be performed cost efficiently unless performed by a central tax collection department. For example, one drainage district's tax levy is \$41,000, for which the TAC charges only \$410 per year.

In addition to assessing and collecting property taxes, the TAC office's other duties include collection of motor vehicle sales tax, vehicle registration taxes, collection and issuance of alcoholic beverage permits, fees imposed on coin-operated amusement machines, and special vehicle inventory taxes (VIT). In the fiscal year ending September 30, 2011 the office collected \$3,190,993. It collected \$2,951,374 in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010. The expenditures incurred to support the level of operations in fiscal year 2011 were \$2.7 million and in the prior fiscal year (2010) they were \$2.95 million. They are budgeted to be \$2.85 million for the 2012 fiscal year, which began on October 1, 2011.

Fees earned from the one percent charge for all property taxes collected (called commissions) amount to approximately \$1.6 million per year. The other major source of revenue earned by the tax office is from motor vehicle registrations, which is estimated to provide about \$637,000 in revenue in the current (2011-2012) fiscal year. Other commissions and fees earned from all other taxes and fees collected by the TAC combine to provide another \$600,000 in revenue for the department. The total budgeted revenue for

the current fiscal year is \$2.85 million, which includes estimates for earnings expected from interest on bank deposits and proceeds from the sale (redemption) of property.

Functions

In order to fulfill its responsibilities to collect taxes the TAC must conduct several activities to properly assess, collect, remit, and account for taxes and other fees and provide numerous other functions to serve its customers (taxpayers) and its clients (taxing authorities for which it collects taxes). Activities provided for the assessment, collection, and distribution of property taxes include preparing tax rates based on information from the appraisal district and from the taxing jurisdiction; preparing exemptions; calculating discounts; preparing and mailing tax statements; collecting taxes in person, by mail or via online payments; making adjustments and refunds; distributing collected taxes to taxing authorities; and preparing reports. Activities associated with collections of other taxes, motor vehicle (motor vehicles, trailers, and semitrailers) registrations, various combinations of beer, wine, and/or liquor, gaming licenses, and transferring and issuing automobile certificates of title are similar, with most funds collected being sent to the pertinent state agencies.

Besides collecting taxes, a related function the TAC took on in 1999 is dealing with auto theft. The Cameron County Tax Assessor-Collector has been involved in investigations and prevention of motor vehicle theft. To gain access to the information needed to conduct criminal investigations and to qualify for state grant resources required significant law enforcement presence. As a result, the TAC established its own law enforcement unit with certified peace officers. Most funding for this unit does not come from general revenue but rather from state grants and proceeds received from working with the local auto theft taskforce. In 1991, the Texas Automobile Theft Prevention Authority, now called the Texas Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (TABTPA,) was charged with assessing automobile burglary, theft, and economic theft and for providing financial support to combat problems. In 2009, TABTPA became part of the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. To date more than 900 vehicles have been recovered in the area.

Organizational Structure

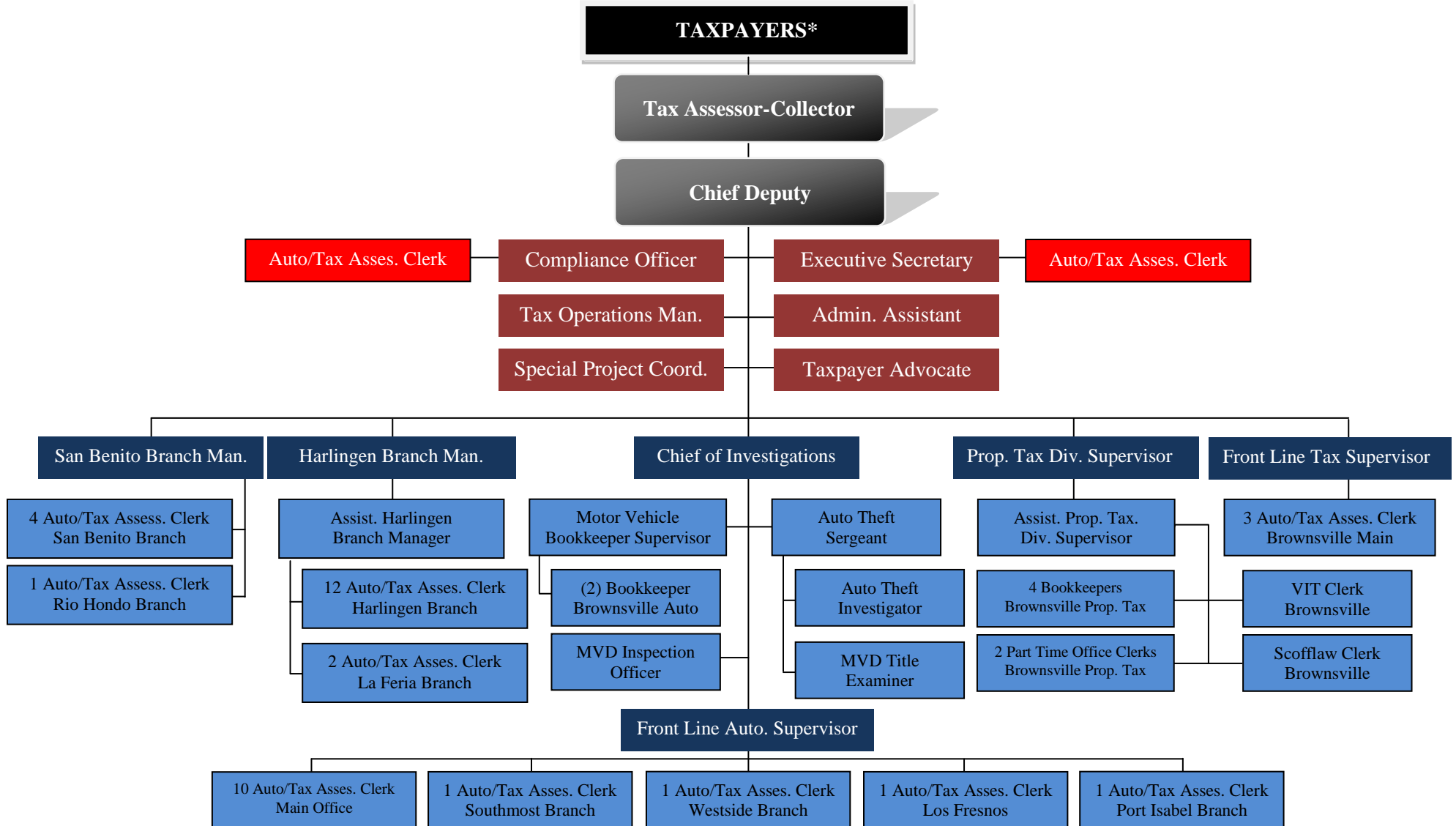
The TAC office is organized along a combination of functional and geographical delineations. Reporting to the elected Tax Assessor-Collector is the Chief Deputy. He is the only direct report to the Tax Assessor-Collector. The chief deputy has 11 managers, supervisors, or administrative staff reporting directly to him. As can be seen in **Exhibit 7** on the following page, the direct reports to the Chief Deputy include central office administrative staff, an operations manager, a compliance officer, the head of the law enforcement unit, a division supervisor, the front-line property tax supervisor, and two branch managers. Some of these direct reports to the Chief Deputy have only one or no one directly reporting to them, while others have as many as 14 staff reporting directly to them.

The downtown Brownsville main office has two customer services areas: one for property tax collections and the other for auto registration and other miscellaneous tax and fee collections. Although property tax collections are seasonal, the collections area is open and staffed year round. It is minimally staffed part of the year and fully staffed, with other cross-trained staff, during the peak periods of October through January. In addition, the main office also houses all other administrative and management staff. Front-line workers staff the customer service stations, while bookkeepers provide “back office” support. The auto registration unit is headed by the Chief of Investigations who is a certified law enforcement officer. In addition to three other certified officers (a sergeant and two officers) in this department (assigned to auto theft investigations) there is a bookkeeping supervisor, a motor vehicle inspection officer, and a front-line supervisor. The front-line supervisor oversees ten 10 clerks in the main office and four clerks assigned to the one-person branch offices. The one- and two-person branches in the Harlingen and San

Benito areas are supervised by the branch manager in the Harlingen and San Benito branch offices. Also reporting directly to the Chief Deputy are a compliance officer, who has a clerk, an executive secretary, who also has a clerk, a tax operations manager, an administrative assistant, a special projects coordinator, and a taxpayer advocate.

Obviously this is a rather complex organizational structure given the relatively small size (68 employees in addition to the Tax Assessor-Collector) of the organization. Nevertheless, due to the diverse nature of the office's functions and having two full service branch offices and six limited purpose branches, several contractor provided substations located in grocery stores, and three certified law enforcement officers, it provides management with the level of control and oversight they believe serves them and the taxpayers of Cameron County very well.

**Exhibit 7
2011 Tax Assessor-Collector Organizational Chart**



Source: Cameron County Tax Assessor-Collector's Office.

*MGT of America, Inc.

Staffing

The Tax Assessor-Collector's duties as laid out in Texas Property Tax Code Sec. 6.23 are to calculate taxes, collect and account for property taxes, oversee delinquent tax collections, and initiate tax warrants, seizures, and foreclosures when necessary. The office also collects numerous other taxes, fees, penalties, and interest. The stated mission of the Cameron County TAC Office is to service all taxpayers with dignity and respect while requiring staff to demonstrate a high level of professionalism. To carry out its mission the TAC needs to have professional, clerical and administrative staff with the ability to learn numerous and varied functions. Most staff are cross-trained in several areas of expertise, which enables staff to move to other offices when employees are out on leave and to help staff desks during peak days and season for certain collections.

To carry out its mission the office has 66 full-time employees and two part-time employees in 20 job classification titles. The salaries and benefits of the elected Tax Assessor-Collector and 63 tax office staff are out of general funds, while some staff in the Vehicle Inventory Tax (VIT) program and motor vehicle inspection program are funded outside of the TAC office's general fund budget. The county's job description documents are thorough, well written, and contain very descriptive job functions, requirements, physical demands, and job dimensions.

FINDING

Job descriptions received from the county indicate all staff members from the chief deputy on down through the entire organization have a Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status stated as non-exempt. According to interviews with senior staff there are at least ten exempt positions. This could be just a typo (that needs to be fixed) or an indication that proper procedures for establishing job positions and classifications, such as exempt or non exempt, for federal labor law purposes have not been properly completed.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

The chief deputy, working with the county's human resources department, should ensure job descriptions are accurate in all areas, including FLSA status.

In addition to the elected Tax Assessor-Collector, there are 68 employees (66 full-time and 2 part-time) The annual budget for TAC payroll for the fiscal year that ended September 30, 2011 is more than \$1.7 million plus a little more than \$600,000 in payroll taxes and benefits such as health care and retirement contributions. Salary, wages, taxes, and benefits combined to more than \$2.3 million or approximately 87 percent of the total budget. This level of personnel costs as a percent of budget is fairly typical of government offices.

Compared to other comparable tax offices, the Cameron County TAC staffing level and operating expenditures were favorable. The per capita cost of operating the tax office in Cameron County was approximately \$7.07 per county resident in 2010. This information is displayed in the following table, **Exhibit 8**. This is better than most other peer offices where the costs ranged from more than \$8.00 per person to more than \$10.00. El Paso County data were not analyzed because the county TAC is not the primary property tax collector in that county.

**Exhibit 8
Comparable Data on TAC office Costs and Staffing.**

County	Population	TAC Office Employees (FTE)	Estimated Operating Cost of TAC office	Estimated Cost per County Resident	TAC office FTE per 10,000 Resident
Cameron	396,371	68	2,800,00	\$7.07	1.72
Nueces	323,046	59	2,600,000	\$8.05	1.82
Hidalgo	741,152	129	6,000,000	\$8.10	1.73
Webb	241,438	Not available	2,500,000	\$10.35	Not available
El Paso	751,296	75*	2,900,000		1.0

Source: County Websites.

*The City of El Paso is the conciliated property tax collection office in El Paso.

Branch Offices

The Cameron County Tax office is fairly unique among Texas counties with its extensive use of branch offices to conduct much of its business. There are eight branch tax offices in the county. **Exhibit 9** shows the branch offices and their staffing levels.

**Exhibit 9
Cameron County Tax Assessor-Collector Branch Offices**

Branch Location	Branch Manager	Assistant Manger	Auto/Tax Assessment Clerks
San Benito	1		4
Rio Hondo			1
Harlingen	1	1	12
La Feria			2
Southmost			1
Westside			1
Los Fresnos			1
Port Isabel			1
Branch Staffing Total	2 Branch Managers	1 Asst. Branch Mgr	23 Auto/Tax Assess. Clerks

Source: Cameron County Tax Assessor-Collector, September 2011.

As can be seen in the preceding table, there are 26 full-time employees assigned to branch offices. The San Benito branch manager supervises staff in that office as well as the Rio Hondo office. The Harlingen branch manager and assistant manager work together to supervise staff in the both the Harlingen and the La Feria branch offices. Those two branch managers report directly to the chief deputy. The auto/tax clerks in the four other branches, Southmost, Westside, Los Fresnos, and Port Isabel, are supervised by the main office front-line auto supervisor. In addition to the four branch office staff, that supervisor has ten auto/tax clerk direct reports that are assigned to the main office. The position is supervised by the Chief of Investigations, who reports directly to the Chief Deputy.

FINDING

Unlike the branch managers, the front-line auto supervisor does not report directly to the chief deputy. Although the front-line auto supervisor oversees 14 staff, the position is not at the same organizational reporting level as the two branch managers, who have fewer staff reporting to them. One branch manager supervises five staff and the other branch manager has a supervisor to assist in overseeing the 14 clerks in that office. In addition to the disparity in the number of direct reports, there may be a loss of clarity in management direction because the two branch managers report directly to the chief deputy while the front-line supervisor reports directly to the chief of investigations. This can not only create communications problems but could lead to different approaches to processes, procedures, and policy interpretation.

The consultant team noted no apparent problems created by this situation, so this issue is presented just as an observation.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Position the front-line auto supervisor as a direct report to the chief deputy.

Some other Texas tax assessor-collector offices do use branch offices. Harris County has 14 of them. In addition to branch offices, many counties, including Cameron, rely on contract vendors such as HEB to offer limited services such as auto registration renewals. As indicated in the following table (**Exhibit 10**), Cameron County has eight branch offices, more than any other county included in this table. **Exhibit 10** shows the number of branches, total motor vehicle registrations, and the amount and percent of walk-in registrations compared to total motor vehicle registrations. It also shows how those figures compare to other counties in Texas. Cameron County is the 13th largest county in population in Texas. The table includes counties ranked 7th through 20th to provide a broader perspective than the four peer counties we use in other sections of this report.

Exhibit 10
Motor Vehicles Registrations in Selected Texas Counties
Counties Rank 7th through 20th in Population

2009 Population Rank	County	Number of Branch Offices	MV Registrations	MV Registration by Walk in	Percent of total MV Registrations that walk-in
7	El Paso	4	489,981	399,070	81.4%
8	Hidalgo	5	396,038	320,709	81.0%
9	Denton	4	433,132	241,321	55.7%
10	Fort Bend	4	373,641	187,711	50.2%
11	Montgomery	4	316,411	242,514	76.6%
12	Williamson	3	273,839	157,662	57.6%
13	Cameron	8	222,645	188,368	84.6%
14	Nueces	3	215,801	111,099	51.5%
15	Brazoria	6	221,201	159,636	72.2%

Exhibit 10 (continued)
Motor Vehicles Registrations in Selected Texas Counties
Counties Rank 7th through 20th in Population

2009 Population Rank	County	Number of Branch Offices	MV Registrations	MV Registration by Walk in	Percent of total MV Registrations that walk-in
16	Galveston	3	207,553	173,482	83.6%
17	Bell	3	208,966	152,366	72.9%
18	Lubbock	3	175,634	116,517	66.3%
19	Jefferson	2	167,475	138,298	82.6%
20	Webb	0	132,096	122,151	92.5%
	Average	3.7	3,897,182	2,769,390	71.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, July 1, 2009 Estimated Population.
 Websites for tax assessor-collector offices in each Texas county.

Noteworthy in the preceding table is that the percent of customers that register their motor vehicles in person in Cameron County (84.6%) is higher than all other comparison counties except Webb County, and much higher than the average percentage of the counties in the table (84.6% compared to 71.1%). This high number and percentage of registrants who walk in tends to support the number of branches established for the tax office. Until Cameron County taxpayers embrace the mail and internet options available to them, the need for branch offices will continue.

The consultant team noted no direct real estate lease expenses for any of the TAC branch offices charged to the TAC budget. According to TAC leadership, that is because all offices are co-located in other county offices (annexes) or in city-owned buildings for which no rent is charged. The county's budget indicated only minimal direct rental charges included in the building maintenance and operations (M&O) expenditures. A 2009 Tax Collection Rate Study provided for Cameron County by Maximus indicated approximately \$175,000 in building maintenance and operating costs (M&O) for annexes could be allocated to the TAC. This implies that although there are no additional facility costs to the TAC (or the county) created by branch offices, if the TAC branches were not used and that staffing were just moved to other offices, there would be little if any savings due to closure of branches. This conclusion is based not only on the facility usage but on the staffing in all offices and the level of business conducted. Closing a branch would most likely result in staff being relocated to another outlet because business would move to another office or to online or mail processing. Again, until usage of mail for property tax and motor vehicle registration increases there is little savings in closing branch offices and the public would be less well served.

An additional reason cited by the Tax Assessor-Collector and the chief deputy is that locating branches in communities is a factor in attracting taxing jurisdictions in those communities to have the Cameron County TAC be the assessor-collector for them. We cannot offer any evidence that that is not a correct conclusion. Moreover, some branches are located in city-owned buildings in high traffic areas that cost the county no additional resources to provide such an office and, again, be able to offer a higher level of customer service and convenience for walk-in customers. The consultant team visited four of the eight branch offices and all had a significant level of customer activity while we were on site.

Five of the branch offices are operated by a one-person staff. This creates significant security issues for the staff members and for the safeguarding of county assets. The county is aware of this and has implemented additional internal controls and other steps to help minimize the risk to the staff members and to the county.

The consultant team was unable to obtain from the TAC office much information in the way of workload measures such as walk-in traffic in branch offices and substations or traffic at drive through windows or information related to the letters sent to taxpayers regarding delinquent taxes. The TAC indicated it could probably provide such information but was not able to before the issuance of this report or the beginning of its peak season for which there was little availability of staff to gather requested information.

Should the county and the TAC wish to explore the impact of closing offices, it should focus on the one-person offices with lighter workload. Without workload data, the consultant team could not reach a conclusion about the potential impact, nor could it reasonably estimate the political impact, should a taxing entity not be satisfied with the closing of an office within or near its location.

COMMENDATION:

The TAC is commended for providing branch offices located across the county to give access for the almost 85 percent of Cameron County taxpayers who pay their property taxes, automobile registrations and other taxes and fees in person. These offices appear to cost very little in additional resources to run and help generate revenue through commissions earned from taxing jurisdictions including the state of Texas and goodwill among taxpayers and the same taxing jurisdictions, all of whose residents are citizens of Cameron County.

Tax Assessor – Collector’s Website

FINDING

The Cameron County tax office maintains a website at <http://www.co.cameron.tx.us/tax/>. The website has several areas that were “under construction”, other areas lacked complete or current information, such as location and hours of branch offices and substations or links to other related sites such as county departments or taxing entity websites. All in all it lacked the level of accurate, current information that should be of interest and necessary for taxpayers who seek information without having to place a telephone call to actually get worthwhile information. It is not efficient for a tax office staff member to have to answer a phone call from someone who could not find basic information on the department’s website.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

The Cameron County TAC should make updating its website a priority. Information should be accurate, updated frequently and expanded to give interested taxpayers, residents, and taxing entities information that helps them answer questions quickly.

Assets

MGT reviewed the tax office “fixed inventory listing” as signed by the Tax Assessor-Collector on May 4, 2011. Most of the assets were as expected: office furniture, computers, printers and other office equipment. The department also has six motor vehicles. Noted among the assets listed are shotguns and handguns.

Scofflaw Enforcement

There are many residents in the county that have outstanding moving violations, warrants or fines that have not been paid to the county or cities. Effective October 1, 2010 the Cameron County Tax Assessor-Collector was able to deny the vehicle registration renewals of applicants who have outstanding traffic fines due with any Cameron County Justice of the Peace Court and the cities of Brownsville, Los Fresnos,

Harlingen, San Benito, Port Isabel, and the Town of South Padre Island. This enforcement effort is made possible by provisions of Texas Transportation Codes 702.003 and 502.185, which permit the TAC to deny registration for those with outstanding fines, fees, or tax to the county or municipalities within the county.

The benefits to the cities within Cameron County are only available under a contract between the city and the county and requires the city to provide information regarding past due fees and fines for violations of traffic laws and the payment of such fines so that the county may issue the registration. This takes cooperation and coordination between jurisdictions to ensure information is easily accessible and accurate. This coordination is enhanced by the use of an internal database developed by the county to permit cities and justices of the peace to send failure to appear violations to the TAC. The tax office updates the information into the database which is verified before every renewal by checking the Texas driver's license number in the database to see if there are any outstanding warrants/citations.

COMMENDATION:

Taking advantage of the provisions of these statutes not only helps ensure that past due fines and fees owed the county and cities can be collected before vehicles may be registered, but it provides an additional revenue source because the laws permit the county and the cities to impose an additional \$20.00 fee on the person paying the fine or past due fee. TAC officials report that in the first two months of implementation, an additional \$150,000 was collected from past due fines and fees.

Discounts

In Texas, the Property Tax Code (Sec. 31.05) permits governing bodies of taxing jurisdictions to adopt discounts for early payment of property taxes. Property taxes are due in January of each year, and are delinquent if not paid by February 1. Discounts allowed for early payment are three percent if the tax is paid in or before October, two percent if paid in November, and one percent if paid in December in the year preceding the January due date. The discount may only be the amount established by the state legislature as defined in the Property Tax Code. No other discount rates may be adopted.

Discounts are not as common as they once were. In fact, according to the consultant's review of tax assessor-collector offices of the 20 largest counties in Texas, Cameron County, and the taxing entities for which it collects taxes, are the only ones that still offer an early payment discount. There may still be valid reasons for offering a discount, such as helping to bring cash in earlier and spreading out payments and therefore walk-in traffic over several months, nevertheless, it is not clear if the cost is worth those or any other benefits.

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Cameron County should reconsider its policy of offering an early payment discount pursuant to Sec. 31.05 of the Texas Property Tax Code. Changing the policy by eliminating the discount could impact other taxing jurisdictions should they choose to continue the discount. Rather than offering a discount, the county could approve one of the acceptable partial payment options used in other counties. Section 31.01 of the Texas Property Tax Code permits governing bodies of taxing units that collect their own taxes to allow taxpayers to pay one-half of the unit's taxes before December 1 and pay the remaining one-half of the taxes due before July 1. There would be no discount offered (other than the approved exemptions) nor would there be any penalty for payments that will be after the January 31 due date. Implementation of this recommendation would require approval by the county commissioners.

This option would help taxpayers by allowing them to more easily budget for amounts due. It would however, create an additional peak payment window, in June, which could require additional seasonal staffing or perhaps limit the granting of vacation leave during that period.

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated total amount of discounts that would be eliminated is approximately \$3.7 million for all taxing entities in the county for which Cameron County collects taxes. This amount of money would remain with those taxing jurisdictions. For Cameron County the amount is approximately \$1 million that would be additional revenue for the county or used to reduce taxes in future years.

Conclusions

The Cameron County Tax Assessor-Collector is an outstanding example of good government. The TAC is conscious of maximizing efficiencies to save taxpayer resources. Examples of this are shown by the cross-training of most staff, minimizing overtime, and finding innovative ways to bring in revenue law breakers. The TAC also tries reaching out to all of the taxing entities in the county to allow for more efficient tax collection for all county residents. It has few administrative-only staff. Almost all management and all supervisory personnel are “working supervisors.” In addition to being as efficient as it can be, it fulfills its commitment to provide excellent customer service by establishing, at little additional cost, branch offices and substations located throughout the county and by rapidly remitting taxes it collects to the taxing entities.

Courthouse Security

The mission of Cameron County's Courthouse Security Unit, according to the chief of courthouse security, is to protect the judges, staff, attorneys, jurors, witnesses, offenders and civilians who work in or visit the courthouse every day. To paraphrase the chief of security, many people visit the courthouse everyday and a few of those are angry and upset. Some are even offenders, which makes courthouse security a very important and at times dangerous responsibility.¹

As the National Center for State Courts notes, "[Courthouse] security is not a one-time achievement. It is a serious and continuous goal and requires constant vigilance. Further, it must be a number one priority every single day for all those interested and involved in the process. The risks involved in court building operations are great and varied, and they can never be eliminated. But with proper attention and care, they can be minimized."²

Security Responsibilities

The Courthouse Security Unit is responsible for three general areas: courtroom security, prisoner movement and courthouse security.

Courtroom Security

One of the core responsibilities of the Courthouse Security Unit is to provide a safe and secure environment in 14 courtrooms, surrounding offices, corridors, hallways, and jury rooms in the county courthouse. The Courthouse Security Unit is responsible for security in eight district courts, three county courts-at-law, two juvenile courts and one child support court. The courtroom bailiffs are used primarily to provide security in the courtrooms and areas surrounding the courtrooms, and typically do not share security responsibilities in other areas of the courthouse such as the main entrance and with prisoner movement, according to unit staff interviewed by the consultants.

During interviews with some courtroom bailiffs and other Courthouse Security Unit members, they were asked what duties or responsibilities courtroom bailiffs have when courts are not in session. The consultants were told that courtroom bailiffs' non-court session responsibilities vary from court to court but they frequently work with the sheriff's office to confirm that prisoners needed for court hearings scheduled for the next day will be available for court, prepare files for cases to be heard the next day, and periodically conduct searches of courtrooms to ensure no contraband or other items are left in the rooms. In addition, the bailiffs said they perform office or clerical duties as directed by judges and the judges' administrative staff such as retrieving and opening mail, and occasionally taking judges to and from the airport.

Court is normally held from 9 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday, although the hours may vary depending on caseload. Bailiffs are required to provide security in the courtrooms while court is in session. Bailiffs are required to respond to all incidents in the courtrooms as well as the surrounding corridors, hallways, offices and jury rooms. In addition, courtroom bailiffs open the courtrooms and allow people to enter.

Prior to the start of court and the arrival of the judges, courtroom bailiffs, working with supervisors and rover bailiffs, move prisoners into the courtrooms, help ensure prisoners' paperwork is in order, and make sure prisoners are ready for their appearance. (Rovers provide security in offices, jury rooms, hallways

¹ Raymond Shears, Chief of Courthouse Security, personal interview, August 1, 2011.

² Steps to Best Practices for Court Building Security, National Center for State Courts, January 2010, page 33.

and corridors throughout the courthouse as well as help move prisoners to and from courtrooms.) If any cases on the dockets require special security measures, the bailiffs work with rovers and supervisors to take any appropriate extra security measures. For example, high profile cases or cases involving extremely dangerous prisoners frequently require additional courtroom security staff and special handling of defendants.

Since judges, jurors, court staff and prisoners use many of the same hallways to enter and exit courtrooms, bailiffs must ensure the safety of everyone. This requires close coordination among bailiffs and court officials to avoid exposing prisoners to jurors.

In addition to maintaining orderly and safe courtrooms while courts are in session, bailiffs frequently take paperwork to and from the judges and court staff for processing. They also accompany juries to and from jury rooms as needed.

During business hours, courtrooms bailiffs and rovers are responsible for the security of judges' chambers, court staff offices, all hallways, corridors and jury rooms. At the end of the day, bailiffs are required to secure courtrooms.

According to information provided by the county, there are currently 24 staffed positions in the Courthouse Security Unit and one vacant position. Of the 24 staffed positions, 14 serve primarily as courtroom bailiffs. Some of the 14 courtroom bailiffs, however, may serve as rovers and courthouse entry control bailiffs, as needed. (Rovers provide security in offices, jury rooms, hallways and corridors throughout the courthouse as well as help move prisoners to and from courtrooms. Entry control bailiffs screen people entering the courthouse.) Yet, not all courtroom bailiffs are available to help in other capacities in the courthouse. For example, the bailiff in county court-at-law two is not available to relieve other bailiffs performing roving or entry control duties, which puts unnecessary burden on the remaining bailiffs.

Prisoner Movement

The Courthouse Security Unit also is responsible for moving prisoners (adults and juveniles) brought to the courthouse from county detention facilities to the courtrooms on the first, second and third floors of the courthouse. Most adult prisoners are housed in the nearby county jail and enter the courthouse through a secure hallway connecting the two facilities. The prisoners are released to the custody of the bailiffs from the sheriff's office and become the responsibility of the bailiffs.

The rover bailiffs are responsible for getting prisoners to the correct courtrooms at the right times for their court appearances. The rover bailiffs work closely with courtroom bailiffs and unit supervisors to ensure prisoners are at the appropriate locations at the correct times for court hearings, which require close coordination since they must synchronize prisoner movements among the county's 14 courtrooms. It is extremely important for security, court scheduling and attorney conferences to know the location of all prisoners at all times during their visits to the courthouse.

The courtroom and rover bailiffs begin the day by reviewing the prisoner log with the sheriff's office to confirm the number of prisoners to be moved to the courthouse. The bailiffs also will review the need for any special security measures needed to handle "high risk" prisoners who may be making court appearances. The prisoners typically arrive at the courthouse in groups from the jail. If there are more than six prisoners in a group, more than one bailiff is needed to escort the prisoners to court. The prisoners are checked against the log to ensure all prisoners are accounted for and are moved to the appropriate courtrooms to wait for their court hearings.

Because of the growth in criminal court cases (new cases added), from 11,236 in 2000 to 13,188 in 2010, and the presumed increase in prisoner court appearances, unit supervisors typically must assist with prisoner movement.³ On extremely busy days, courtroom bailiffs, rovers and unit supervisors and managers (i.e., sergeant, assistant chief and chief) assist with prisoner movement.

Once the court appearances are completed, the bailiffs move the prisoners from the courtrooms back to the jail. This must be closely coordinated since another group of prisoners is usually being moved from the jail, while jurors, judges and court staff are generally moving around the offices, hallways and corridors surrounding the courtrooms as well. Again, the bailiffs handling prisoner movement are working closely together with the sheriff's office to accurately track the location of each prisoner.

In addition, the Courthouse Security Unit must process defendants incarcerated "off the street" as a result of their court appearance. (An example of an off the street defendant is someone who is out on bond and appears in court to face charges and is then convicted, rather than being escorted from incarceration at the sheriff's office to face charges in court.) Off the street prisoner processing includes escorting the person out of the courtroom, which may leave the courtroom with no security personnel; securing the person with handcuffs, retrieving the appropriate paperwork to accompany the prisoner; and moving the person to the jail and turning them over to the custody of the sheriff's office.

Courthouse Security

The Cameron County Courthouse Security Unit also is responsible for maintaining a secure access system to the courthouse and surrounding grounds, which requires conducting physical security checks of individuals and property entering the courthouse, and conducting periodic security checks of the grounds surrounding the courthouse.

The security of the courthouse typically involves the following activities and responsibilities:

- Working the metal detectors, x-ray machines and handheld metal detectors or wands used to screen individuals and property entering the courthouse.
- Periodically conducting security checks of the grounds and parking lots surrounding the courthouse.
- Periodically escorting jurors, witnesses and others to their cars, if requested or deemed necessary, because of safety concerns.

There is one entrance to the courthouse equipped with a metal detector and x-ray machine. (The other entrance to the courthouse is in the back of the building leading from the secure parking lot. This entrance requires a key card to enter and is not staffed.) The main entrance to the courthouse is typically staffed by four bailiffs. One bailiff works the x-ray machine to screen property, one monitors the walk-through metal detector and uses the hand wand to screen individuals, one bailiff oversees the removal and return of personal items taken from individuals walking through the metal detector, and one bailiff assists as needed to help ensure individuals and property move through the screening process smoothly to reduce the time needed to pass through security and reduce wait times. Supervisors, rovers and some courtroom bailiffs are periodically used at the main entrance to allow entry control bailiffs to take breaks.

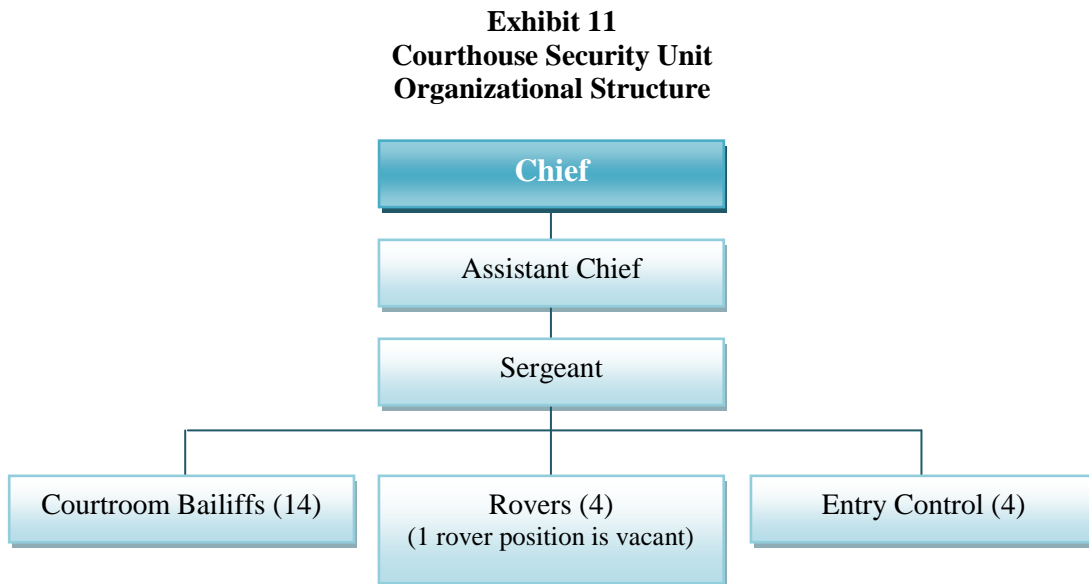
Although not done on a routine basis, bailiffs do periodically check the parking lots and surrounding grounds of the courthouse. The bailiffs look for and deal with any suspicious persons, property or vehicles and call for assistance, if necessary. The consultant team was told that the bailiffs do find suspicious property (e.g., knives, drugs) presumably left by individuals entering the courthouse.

³ Texas Judicial Council, 2011.

The bailiffs also escort individuals such as jurors and witnesses to their vehicles if there is any threat of harm as a result of their involvement in a court case or trial.

Organizational Structure

Although the Courthouse Security Unit did not provide the consulting team with an organizational chart, the chart below roughly depicts the unit's organizational structure according to the functions performed by the unit and shows the unit's current staffing level.



Source: MGT of America, Inc.

Staffing

There are currently three supervisory staff (chief, assistant chief and sergeant), three rover bailiffs, four entry control bailiffs, and 14 courtroom bailiffs. (There is one vacant bailiff position, which is a rover position serving the district courts.) Of the 14 courtroom bailiffs, eight are assigned to district courts, three are assigned to county courts-at-law, one is a child support court bailiff and two are juvenile court bailiffs. According to the chief, the staffing level has remained stable over the past few years.

The basic job responsibilities of the bailiffs are outlined in the job descriptions of two bailiff positions: courthouse security bailiff and courthouse rover. There are no job descriptions for the positions of entry control, sergeant, assistant chief, and chief.

Courthouse Security Bailiff

The job description for the courthouse security bailiff lists the position's job duties and responsibilities as follows:

- Opening and closing the courthouse building. (The courthouse hours are from 7:15 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.)
- Assisting and maintaining security within and around the courthouse, including but not limited to walkways, parking lots, and entrance/exit doors.

- Responding to emergency situations jeopardizing the safety of court personnel and the general public.
- Screening all persons and personnel entering the courthouse as well as safeguarding all persons, personnel and courthouse property.
- Carrying out oral and written instructions, enforcing federal, state and local laws, and making arrests if needed. (Bailiffs are certified law enforcement officers.)
- Maintaining appropriate records on incident and offense reports.
- Performing other assignments as directed by supervisors.
- The safety of judges, courthouse personnel, staff members, and the general public is the primary goal of the position.
- The position is located at the main entrance or lobby area of the courthouse.

Courthouse Rover

The job description for the courthouse rover lists the position's job duties and responsibilities as follows:

- Assisting the court(s) is the rover's primary responsibility, however, the rover is to assist other courts when their court is not in session.
- Covering any other court(s) as assigned in order to meet the needs of the judicial system.
- Reporting to their assigned court on time for any court hearings if the courtroom bailiff assigned to that court is out on leave.
- Assisting and maintaining security within the courthouse, including but not limited to walkways, parking lots, and entry and exit doors.
- Responding to emergency situations jeopardizing the safety of court personnel and the general public.
- Carrying out oral and written instructions, enforcing federal, state and local laws, and making arrests if needed. (Bailiffs are certified law enforcement officers.)
- Maintaining appropriate records on incident and offense reports.
- Performing other assignments such as bailiff in family protection services court, assisting with security on the first floor of the courthouse, conducting security checks of the judges' parking lot, conducting security checks of incoming mail, and relieving other bailiffs as needed so they can take breaks.
- The safety of judges, courthouse personnel, staff members, and the general public is the primary goal of the position.
- The position is located at the courthouse and work hours are from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Budget

The unit's budget has grown over the past five years. As shown in the chart that follows, according to information provided by the Cameron County Auditor's Office, the Courthouse Security Unit's budget has increased from \$820,959 (actual) in 2007 to \$965,393 (budgeted) in 2011, an increase of \$144,433 or approximately 18 percent.

**Exhibit 12
Cameron County Courthouse Security Budget
2007-2010 Actual and 2011 Budgeted**

Expense Item	2007 Actual	2008 Actual	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Budgeted	Difference 2007 To 2011	% Change 2007 To 2011
Salaries - Asst. and Deputy	\$39,159.90	\$40,402.83	\$41,273.63	\$41,350.74	\$41,172.00	\$2,012.10	5.1%
Salaries - Employees	546,381.24	571,790.07	615,659.90	652,980.16	659,435.00	113,053.76	20.7%
FICA	43,813.78	45,754.20	48,941.44	51,480.76	53,811.00	9,997.22	22.8%
Group Health	94,083.22	90,544.37	90,951.00	94,926.36	100,800.00	6,716.78	7.1%
Retirement	47,545.18	47,405.54	49,828.68	59,081.11	60,834.00	13,288.82	27.9%
Uniforms	1,414.80	5,635.40	815.85	1,105.90	7,300.00	5,885.20	416.0%
Workers Comp	33,810.78	33,284.67	25,388.32	27,140.66	27,961.00	(5,849.78)	-17.3%
Unemployment Insurance	5,852.74	6,138.98	6,567.15	6,906.51	5,214.00	(638.74)	-10.9%
Office Supplies	827.66	692.78	718.70	533.82	713.00	(114.66)	-13.9%
Gasoline	-	343.48	273.62	338.42	413.00	413.00	20.2%
Camera and Police Supplies	6,336.76	697.06	1,208.90	1,938.54	1,000.00	(5,336.76)	-84.2%
Vehicle Repairs	-	12.72	242.07	483.07	1,600.00	1,600.00	12479%
Small Tools and Equip	-	3,543.18	1,982.42	2,371.00	1,075.00	1,075.00	-69.7%
Professional Services	-	1,246.12	-	9.00	-	-	-100.0%
Mobile Phones	417.76	1,056.66	948.11	1,006.16	860.00	442.24	105.9%
Communications	164.40	331.58	234.88	241.30	180.00	15.60	9.5%
Postage	-	-	-	355.22	100.00	100.00	-71.8%
Vehicle Insurance	-	281.55	304.00	258.53	300.00	300.00	6.6%
Liability Insurance	-	189.43	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	111.08	-	-	-	-	(111.08)	-100.0%
Equip Maintenance	1,039.95	90.00	347.11	894.96	625.00	(414.95)	-39.9%
Education and Training	-	-	-	315.00	-	-	-
Weapons	-	-	1,457.70	-	2,000.00	2,000.00	37.2%
Total	\$820,959.25	\$849,440.62	\$887,143.48	\$943,717.22	\$965,393.00	\$144,433.75	17.6%
Percent Change		3.5%	4.4%	6.4%	2.3%		17.6%

Source: Cameron County Auditor's Office.

The largest part of the budget, employee related expenses including salaries and benefits, has grown by approximately 20 percent, from \$772,398 (actual) in 2007 to \$923,352 (budgeted) in 2011. Although direct employee costs are by far the largest expense items in the budget, they have represented roughly the same proportion of the budget over the past five years, accounting for 94.1 percent of the budget in 2007 and 95.6 percent in 2011.

Findings and Recommendations

Below are the findings and recommendations based on the consulting team's assessment of the Cameron County Courthouse Security Unit.

Benchmarking with Other Counties

The consulting team compared Cameron County's courthouse security operations to five other similar counties in an effort to identify issues that may need to be addressed as part of this operational review. The section immediately below reflects the results of the comparative analysis.

FINDING

Cameron County's Courthouse Security Unit uses the Constable's Office (Precinct 2) incident report. While the report collects useful management information, it is constructed from a law enforcement perspective rather than a security perspective. This limits the utility of the report; it would be difficult to answer fundamental security questions such as "what was the most serious incident that occurred in the last month" or "how many weapons were confiscated during security incidents."

Cameron County's Courthouse Security Unit covers a wider area (both in terms of the type of individual security it focuses on and how much of the court building and its surroundings are protected) than several of its peer counties surveyed for the comparative analysis.

MGT identified other counties in Texas that have judicial system characteristics comparable to Cameron County. The consulting team chose these counties based on similarities of their number of new cases filed (including criminal, civil, and juvenile) and the number of judges, based on public information available through the Texas Judicial Council. The former serves as a proxy for the number of people coming into the court building, and the later serves as a proxy for the number of court personnel. The counties analyzed were:

- Collin County;
- Denton County;
- Fort Bend County;
- Galveston County; and
- Nueces County.

Exhibit 13 displays the peer counties and some metrics of courthouse security.

**Exhibit 13
Peer Courthouse Security Metrics**

County	2009 Population	DC+CC+JP* New Cases Added	Total Judges	Incident reports	Seriousness of Incident	Prohibited Items Part of Incident Report	Part of Court Covered by Security	Focus on Prisoners or Public
Cameron	396,371	78,527	22	Yes	Unknown	Not in incident report, possibly in supplemental report	All	Both
Collin	791,631	73,256	21	Yes	Yes	Yes	Entrances	Public
Denton	658,616	66,164	20	Yes	Yes	Yes	All but courtroom (includes outside of courthouse)	Primarily Public
Fort Bend	556,870	73,441	16	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Galveston	286,814	57,242	18	Yes	Yes	Yes	All	Unknown
Nueces	323,046	54,396	22	Yes	Criminal acts are covered in offense reports	Yes	All (court bailiffs are directly hired by judges and not part of courthouse security personnel)	Both

Source: New cases filed from the Texas Judicial Council 2010 Annual Report, number of judges from the county websites, and the rest from interviews with courthouse security officers.

*District Courts, County Courts-at-Law, and Justice of the Peace Courts.

NOTE: All magistrates and/or special judges in each county were treated as one judge.

Metrics were based on two areas: performance review and coverage. The foundation of performance review is the incident report. Ideally, reviewing incident reports would allow court security management to determine peak days and times of day for incidents, the most serious incidents (and assess the response to these incidents), and the types of incidents. Additionally, incident reports can assist in the management of contraband that is collected during security operations.

There are two measures of coverage: what physical areas of the court building are under the jurisdiction of the Courthouse Security Unit and for what groups does courthouse security have responsibility. These measures are related; if courthouse security only secures the public entrance to a court building, security officers will not deal with inmates, but if courthouse security also is responsible for security in the courtroom and surrounding offices and hallways, bailiffs may interact with inmates.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

The county should instruct the Courthouse Security Unit to modify its incident report to collect information to allow for meaningful assessment of threats and risks that can provide perspective on appropriate responses to threats and risks.

Management of the Courthouse Security Unit should contact other counties and request copies of their incident forms to use while considering changes to its current form.

FISCAL IMPACT

The implementation of this recommendation could be accomplished with existing resources.

Courthouse and Courtroom Security

One of the primary responsibilities of the Courthouse Security Unit is to provide a safe and secure environment in the courthouse and its courtrooms, as well as the safety of the judges, courthouse personnel, staff members, and the general public. This responsibility is noted in the job descriptions of two bailiff positions presented above (courtroom bailiff and courthouse rover), and was mentioned several times during interviews conducted by consulting team members of Courthouse Security Unit personnel.

FINDING

When the consulting team asked the Courthouse Security Unit for a copy of its policies and procedures manual, the team was given a six-page document titled “Front Door Security Policies and Procedures.” (**Appendix A**) The consulting team was told that the document was the unit’s policies and procedures manual.

The first four pages of the document list 32 items deemed critical to courthouse entry security describing such things as who must pass through the security screening process and who is exempt from the screening process; listing the items that are prohibited in the courthouse (i.e., weapons, scissors, tools); and being aware of suspicious activities. The document also describes the various “phases” of the screening process as well as the actions involved in each phase of the process.

One page of the document lists the essential job requirements of the courthouse entry control bailiff, which differ from the job description of the position noted earlier in this chapter. The last page of the document is the signature page showing the key county administrators who authorized the policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures document provided to the consulting team is not well-organized, is not comprehensive in that it does not address all other responsibilities of the Courthouse Security Unit (e.g., courtroom security), and does not contain basic information such as how the unit is organized, and its mission and goals.

There are very good reasons why it is worth the time and effort to commit what you are about and how you do it to paper. Here are a few ways that a well-written policies and procedures manual can benefit the unit and the people and parties served by the unit.

A policies and procedures manual can:

- Clearly tell interested people who you are and what you are all about.
- Orient staff and others about the unit’s purpose, job standards and expectations.

- Contain detailed job descriptions for all positions in the organization.
- Ensure the unit stays on track even when there are changes in management and staff.
- Set a positive direction for the unit.
- Serve as a guide for managers, supervisors and staff, which takes a proactive approach to present and future issues.
- Help ensure continuity and consistency in decision-making.
- Save time and effort when issues surface that cause conflict or confusion by checking the manual for existing policy and not spend time recreating policy to address the issue at hand.
- Help avoid conflict and the potential for misunderstanding.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

The county should instruct the Courthouse Security Unit to create a comprehensive policies and procedures manual.

The Courthouse Security Unit's policies and procedures manual should cover every aspect of the unit's operations.

The consulting team contacted some counties concerning their courthouse security policies and procedures to help determine the extent and thoroughness of their policies and procedures. For example, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, which is the department responsible for courthouse security in that county, has an extensive manual.

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office's manual, known as the "Court Bailiff Division Manual", covers every aspect of courthouse security operations. The manual begins by stating what the purpose of the manual is:

The purpose of this manual is to provide an outline of the duties and responsibilities of Bailiff Division personnel. It provides a source of information and reference, which will enable any bailiff the ability to develop an understanding of their role as a member of the Bailiff Division and Court, as well as providing an overview and the background information necessary to work within the legal and organizational framework of the Montgomery County courts.

This manual is designed to provide an understanding of procedures and other measures to be used in the courtroom in regards to security, handling inmates for court, fire procedures, and other emergency situations.⁴

The manual goes on to describe the organizational structure of the Courts Division, as well as its general responsibilities and duties, and specific responsibilities related to matters such as trials, jurors and prisoners, to name a few areas.

FISCAL IMPACT

The development of a comprehensive policies and procedures manual can be accomplished with existing county resources. The manual can be developed with existing staff that can use other counties' manuals as models. There could be some minimal cost associated with producing copies of the manual for staff.

⁴ Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, Courts Division Procedures, 2011, pg. 3.

FINDING

The consulting team asked the unit's management team to describe the training program for bailiffs so the consulting team could gain an understanding of how bailiffs are prepared to handle their job responsibilities. The consulting team also asked to see all training materials used to train bailiffs on their job duties. The unit's management team said there is no formal training program or training materials for bailiffs. The management team did say, however, that bailiffs receive firearms training as well as on-the-job training.

The unit's management team stressed that bailiffs receive hands-on, on-the-job training that consisted of unit supervisors essentially working side-by-side with bailiffs to learn their job duties while actually performing their tasks, whether that was serving as courthouse entry security, courtroom or roving bailiffs.

The unit's supervisors insisted this was an effective way to train staff, and by all indications staff seemed to know their job duties and function effectively. Nonetheless, a formal training program helps ensure job performance consistency and continuity regardless of which staff member is carrying out the duties.

RECOMMENDATION 12:

The county should instruct the Courthouse Security Unit to prepare a formal training program and associated training materials for courthouse security bailiffs.

A formal job training program helps ensure employees possess the minimum proficiency, knowledge and ability to perform their required duties. The goal of such a program is to provide a foundation for employee success. The training program should be tied to the new policies and procedures manual discussed in the previous recommendation.

The Travis County Sheriff's Office, which is responsible for courthouse security in the county, shared with the consulting team its training manual for courthouse security deputies. The training manual, and the associated training program, introduces courthouse deputies to their primary duties and responsibilities. The manual outlines the policies and procedures governing courthouse security operations. The manual and program also introduce courthouse deputies to the wide variety of functions and roles performed by the courthouse security operations unit, as well as many of the laws they are responsible for enforcing.

FISCAL IMPACT

The development of a training program and associated materials can be accomplished with existing county resources. The program and materials can be developed with existing staff who can use other counties' programs as models. In addition, the management team can get information from organizations such as the National Center for State Courts at <http://www.ncsc.org/Topics/Courthouse-Facilities/Court-Security/Resource-Guide.aspx>, which makes some materials available to government agencies at no cost, to help develop a training program.

There could be some minimal cost associated with producing training materials for staff. Unit management may need to adjust staffing, much like it does when staff takes vacation leave, to allow time for staff to be trained.

FINDING

The consulting team asked Courthouse Security Unit management how they handle the need for bailiffs to be certified law enforcement officers as part of their job qualifications when the unit is not given money to cover law enforcement officer certification costs. Unit management stated that they only hire people who are already certified law enforcement officers and, therefore, do not need money to cover certification expenses.

COMMENDATION:

The Courthouse Security Unit should be commended for hiring people who are already certified law enforcement officers as a means for holding down its operating costs.

FINDING

During the consulting team's interviews with Courthouse Security Unit staff it was mentioned several times that some judges do not allow their bailiffs to assist with duties outside their courtrooms. For example, if additional bailiffs are needed to help escort a large number of prisoners from the jail to courthouse, and a courtroom bailiff is not busy because their court is not in session, that judge will not allow the bailiff to assist with prisoner movement. Not all judges do this but some judges do, which makes the job of moving a large number of prisoners to the courthouse more difficult, and potentially less safe, than it needs to be.

Currently, nine bailiffs are actually available to help with all aspects of courthouse security, and 14 bailiffs are dedicated to courtroom duties.

Because 14 of the 24 bailiffs are dedicated to courtrooms, it also may require the Courthouse Security Unit to need more staff since it cannot use some courtroom bailiffs to help when workload temporarily increases for other bailiffs in the courthouse.

RECOMMENDATION 13:

The county should work with all judges to help ensure courtroom bailiffs are free to help with other courthouse security duties when their courtroom related workload allows.

In tight fiscal times, it is essential the county be able to temporarily reallocate resources in one area to supplement resources in another area when needed. The county does not have the luxury of increasing staffing levels in courthouse security given current economic conditions. Consequently, the county must look for ways to maximize the use of current staff to meet critical needs, especially security needs.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Staffing

FINDING

The consulting team tried to match workload with staffing to help determine the staffing needs of the Courthouse Security Unit. The consulting team requested data on a number of typical workload measures used by courthouse security departments around the state and country.

The consulting team was told that the Courthouse Security Unit did not have workload measures and did not keep any statistics related to workload. Consequently, the consulting team was not able to objectively determine the appropriate staffing level of the Courthouse Security Unit based on workload data.

RECOMMENDATION 14:

The Courthouse Security Unit should establish workload measures for the unit and begin collecting workload data as soon as possible.

Workload measures are used throughout government and courthouse security is no exception. Annual workload measures for the courthouse security function typically include such items as:

- Number of persons entering the courthouse.
- Average waiting time to enter the courthouse.
- Number of physical security checks performed.
- Percent of physical security checks resulting in action.
- Number of courthouse incidents requiring security action.
- Court caseload.
- Number of court days requiring security.
- Number of high-profile court cases requiring extra security.
- Number of prisoners received for court hearings.
- Number of “off the street” prisoners incarcerated.

In addition, the Cameron County Courthouse Security Unit may want to develop some workload measures that are unique to its operations and begin tracking them on a regular basis, such as the number of incident reports generated or the types and amounts of property confiscated at the courthouse entrance.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING

Because the Courthouse Security Unit does not collect workload data, the consultants sought to determine the unit’s appropriate staffing level based on the number of positions or “posts” required to be filled by bailiffs in order to provide ample security throughout the courthouse. Posts are security positions that must be staffed on a full or part-time basis. For example, a security post at the entrance of the courthouse must be staffed the entire time (full time) the courthouse is open for business.

A full-time post typically requires more than one staff person to fill the position because the post must still be staffed even when a bailiff takes time off for vacation, illness or training. Consequently, management must determine how many staff are needed for each position based on the number of hours that position must be filled as well as factoring in time off for employee vacation, doctor appointments, etc. Determining the appropriate staffing level requires management to closely track employees’ time including overtime earned and used, vacation leave, sick leave usage and so forth in order to accurately determine how many staff hours are available to fill a post.

Unfortunately, the Courthouse Security Unit does not track employee overtime, which is an essential piece of data needed to accurately determine staffing. Unit management simply remembers how much overtime each bailiff works and tries to give staff an equivalent amount of time off as soon as possible after the overtime is earned, which often means time off later during the week the overtime is earned. Because unit management does not formally track overtime, it is problematical to determine the total number of staff hours available to fill all security posts.

RECOMMENDATION 15:

The Courthouse Security Unit needs to formally track and account for all employee time, especially the handling of overtime earned and used, so that an accurate determination of the unit's staffing needs can be established.

The Courthouse Security Unit would determine how much time, on average, each bailiff has available to work per year by taking the total number of work hours in a year (typically 2,080), less time off for training, vacation leave, sick leave and holidays. For example, in a year a bailiff would have 2,080 hours total work time, less 40 hours for training, less 80 hours for vacation leave, less 54 hours for sick leave, and 88 hours for holidays, for a net available work hours total of 1,818. If a courthouse entry control post or position had to be staffed for 10 hours a day (from 7 AM to 5 PM) Monday through Friday for 249 days a year, that one position would have to be filled 2,490 hours per year. If one bailiff was available to staff that position 1,818 hours per year, the county would need 1.15 staff to fill that position for one year ($2,080/1,818=1.15$).

Each position in courthouse security would need to be examined using the same methodology to determine the appropriate staffing level for the unit.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Organization and Management

As the various findings above illustrate, the Courthouse Security Unit does not operate in the best possible manner by collecting and analyzing typical management information and using that analysis to make organizational and operational decisions. For example, the unit does not collect workload data to help determine appropriate staffing levels. The unit does not track the earning and use of employee overtime to help determine its staffing needs.

Similarly, unit supervisors could improve the professionalism of the organization by creating a more structured environment for the unit thereby strengthening the management of the Courthouse Security Unit. For example, the unit does not have a comprehensive policies and procedures manual and a formal training program to help ensure all employees have a solid foundation upon which to perform their job duties and fulfillment of their job responsibilities. The unit does not have job descriptions for each position in the organization, and the unit does not have "post orders" or documents outlining the specific job duties of each post staffed in the courthouse.

FINDING

In January 2010, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) released a document titled, *Steps to Best Practices for Court Building Security*. The document describes the measures that should be in place to provide a comprehensive set of actions and procedures covering courthouse security. The document seeks to help the leadership in every courthouse to achieve best practices in all areas of courthouse security management and operations.

It is important to point out that the NCSC recognizes that government budgetary resources are limited and are growing increasingly scarce. Therefore, the NCSC suggests steps that can be taken to improve the management and operations of courthouse security while being mindful of limited financial resources.

The NCSC document groups key topic areas into categories beginning with the most fundamental areas to be addressed and moving to the areas that are not as high in importance but are still important. For example, one area of critical importance is a comprehensive set of policies and procedures (Category A). An area that is important but not considered extremely important is the screening of mail and packages (Category D).

RECOMMENDATION 16:

The county should instruct the Courthouse Security Unit to begin an effort to improve the overall management and operations of the unit.

The improvement effort should focus on implementing the recommendations contained in this report but also include collecting and reviewing information on best practices of courthouse security. The Courthouse Security Unit should develop an improvement plan that addresses both short-term and long-term improvement steps that can be undertaken to significantly enhance the management and operations of courthouse security.

The improvement plan should describe the overall goals for the improvement effort and explain how each action or step contributes to those goals. If there are fiscal implications of any actions or steps, those should be explained in detail.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented at little or no cost. It is possible that some publications on courthouse security may need to be purchased but those costs should be minimal.

The development of the improvement plan can be accomplished with existing resources.

Jail Operations

Introduction

The Cameron County Jail system consists of four units in three separate locations. Three of the units are located in the city of Brownsville, Texas, on East Harrison Street, in close proximity to the county courthouse.

The “Old Jail”, which is located within the courthouse structure and also serves as the hub for court transportation, is a 258 bed unit that was once the only facility for housing county offenders. As the population of the jail system grew, additional units were constructed on Harrison Street and are identified as Detention Center One (DC1) and Detention Center Two (DC2). DC1 has a capacity of 288 beds and DC2’s capacity is 192 beds.

More recently, a new facility was constructed in Olmito, Texas, on Old Alice Road that was occupied initially in 2001, with a more recent addition completed in 2010 and occupied in 2011. This facility, known as the Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center (CRDC), has a capacity of 1,008 inmates/detainees, with 128 beds currently decommissioned, therefore, the operational capacity as of this writing is 880 inmates/detainees. The overall capacity of all units combined is 1,746 when all units are functional, keeping in mind that 128 beds at CRDC are not operating at the present time due to funding issues, so the current operating capacity of the system is 1,618.

The facilities house a combination of pre-trial and sentenced inmates/detainees, male and female, including those awaiting transfer to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice units post-sentencing, known as “paper ready” cases. In addition, Cameron County has a contract to house up to 300 federal detainees of the United States Marshals Service. These detainees are currently held at DC1.

Because overcrowding has been an issue, the county occasionally houses inmates/detainees at out of county locations to relieve the overcrowding. As of this writing, approximately 70 inmates/detainees were being housed at out of county facilities. Of the available capacity, there are 96 beds dedicated to housing females at this time and they are located in DC2.

A snapshot of the type of inmates/detainees residing in Cameron County facilities on September 1, 2011, reveals the following breakdown of the population:

- Pretrial Felons – 40.5%
- Pretrial Misdemeanants – 13.1%
- Federal Detainees – 18.7%
- Convicted Sentenced to County Jail – 4.5%
- Parole Violators – 5.5%
- County Sentenced – 4.5%
- Convicted Awaiting Transfer – 12.9%
- Other – .3%

Organizational Structure

Jail operations are managed under the authority of the County Sheriff, who is responsible for managing the county jail, in addition to law enforcement responsibilities. A Chief Deputy reports to the Sheriff and supervises the Chief Jailer, who oversees day-to-day operations of the jail facilities. Reporting to the Chief Jailer are two commanders who are responsible for overseeing jail operations. One commander oversees the CRDC and the other the downtown units. There is one captain that functions as a chief of security managing the three shifts of personnel that operate the jails on a 24/7 basis.

In addition to the above, there are six lieutenants, as well as 18 sergeants and 254 detention officers. Medical services are provided by professional staff that are led by a health service administrator, who is a registered nurse. There are 43 staff assigned to medical services in the various disciplines to include nursing, medication distribution, dental, vision, and mental health.

Budget

The Fiscal Year 2011 budget for the jail system is \$18,207,160, which includes \$15,591,646 for jail operations with another \$2,615,514 for inmate healthcare. Salaries and benefits account for 70 percent of the overall jail budget or \$12,615,237. The approved budget authorizes the Sheriff to expend \$250,000 for overtime. However, it appears that overtime expenditures will exceed and possibly double the authorized amount in FY 2011. Additionally, the jail system has been overcrowded and, as a result, inmates/detainees have been transferred to other counties' facilities at significant expense to Cameron County. In FY 2010, Cameron County expended \$1,600,000 to pay for housing inmates in other counties. The FY 2011 budget authorizes the Sheriff to expend \$12,000 for that service, a figure that has been exceeded. There are revenues budgeted at \$5,117,235 to offset expenditures, which includes payments from the federal government of \$3,788,489 to pay for the cost of federal detainees housed at DC1. Other revenues are planned to be received from federal grants, pay phone commissions, and prisoner transportation reimbursement.

Scope of Analysis

MGT was tasked with evaluating county operations in a number of different functional areas. This particular analysis was a review of budget, staffing, general operations and the various cost centers relating to the management and operation of the jail. As such, the consultants spent considerable time evaluating jail performance and operating costs while looking for any efficiencies and cost reductions that may be realized. In addition, a staff analysis was performed to examine how security staff is deployed at the four detention units. We used a relief factor that was provided to us by jail management staff in performing our staffing needs calculations. The relief factor issue will be addressed in our recommendations.

Challenges

A number of challenges became immediately evident that have a direct impact on jail costs and must be considered when analyzing cost reduction opportunities in jail operations. Each will be addressed in our recommendations and cover the following areas:

- Economies of Scale - The county is operating four jails at three locations. Having multiple units causes a duplication of services and increases costs. For example, the county operates three kitchens, multiple laundries, multiple health service units, and is forced to duplicate management staffing to supervise each unit 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. If all jail functions were at a single location, there would be some cost savings associated with reducing or eliminating duplicated services.

- Texas Jail Standards Commission Requirements - The county jail system is out of compliance with the Texas Jail Standards Commission requirements, which require certain staffing levels and operational mandates and can add to the jail's operating costs. Specifically, these are related to the inmate to staff ratio requirements, inmate classification process, overcrowding, and issues related to the physical plant. Although we will discuss this in more detail later, these requirements present a problem for Cameron County and, if complied with, will add significantly to the cost of the operation. Failure to comply can have considerable legal implications. After our visit in early September 2011, the Jail Commission conducted an unannounced inspection of the facilities and cited the county jail for being overcrowded and not meeting the mandated staffing ratios.
- Staffing and Turnover - A problem that plagues correctional systems across the country is retaining qualified and capable staff, which often results in high turnover rates. Corrections work can be stressful and potentially dangerous, which affects the ability to retain personnel and staff the facilities without using overtime to fill vacancies. The cost of selecting, hiring, training and licensing of staff can be burdensome and have great impact on the county's budget, especially when the process has to be repeated time and again due to a high turnover rate. As will be discussed later, a review of the salaries of detention officers in Cameron County finds them to be among the lowest paid detention officers in the region. This often results in good staff leaving for higher paying criminal justice jobs in other counties and private facilities. When considering cost reduction strategies for the county over the long-term, it may be necessary to increase costs initially by offering pay raises or incentives to retain staff in order to save money in the long term.
- Management Information Systems - The county has limited inmate demographic data, thus limiting our ability to examine in-depth the composition of the inmate population. When examining cost information related to incarceration, it is critical to understand the makeup of the jail population with respect to type of crimes, felonies versus misdemeanors, lengths of stay, bail amounts, number of inmates/detainees with serious felony detainees, numbers of inmates/detainees with federal holds, as well as other demographic information that would aid in examining how the jail population can be better managed and/or reduced. In fairness, our evaluation took place in the midst of an information technology conversion from an older inmate database to the new Odyssey database that is being activated at this time. Hopefully, the Odyssey database will allow for in-depth examination of inmate demographic data and provide management reports that will assist with planning and decision-making.
- Roster Management - The jail staff has not been able to take advantage of information technology to assist them with management of their personnel resources and expenses. The current roster management methodology is to use a one-page manual form for all shifts each day to list personnel assignments to the various job locations. The roster utilized does not include all personnel that are at work that day, nor does the roster identify personnel that are not present due to days off, benefit leave, or who have been hired for overtime. It appears that there are personnel that are assigned to other duties, but are counted as part of the detention officer contingent available to be assigned to posts on the roster when, in fact, they are not available. This lack of clarity makes an assessment of personnel resource needs difficult.

Inmate Management

Cameron County's inmate/detainee census, when factoring out the federal population, is in the vicinity of 1,250. The Cameron County inmate population ranks seventh among all Texas counties. Furthermore, the incarceration rate for Cameron County is 2.97 per 100,000 residents. It exceeds the state incarceration rate average of 2.57.⁵ The overall Cameron County population of roughly 406,000 ranks 13th compared to all other Texas counties⁶. The disparity between the overall county population and a higher incarceration rate suggests that the jail population may be higher than necessary and in need of further examination. It is possible that through a series of reforms there could be a reduction in the overall census of the jail system. MGT evaluated the costs associated with managing the inmate population and calculated the per diem cost of housing a prisoner in the jail system in FY2011 at \$46.61/day. Although per diem costs cannot be recovered by a reduction of a small number of inmates/detainees, there could be substantial savings if a reduction of a larger population of inmates/detainees takes place, resulting in the closing of housing units and a reduction of services. A census reduction further provides benefit in that the county could choose to contract with another governmental entity in need of jail beds, such as US Immigration and Customs Enforcement or the United States Marshals Service, an entity that already contracts for 300 beds with Cameron County.

The MGT team had discussions with a number of governmental officials who reported that there are issues with case processing in the court system, which result in longer periods of incarceration, and these have an adverse impact on the overall population of the jail. As evidence of this, we determined that a number of detainees on a regular basis file writs of habeas corpus requesting relief from the court due to a delay in the processing of their criminal cases. In many cases, criminal matters are not filed in a timely manner, resulting in delays in case processing and increased bed days in the jail facilities. This has a significant impact on costs and does not necessarily improve public safety, as many of these offenders are eventually released after the processing has finally been completed. Thirteen percent of the detainee population is being held for misdemeanor charges and these cases should be reviewed and processed in a timely manner to reduce costs and avoid habeas corpus hearings. It appears that the average number of petitions filed weekly is approximately 60. Given the significance of this issue this matter should be studied further. The MGT consultants took the opportunity to observe a judge conduct hearings of those who had recently filed petitions for habeas corpus. Most, if not all, of the cases heard were detainees that had been held in excess of 30 days and had not received a bond reduction. In many cases, the filing of their particular case had been delayed by the arresting law enforcement agency and/or the district attorney.

The inability to manage the inmate population and its growth in general has a deleterious effect on the budget and cost control. This is evidenced by recent events where overcrowding resulted in the transfer of inmates/detainees to other jurisdictions at a cost to the county. These are unbudgeted costs that place the county in an untenable position of having to pay for the inmates/detainees being sent out of the county.

Census management is the key to cost containment in the provision of jail services. Our report will touch upon a number of areas where possible savings can be achieved through implementation of strategies that will lead to efficiencies. None of these will match the savings that can be attained through census management and efficient use of correctional bed space. Jurisdictions that have been successful at controlling jail costs typically evaluate criminal justice system practices to ensure that resources are being applied to the critical aspects of public safety. Inefficient criminal justice practices typically drive up costs, overpopulate correctional facilities, and lead to budget shortfalls.

⁵ Costly Confinement and Sensible Solutions: Jail Overcrowding in Texas, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition Public Policy Center, 2010, Page 4

⁶ 2000 US Census

Pretrial Services

At the present time, there is a team of three individuals who provide pretrial services to the detainee population. The majority of their effort is to assist detainees with assignment of counsel, as most of the detainees are indigent and eligible for court appointed counsel. Additionally, the pretrial services manager can arrange for reduced bond for detainees that meet certain criteria. Beyond the reduced bond program and assignment of counsel duties, the pretrial services division lacks authority and resources to develop a full-scale pretrial services program that would likely have direct impact on length of stay for detainees in the jail system. Many jurisdictions across the country have faced similar problems with respect to jail occupancy and overcrowding. A number of these jurisdictions have developed plans that include controlling census growth and increasing the efficiency of processing criminal cases. This is something that could have great impact in Cameron County and is deserving of serious consideration.

Pretrial services programs take many forms and should be tailored to a jurisdiction's particular needs and available resources. They often include programs such as pretrial diversion to drug treatment or community supervision that may include electronic monitoring and case management. Many times pre-trial staff are assigned to work at the jail with the detainees, as well as with prosecutors and the courts to expedite case processing. All of these options have the ability to reduce the daily jail population and alleviate overcrowding.

Case Processing

Staff interviewed indicated that delays in case processing are a major cause of extended stays at the jail facilities. We were advised that arrest reports and case filings are often filed manually and can take a number of weeks before the paperwork is put in order. This problem was observed during the habeas corpus hearings attended by the consultants, as in certain cases the prosecutors were unprepared to proceed with matters because of processing issues and, as a result, detainees that had been at the jail for over 30 days were still awaiting the formal filing of charges. Delays of this nature also have an adverse impact on increased length of stays and costs associated with delays.

RECOMMENDATION 17:

Develop a Criminal Justice Coordinating Council - County officials, including the Sheriff, District Attorney, and local judges should meet regularly to monitor the jail population numbers and to discuss strategies to address jail overcrowding and the timely processing of criminal cases. Many jurisdictions have had success with forming a criminal justice coordinating council, an ongoing forum of justice system stakeholders that work together to improve the operations of the criminal justice system.

RECOMMENDATION 18:

Case Processing Enhancements - Criminal justice partners, as part of their deliberations, should evaluate options to improve case processing, such as automated systems for direct entry of police reports and the use of case expeditors to coordinate with criminal justice officials and detainees' representatives to expedite case processing through the system.

RECOMMENDATION 19:

Pretrial Services - Criminal justice partners should consider investing in pretrial service programs that allow for diversion of eligible detainees from jail to supervision and treatment programs in the community. Many of the offenders who are not considered a threat to the public safety are in need of substance abuse and mental health treatment to reduce their risk of reoffending. These programs can have significant impact on reducing jail bed days and also serve to reduce recidivism in the long-term.

County officials should consider retaining an expert in pretrial services and judicial matters to work with the parties to facilitate the development of a series of acceptable options that will reduce the overall census of the jail. It is important to stress that this program will only be successful if the judiciary, prosecutors, law enforcement, jail officials, and other county officials work together in this effort.

The Privatization Option

One option the county may want to consider is the option to privatize jail operations as a method to reduce costs, which can be accomplished under the right circumstances without reducing quality of service. Determining the right circumstances requires detailed analysis and is beyond the scope of this study; however, it is important to point out areas of potential savings for consideration. There are a number of areas where the county may obtain savings through privatization of operations.

Pension Liability

One significant area of savings could be eliminating costs associated with the pension program. FY2011 expenditures for this item are \$823,600, and this is an expense a private operator will not pass on to the county, as most private operators offer a 401K retirement savings program, versus the expense of a government pension program. A private company match is significantly less than a government pension cost. This will not eliminate all pension costs as many employees are likely vested in the current program, but most prospective pension costs will be eliminated.

Insurance

- **Health Insurance** - A potential savings could occur through eliminating health insurance through the county and having the expense taken on by the private contractor. In most instances a private corrections operator can offer a less expensive health insurance option than government and, as a result, there is a reduced expenditure and less impact on the per diem rate the operator is likely to bid. The cost of county employee health insurance for FY2011 is \$1,600,000.
- **Liability Insurance** - A well-constructed contract will also ensure that most of the liability associated with jail operations will be assumed by the operator with an assurance of county indemnification, thus reducing insurance costs. County insurance costs for FY2011 are in the vicinity of \$185,000 for property, auto, and liability insurance; a cost that will be taken on by the operator.
- **Workers' Compensation Insurance** - Corrections work can be particularly hazardous as staff often responds to inmate violence and risk injury on a regular basis. Workers' compensation rates are typically higher in corrections than in other vocations. In FY 2011, the cost of worker's compensation insurance for Cameron County is \$317,000.
- **Insurance Rates General** – Many of the government entities we are familiar with report that once liability associated with jail operations has shifted to a private operator their insurance premiums as a whole are reduced. This is an ancillary benefit associated with privatization.

Inmate Health Care

Additional savings can be realized through privatization of inmate health care services. The advantage here is that vendors can often provide pharmaceuticals at a lower cost than government and better manage bed day utilization in outside hospitals, although this is not always the case. Therefore, the county should proceed carefully if it intends to consider this option. The cost of inmate health care for FY2011 is \$2,600,000, and if even a 10 percent savings could be realized, it could save the county approximately \$260,000.

Food Service/Commissary

Inmate food expenses are a big part of any jail budget. The FY2011 food costs were approximately \$1,935,000. Food service is operated by a vendor and a contract is in place. If all facets of correctional operations were privatized, it is possible that the county could realize additional savings if one vendor was operating the entire correctional program.

The consulting team did not have the opportunity to look at the commissary contract or the contract for pay phone service, but the county may want to examine those contracts and possibly re-bid them, using a carefully crafted request for proposals to help ensure it is receiving the maximum commissions available. These commissions are typically used to offset the cost of inmate programs and services.

Overtime

The annual cost of detention officer overtime exceeds appropriated levels each year. This fiscal year the cost will exceed \$500,000. Most overtime is a direct result of vacancies caused by turnover, coupled with a high workload. If security operations were contracted out, it would be the responsibility of the vendor/operator to staff the facilities in accordance with all legal requirements at a straight time rate, or assume the burden and cost of overtime if they operated understaffed. The county could also penalize a vendor through liquidated damages for failing to maintain adequate staffing consistent with commitments made in the contract. One benefit of outsourcing correctional services is the county sets the required staffing levels and the vendor must comply or be in violation of the contract. This motivates the vendor to comply and avoid facing financial penalties.

Census Demands/Privatization/Contracting Beds to Other Entities

As discussed previously, the primary problem affecting Cameron County with respect to correctional costs is a jail population level that is proportionally high given the size of the county compared to other counties in the state. This is exacerbated by criminal case processing delays and the lack of a robust pretrial services program. If there is success in reducing the jail population, this opens up the possibility of leasing beds to other entities, such as ICE or the US Marshals service. In the privatization scenario, it is typical for the vendor to be responsible for aggressively marketing vacant beds and contracting for their use. In situations we are familiar with where the vendor negotiates a contract to house prisoners from a governmental entity, the county typically receives a payment in lieu of taxes from the vendor, which is paid from a portion of the per diem rate. For example, if the vendor contracted for 150 beds and paid the county five dollars per day for each of those inmates/detainees, the county's payment would be in the vicinity of \$273,000. Of course, this can only occur if there are vacant beds and the vendor can successfully market those beds to a different governmental agency. This model is used by a number of counties in Texas to generate revenue and reduce the overall cost to taxpayers. At the present time, there are 128 decommissioned beds not in use. These beds, if leased to another entity, could be generating revenue.

RECOMMENDATION 20:

Privatization of Correctional Services – The county should evaluate the benefits of privatizing correctional services, thus gaining additional control over correctional costs.

If coupled with reforms that reduce the overall inmate/detainee population, there can be a considerable financial benefit.

United States Marshals Service Contract

The county entered into a contract with the United States Marshals Service in 1999 to house federal detainees in the county's facilities. The contract was known as a Cooperative Agreement Program (CAP) and the county committed to house 300 detainees for 15 years at a reduced per diem rate of \$30 per day. In exchange, the US marshals provided the county with \$3,000,000 in project funds for a construction program. Since that time, the per diem rate has increased to \$36.35 per day. In addition to the per diem, the county receives reimbursement for detention officer costs associated with the transportation of federal detainees. According to the county, the per diem received is not sufficient to meet the cost of managing the detainees. The cost of housing an offender in the county jail system is \$46.61, which is \$10.26 more than the federal reimbursement rate.

In hindsight, agreeing to a 15 year reduced per diem for \$3 million in construction money was not a good deal for the county. Regardless, at the time the decision was deemed appropriate and the construction money was put to good use. The issue here is that the county is now losing over \$1,000,000 per year in revenue because it is unable to charge the federal government the full per diem rate because of the prior CAP contract.

There are 128 decommissioned beds in the new section of the Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center (CRDC) that are not in use that could be generating revenue if a market for those beds could be identified.

RECOMMENDATION 21:

United States Marshals Service Contract - County officials should contact the United States Marshals Service, and its US congressman and senators to see if the federal government might be amenable to renegotiating the original CAP contract to obtain a higher per diem rate than is currently being paid. As part of the negotiation, the county may choose to offer an additional 100 beds from the decommissioned section of CRDC as an incentive for the negotiation. This could prove to be of great financial benefit to the county. To be successful in implementing this recommendation, recommendations related to pretrial services and census reduction ought to be implemented to help ensure that vacant beds are available.

Video Arraignment/Conferencing

The county's courts have begun to experiment with the use of video conferencing for certain types of court appearances that can be conducted efficiently without having to transport the prisoner from the jail to the court. Video conferencing links have been installed at the county courthouse and at the CRDC. The MGT consultants were advised that video conferencing is taking place one day per week at the present time and we observed the process at the CRDC during our visit.

The value of this process is to reduce prisoner transportation and accelerate the processing of cases. We did observe jail officials transporting inmates/detainees from the courthouse correctional facility back to the CRDC for a video conferencing session. This defeats the purpose of using videoconferencing to accelerate court activity and reduce prisoner transportation.

RECOMMENDATION 22:

Video Conferencing Expansion - Judges and county officials, including jail staff, should investigate the potential for expanding the use of video conferencing as a method to reduce prisoner transportation and for expediting case processing in the judicial system.

Certain types of appearances are ideal for video conferencing and officials should determine what works best and test those strategies. The transporting of prisoners from the county courthouse jail facility back to the CRDC for video conferencing should be discontinued. At some point a video link from the courthouse jail facility to the court should be installed.

Jail Staffing

One of the goals of the study was to develop an understanding of the workload and policy issues driving staff deployment patterns. With a budget of over \$9 million dedicated to salaries, it was critical to evaluate the efficiency of staff deployment practices. The consulting team achieved this through a comprehensive information gathering process that utilized three specific approaches: document reviews, staff interviews, and post inspections.

Document Reviews. Applicable local and state policies, Texas Jail Standards Commission requirements, as well as documentation identifying both current and past staffing patterns were reviewed.

Staff Interviews. For a better understanding of the data collected and received, the consulting team interviewed key stakeholders within the Jail Division. The purpose of the interviews was to gain an in-depth understanding of the management practices and issues, as well as data collected. A broad range of staff members were interviewed including the Sheriff, Jail Administrator, County Auditor, jail management personnel and line staff.

Post Inspections. The project team reviewed post assignments during operating shifts. A “post” is a job assignment with specific responsibilities. The review included tours of each facility, observations of personnel working post assignments, and a review of post orders when available. In conducting the review, the following criteria were utilized:

- post assignments should be established in accordance with the goals of establishing and maintaining effective security;
- a post assignment should be staffed by a qualified employee if, in the course of normal operations, the post comes into regular contact with inmates;
- assignment practices should be flexible enough to deploy staff as needed to respond to changing needs within the jail while maintaining post assignment security;
- overtime utilization should be held to the minimal level required to perform critical operational functions;
- jail command structures should provide appropriate supervisory coverage;
- staff deployment should be consistent with detainee classification and placement practices; and
- post responsibilities should be regular, documented and well-defined.

Applying these criteria, the project team identified staffing requirements associated with current operational practices and, as a result, developed staffing recommendations. As a result of the operational review, there were four primary issues affecting staffing patterns. The issues include the personnel policies of Cameron County, jail post responsibilities, the number of staff available and the Texas Commission on Jail Standards requirements. Each of these areas is addressed in this report.

Authorized Positions

The Jail Division is under the direct supervision of the Cameron County Sheriff who has appointed a Chief Jailer to be responsible for the jail’s day-to-day operations. The authorized number of staff positions budgeted for the Cameron County Jail Division is 349, as reported in the FY2011 county salary schedule. This includes 285 security personnel, 43 medical staff, 13 clerical staff, 5 maintenance workers, 1 data systems operator and 1 cook.

Jail personnel currently rely on additional support and assistance from numerous county administrative departments and personnel.

In addition to the support received from other county departments several service contracts have been secured including: Aramark, Inc. to manage food services, Snakre Vending, LLC to manage commissary services, and select personnel contracts to provide medical services for the Jail Division.

The table below identifies the current budgeted full-time staffing levels by position classification for the Jail Division.

**Exhibit 14
Cameron County Jail
Actual Staffing Level Compared to Budgeted Level
By Position Classification**

Position	Budgeted	Actual
Security		
Chief Jailer	1	1
Commander	2	2
Captain	1	1
Training Coordinator	1	1
Lieutenant	6	6
Sergeant	18	18*
Deputy	2	2
Detention Officer	254	254*
Sub-total	285	285
Civilian		
Assistant Administrator	1	1
Administrative Secretary	1	1
Records Clerk	1	1
Clerk	8	8
Attendance Clerk	1	1
Finance Clerk	1	1
Assistant Finance Clerk	1	1
Data Systems Analyst	1	1

Exhibit 14 (continued)
Cameron County Jail
Actual Staffing Level Compared to Budgeted Level
By Position Classification

Position	Budgeted	Actual
Civilian (cont'd)		
Chief Cook	1	1
Maintenance Tech V	1	1
Maintenance Tech I	2	2
Electrician	1	1
Custodian	1	1
Sub-total	21	21
Jail Infirmary		
Infirmary Administrator	1	1
Infirmary RN	1	1
Infirmary LVN	20	20
Medication Aide	14	14
Infirmary Clerk	5	5
X-Ray Technician	1	1
Administrative Assistant (Medical)	1	1
Sub-total	43	43
Overall Total	349	349*

Source: Cameron County Auditor, as presented in the FY 2011 Cameron County Salary Schedule.

* Some staff on military leave status.

At the time of the review, there were six personnel on military leave status including one sergeant and five detention officers. There were no vacant positions at the time of the review. The staffing level will likely change as additional personnel are hired or positions become vacant or eliminated; however, the information presented above is used as a reference point to reflect current staffing levels.

In addition, there are a few part-time positions that are not identified in the salary schedule, and were reported as being filled. These positions included a part-time assistant finance clerk and six detention officers. The part-time positions were shown as being filled in the staff roster provided for September 7, 2011.

At the time of the review the Jail Division was operating at 98.28 percent of the budgeted staffing level. Overall the current staffing level is consistent with the budgeted level. However, since no comprehensive post analysis has been developed to determine actual staffing needs, the budgeted staffing level appears to be based more on funding availability rather than meeting established post responsibilities.

Staff reported that personnel from the Texas Commission on Jail Standards completed a staffing analysis in May 2010; however, the analysis covers only select posts at the Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center. A notation in the staffing analysis provided acknowledges it may not include all positions needed to effectively operate the jail. The jail commission staffing analysis recommended 210 positions for the Carrizales-Rucker Center and there are currently 349 positions budgeted for the entire Jail Division.

FINDING

The current staffing level is consistent with the budgeted level but no comprehensive post analysis has been developed to identify actual staffing needs of the Jail Division. Instead, staffing levels appear to be based on available funding rather than meeting post responsibilities. As a result, the Jail Division is vulnerable to staffing inefficiencies that lead to unnecessary expenditures.

RECOMMENDATION 23:

Establish a post analysis for the Jail Division that will identify appropriate staffing levels based on current responsibilities.

Staff Deployment

The Cameron County Jail consists of four primary facilities operating in three separate locations: the Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center (CRDC); Detention Center I (DC1); Detention Center II (DC2) and the Old Jail. In view of the 24 hour operation of each facility, personnel are required to be assigned to each facility at all times. The number of staff required is based on a variety of factors that will be discussed below.

Cameron County Personnel Policy

A comprehensive personnel policy manual has been developed to provide a guideline describing work conditions for Cameron County employees. The manual includes, in part, reference to the number of hours an employee can work, pay periods and overtime thresholds. No local labor agreements are in place to further define work hours, shift assignments or overtime, as is the case in many jurisdictions.

Work Hours

Cameron County personnel policies reflect that the normal work schedule for administrative and civilian personnel is from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, which includes a one hour unpaid lunch period.

The normal work schedule for law enforcement personnel, deputies and jail personnel, as referenced in Section 7.01, *Administrative Workweek*, of the Cameron County personnel policy manual, is 171 hours in a 28 day period. The policy manual does not define the number of hours that can be worked by deputies or jail personnel each day or during a seven day period.

Security personnel assigned to the Jail Division are currently scheduled to work five consecutive eight hour days followed by two days off. In addition, a 15 minute staff briefing is conducted prior to each shift to communicate staff assignments and discuss current issues. Most security personnel are currently scheduled to be on-site 165 hours during a 28-day work period (20 workdays x 8.25 hours per day). As a result of the current scheduling practice security personnel are scheduled to work six fewer hours in each 28 day pay period than identified in the Cameron County Personnel Policy Manual. Facility administrative staff reported that security personnel are often required to complete incident or activity reports after their shift and the six hour difference allows staff the opportunity to complete those reports without accumulating compensatory time or overtime.

No data was presented or available to indicate the frequency in which personnel work the additional six hours during a 28 day work period. As a result, there appears to be a number of hours during each work period where security personnel are not assigned to a post and may be allowed to work less than the established normal work schedule of 171 hours. The six hour difference can add up to a

significant number of hours over a period of one year. When the six hours is multiplied by the number of staff involved (281) and multiplied by 13 work periods in a year, approximately 21,918 work hours per year are dedicated to something other than being assigned to a post, staff training or attending pre-shift briefings.

Administrative staff reported that the undedicated hours are occasionally filled by staff completing incident or activity reports; however, there is no tracking system to substantiate how these hours are used. Command staff reported that when personnel are not required to complete an incident report they are normally allowed to leave the facility once they have been relieved from their post.

The following table shows the estimated number of hours per year where security staff is not assigned to a post, attending training or attending the pre-shift briefings.

Exhibit 15
Cameron County Jail Division
Security Personnel
Scheduled Hours vs. Established Hours

Current Scheduled Hours	Established Hours in Policy Manual	Difference in Hours	Work Periods Per Year	Security Positions	Undedicated Hours
165	171	6	13	281	21,918

Source: MGT of America, Inc.

What appeared to be problematic in reviewing the scheduled hours vs. established hours is the amount of time available after an employee has been relieved from their post assignment. Most jurisdictions provide a work schedule where staff is finished with their shift and ‘off the clock’ once they are relieved from their post. Activity reports are usually completed during the shift whenever feasible.

In the Cameron County Jail Division, staff are still ‘on the clock’ once they are relieved from their post but are normally allowed to leave the facility unless an activity or incident report is required to be completed. Although it is a small amount of time each day, it can add up to a significant amount of time over the course of a year.

An important difference between Cameron County and comparable departments is that most other jurisdictions establish work schedules that define in policy the number of hours to be worked each day and the corresponding daily overtime threshold. A common work week, for example, may include an eight hour work day and a 40 hour work week. Any hours worked beyond the established hours are considered overtime hours. In Cameron County, the normal work schedule for law enforcement, deputies and jail personnel is defined as 171 hours in a 28 day period. The current work schedule allows some flexibility in the number of hours that can be worked each day and during a seven day work week prior to receiving compensatory or overtime time for additional hours worked. This flexibility can be a significant benefit to the county when properly managed.

Fair Labor Standards Act

The 171 hour, 28 day work schedule currently used by Cameron County is derived, in part, from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The FLSA establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, record-keeping, and child labor standards in the private sector and in federal, state, and local governments. The FLSA also identifies select public safety positions that may be considered exempt from specific standards established in the FLSA. The exempt positions known as “7 (k) exemptions” are

identified in the Act as the number of hours that can be worked before overtime payment is required. Some of the positions that can qualify for the partial overtime exemption are “security personnel in detention facilities”, firefighters and law enforcement officers.

The most significant impact the FLSA 7 (k) exemption has had on the operation of a detention facility is the establishment of an overtime threshold. According to the FLSA 7 (k), overtime does NOT have to be paid to detention officers after 40 hours. The overtime threshold is based on the “work period” set by the county. An employer can establish work periods that range from 7 to 28 days with the maximum number of work hours being identified for each work period before overtime payment is required. For example, the maximum number of hours that can be worked in a 14 day work period prior to overtime is 86 hours. The current recognized work period for Cameron County is 28 days and the corresponding maximum number of hours that can be worked prior to overtime is 171 hours.

The result of the FLSA 7(k) exemption has led to a tremendous growth in the number of detention facilities utilizing alternative work schedules and expanded work periods for security personnel. Most jurisdictions using an alternative work schedule have reported savings in personnel costs.

Based on the current work schedule, security personnel do not appear to be consistently scheduled to work the maximum number of established hours. Implementing the use of an alternative work schedule may result in expanding the number of hours staff are assigned to a post and result in a cost savings and possible reduction in overtime expenditures.

FINDING

Security personnel are scheduled to work 165 hours per 28 day work period while the established work period as described in the Cameron County Personnel Policy Manual is 171 hours.

The estimated difference between scheduled hours and county established work hours is approximately 21,918 hours per year. Jail administrative staff reported that security personnel are often required to complete incident or activity reports after their shift and the six hour difference allows staff the opportunity to complete reports without accumulating compensatory time or overtime. No recording system is in place that monitors the number of hours or the frequency in which those hours are actually worked.

The Cameron County pay period is every 14 days and the work period is defined as every 28 days.

RECOMMENDATION 24:

Cameron County should consider the use of an alternative work schedule that would result in staff being scheduled to work at a frequency more consistent with the work hours established in the Cameron County Personnel Policy Manual.

RECOMMENDATION 25:

Cameron County should consider redefining the work period as 14 days to be consistent with the current established pay period. This adjustment will result in the overtime threshold becoming 86 hours in the 14 day work period as prescribed in the FLSA.

Currently, the overtime threshold is 171 hours based on a 28 day work period. The adjustment would expand the overtime threshold by one hour for each employee resulting in an increase in the number of hours an employee can work at straight time by 13 hours. (254 Detention Officers x 13 hours = 3,302 hours per year). Overtime hours would be reduced.

RECOMMENDATION 26:

Cameron County should instruct the jail administrative staff to develop a time management tracking system that records and monitors how staff utilize their time, including the time after they have been relieved from their post at the end of the shift.

Work Schedule Sample Comparison

When exploring alternative work schedules it is essential to understand that even though the number of post assignments required to be filled may be the same, the number of staff needed to fill those posts may vary based on the work schedule selected.

To illustrate the difference, two separate work schedules are presented to identify the number of staff required to fill the same posts. The posts selected to show the initial comparison are the detention officer housing posts at located in Phase I at Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center.

Current Schedule: The facility currently operates using a traditional work schedule that has staff assigned to one of three primary shifts with security personnel working five consecutive 8.25 hour days followed by two days off. Personnel are properly balanced throughout the week on each shift to maximize staff coverage and reduce the reliance on overtime. The starting and ending times for each shift vary by work location; however, the following shifts are most commonly used to ensure continuous post coverage: 5:45 am – 2:00 pm; 1:45 pm – 10:00 pm; and 9:45 pm – 6:00 am.

Detention officers are scheduled to work 165 hours in a 28 day work period and are normally assigned to a designated post for 160 of those hours. During the remaining five hours personnel attend a pre-shift briefing. As a result, officers are assigned to an approved post 93.57 percent of the time under the current work schedule.

12 Hour Schedule: The alternative work schedule being presented is a 12 hour work schedule. Staff work more hours each day but fewer days in a year. Many budget conscious counties have become increasingly creative and found ways to reduce operational costs by establishing alternative work schedules that expand the number of hours worked in a day while reducing the overall number of security staff required. In view of the fact that jails operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, 12 hour shifts have resurfaced as a common work schedule alternative.

A 12 hour work schedule has detention officers scheduled to work 14 twelve-hour days in a 28 day work period. Four separate staff teams (crews) are established to ensure continuous post coverage. The day off rotation for staff varies based on the specific rotation the county selects. As a result, officers are normally scheduled to work 170.8 hours in a 28 day work period and are assigned to a post for 168 of those hours. An initial 12 minute pre-shift briefing is provided prior to the shift. In comparison with the established 171 hour work schedule, officers are assigned to an approved post 97.82 percent of the time.

The following table shows the staffing comparison when applying the two different work schedules. As shown in the table, the 12 hour work schedule results in 4.82 fewer detention officers being required to staff the same number of posts.

Exhibit 16
Cameron County Jail Division
Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center Phase I Housing
Sample 28-Day Work Schedule Comparison

8 hr. Schedule	Shifts			Relief Factor	Staff Required	Scheduled 28-Day Work Period			Scheduled %
	<i>CRDC I Housing</i>	5:45a-2:00p	1:45p-10:00			9:45-6:00	Hours on Post	On-Site Hours	
A-Pod (146)	4	4	4	1.63	19.56	3129.6	3227.4	3344.76	
B-Pod (144)	3	3	3	1.63	14.67	2347.2	2420.55	2508.57	
C-Pod (144)	3	3	3	1.63	14.67	2347.2	2420.55	2508.57	
D-Pod (146)	4	4	4	1.63	19.56	3129.6	3227.4	3344.76	
E-Pod (48)	3	3	3	1.63	14.67	2347.2	2420.55	2508.57	
F-Pod (24)	1	1	1	1.63	4.89	782.4	806.85	836.19	
Total	18	18	18		88.02	14082.6	14523.3	15051.42	93.57%
Sample 12 hr. Schedule	Shifts			Relief Factor	Staff Required	Scheduled 28-Day Work Period			Scheduled %
<i>CRDC I Housing</i>	5:45a-6:00p	5:45p-6:00a	N/A			Hours on Post	On-Site Hours	171 Hours/28-days	
A-Pod (146)	4	4		2.33	18.48	3104.64	3156.38	3160.08	
B-Pod (144)	3	3		2.33	13.98	2348.64	2387.78	2390.58	
C-Pod (144)	3	3		2.33	13.98	2348.64	2387.78	2390.58	
D-Pod (146)	4	4		2.33	18.48	3104.64	3156.38	3160.08	
E-Pod (48)	3	3		2.33	13.98	2348.64	2387.78	2390.58	
F-Pod (24)	1	1		2.33	4.66	782.88	795.93	796.86	
Total	18	18	0		83.2	13977.6	14210.56	14288.76	97.82%

Source: MGT of America, Inc.

Based on the sample schedules shown, the following comparisons are presented:

- When detention officers are assigned to the current work schedule, they are scheduled to work 165 hours in a 28 day work period and are normally assigned to a designated post for 160 of those hours. When detention officers are assigned to a 12 hour work schedule they are scheduled to work 170.8 hours in a 28 day work period and are normally assigned to a designated post for 168 of those hours. The 12 hour work schedule will provide eight additional hours of post coverage per officer during each work period.
- Detention officers are assigned to a post 93.57 percent of the time when working the current work schedule. Detention officers working a 12 hour work schedule are assigned to a post 97.82 percent of the time.
- A shift relief factor of 1.63 has been applied to the current work schedule to account for regular scheduled days off, training and staff using annual leave time. The relief factor was determined by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards and most recently referenced in their staffing analysis conducted in March 2010. A shift relief factor of 2.33 has been applied to the 12 hour work schedule. The shift relief factor was determined by taking the net annual work hours used in establishing the current relief factor identified by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards and applying those hours to a 12 hour work schedule. As a result, 4.89 staff (3 shifts x 1.63) are required to fill one 24 hour post under the current schedule and 4.66 staff (2 shifts x 2.33) are required to fill one 24 hour post when using the 12 hour work schedule.
- 88.02 detention officers are required to fill 18 twenty-four hour posts throughout the year when using the current work schedule. In order to fill the same 18 posts under the 12 hour work schedule, 83.2 detention officers are required. In total, 4.82 fewer detention officers would be needed if the county used the 12 hour work schedule.
- When using a 12 hour work schedule, a day off rotation can be established to ensure detention officers do not work more than three consecutive days and each staff member is scheduled to be off for a three day weekend (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) every other week. Applying this work schedule may have a positive impact on staff retention levels.

Alternative Work Schedule

Based on the sample comparison provided it appears that exploring the use of an alternative work schedule may lead to potential costs savings. If the county decides to further pursue an alternative work schedule the following factors should be considered:

Does it make good business sense?

Since the jail operates 24 hours per day, 365 days in a year, 12 hour shifts deserve consideration. There have been situations where a 12 hour shift has reduced overall costs and situations where the work schedule has increased costs. The outcome depends a great deal on the type and extent of work performed prior to implementation. The completion of a staffing analysis that takes into consideration current and required staffing levels, post responsibilities, operational safety and existing personnel policies will assist the county in better understanding how an alternative work schedule may affect operations.

Upon completion of a staffing analysis, the implementation of a pilot program will help demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed schedule. Significant staff shortages, poor scheduling or a lack of employee buy-in may prove to negatively impact the county's effort at establishing a more cost-effective alternative work schedule.

Do alternative work schedules have an adverse impact on productivity, quality or safety?

There has been no consistent research presented that indicates a properly developed 12 hour work schedule in a detention facility has had an adverse effect on job performance. As long as scheduled off days are protected, and periodic breaks are provided, most 24 hour post assignments can be performed equally well when using staff assigned to a 12 hour schedule.

Is there one work schedule that is the best?

There is no one work schedule that is best for every facility. Each jurisdiction has unique characteristics and responsibilities that prevent any one work schedule from being the most effective.

For example, in the Jail Division there are security posts that are more appropriate for an eight hour work schedule and some that are best suited for a 12 hour work schedule. Security posts such as property control, recreation, training, laundry, visitation, transportation and hearing officers may be considered more appropriate for staff working a traditional eight hour schedule. The post responsibilities that go along with these positions do not normally require seven day coverage and personnel assigned 12 to 24 hours per day. Having an employee working a 12 hour shift while assigned to a post requiring fewer hours of responsibility may often lead to inefficient use of staff resources. When considering using 12 hour shifts, the use of more than one work schedule is strongly recommended.

Posts that require at least 12 hours of coverage seven days per week are potential candidates for staff working a 12 hour shift. In the Jail Division, there are over 50 posts that require seven day coverage for at least 12 hours. In view of the liberal personnel policies regarding work schedules and the number of posts requiring seven day coverage, a 12 hour work schedule should be considered as a possible cost savings measure.

Has the workforce been asked what they want?

While 12 hour shifts resulting in more days off in a year are certainly popular, they are not the unanimous preference of all shift workers. The most cost-effective work schedules are schedules that meet both the operational needs of the county and include a buy-in from the workforce. For employees to become invested in the schedule they should be given a clear understanding of what the schedule options include and what shift patterns are available. This initiative can have a direct impact on staff retention levels. It is important for management to review the positives and negatives of each work schedule prior to presenting the schedules to the staff for consideration.

Personnel policies need to be re-examined.

Most traditional employment policies addressing vacation, holiday and sick leave, etc. are written for eight hour shifts. Failure to review existing policies for staff assigned to a 12 hour shift may result in excessive and unnecessary costs to the county.

Potential Impact

To help explain the potential impact of converting the existing practice of using one work schedule to a work schedule that includes both an eight hour and a 12 hour schedule, the table that follows has been developed to further describe the potential impact.

The detention officer post assignments in the jail division that require 24 hour coverage seven days per week have been identified in the table below. These posts consist primarily of housing unit, booking and intake/release posts at all four of the facilities. L-Pod, which is located at the Carrizales-Rucker facility, is included in the chart as part of *Housing* to provide a comparison, although the housing unit is currently decommissioned due to staff shortages.

**Exhibit 17
Cameron County - Jail Division
Work Schedule Comparison
24 Hour Detention Officer Post - Staffing Requirements**

Facility Post Location	Current Work Schedule		12-Hour Work Schedule	
	24 Hr. Posts	Staff Required	24 Hr. Posts	Staff Required
CRDC				
Booking	2	9.78	2	9.32
Intake/Release	3	14.67	3	13.98
Housing*	29	141.81*	29	135.14*
DC 1				
Housing	6	29.34	6	27.96
DC 2				
Housing	4	19.56	4	18.64
Old Jail				
Housing	7	34.23	7	32.62
Total	51	249.39	51	237.66
Current Approved Detention Officers		254		

Source: MGT of America, Inc.

*Includes L-Pod which is currently closed and requires 14.67 or 13.98 detention officers per TCJS.

The table shows the number of detention officer posts assignments for each area that require seven day coverage on a 24 hour basis.

For example, at the CRDC there are three posts assigned to *Intake/Release*. Each post is required to be filled 24 hours per day. Since officers are scheduled to work five days per week for eight hours, more than one officer is needed to fill the post during the week. As a result, a relief factor has been established to determine how many staff are required to ensure continuous post coverage. The Texas Commission on Jail Standards has established the shift relief factor as 1.63. When the shift relief factor is multiplied by the number of shifts used (three), the post staffing becomes 4.89 (1.63 x 3 shifts = 4.89). Based on the fact that there are three *Intake/Release* posts required to be filled, a total of 14.67 staff are needed to fill the *Intake/Release* posts throughout the year (4.89 x 3 posts = 14.67).

Applying this same post staffing formula to the 12 hour work schedule would result in 11.73 fewer detention officers being required. This is based on the use of the revised relief factor of 4.66 to account for the 12 hour shift.

At a base salary of \$24,824 per officer, a minimum cost savings of approximately \$300,000 could be achieved in salaries alone. Adding employee benefits would increase the savings by an additional 35–40 percent.

FINDING

When detention officers are assigned to the current work schedule they are scheduled to work 165 hours in a 28 day work period and normally assigned to a designated post for 160 of those hours. When detention officers are assigned to a 12 hour work schedule they are scheduled to work 170.8 hours in a 28 day work period and are normally assigned to a designated post for 168 of those hours. The 12 hour work schedule will provide eight additional hours of post coverage per officer during each work period.

Approximately 13 fewer detention officers would be required by properly expanding the work schedules options to include both an eight hour and 12 hour schedule. This expansion could lead to potential cost reductions in staffing and overtime expenditures.

At a base salary of \$24,824 per officer, a minimum cost savings of approximately \$320,000 could be achieved in salaries alone. Adding employee benefits would increase the savings by an additional 35–40 percent.

RECOMMENDATION 27:

The county should instruct the Jail Division to expand the existing staff work schedule to include both eight and 12 hour work schedules.

Current Staffing Level Requirements

One of the concerns addressed by the project staff during the study was that the approved staffing level was not consistent with the staffing requirements of the jail. In order to determine the actual number of staff required to operate the jail division, a comprehensive “post” analysis must be completed for each facility. This is an essential element in controlling jail operational costs. If a staffing needs analysis is not completed, there could be a number of problems that may surface, including excessive operating costs and possible life safety issues.

The number of staff required is dependent on six primary factors: the number of posts to be filled to meet existing post responsibilities; state mandates; the frequency in which those posts are to be filled; the work schedule selected; whether the posts require relief personnel during employee absences; and the established relief factor.

As described earlier in the report, the relief factor refers to the number of staff required to provide coverage for a single post during a prescribed period of time when a specific work schedule is used. The relief factor is determined by taking into account the number of hours an average employee is available to fill a post and comparing that with the number of hours the post is required to be filled. The application of a relief factor should never be considered as a means to identify surplus personnel, but rather the recognition that staff has scheduled days off, attends training, uses vacation time, sick time, etc. and during those periods most post assignments still must be filled.

Cameron County Jail Division personnel reported that there has not been a comprehensive post analysis completed on the jail by the county or Jail Division personnel. The only post analysis provided was a partial staffing analysis completed by personnel from the Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS). The analysis was conducted in March 2010 and reflects minimum staffing requirements for the Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center only and excludes any reference to most civilian support personnel. The TCJS reported a minimum of 210 staff were required to operate the CRDC.

In this section of the jail operations chapter, the consulting team will demonstrate how current jail personnel are deployed, explain issues affecting staffing levels, and provide preliminary recommendations.

Existing Staffing Practice

As a result of a combination of staff interviews, post assignment observations and a review of multiple staffing records, the following table was developed to describe the current staffing practice by position classification.

The budgeted number identified in the table is taken from the FY2011 salary schedule provided by the County Auditor and identifies the number of full-time authorized positions by general classification. The actual number referenced is the number of staff assigned to the Jail Division as reported by jail personnel, minus the six staff that are on military leave. The required number identifies the number of staff required for each position classification based on the current practice of filling posts and applying the Texas Commission on Jail Standards established shift relief factor.

**Exhibit 18
Cameron County
Jail Staffing by Position Classification
Based on Current Schedule**

Position	Budgeted	Actual	Required	Actual Difference
Security				
Chief Jailer	1	1	1	0
Commander	2	2	2	0
Captain	1	1	1	0
Training Coordinator	1	1	1	0
Lieutenant	6	6	6	0
Sergeant	18	18	18	0
Deputy	2	2	2	0
Detention Officer	254	254	294.02	40
Subtotal	285	285	325	40
Civilian				
Data Systems	1	1	1	0
Clerical Support	13	13	13	0
Maintenance	6	6	6	0
Chief Cook	1	1	1	0
Jail Infirmary	43	43	43	0
Sub-total	64	64	64	0
Total	349	349	389	40

Source: Cameron County FY 2011 Salary Schedule, September 2011.

As shown in the preceding table, the Jail Division is operating at or near the budgeted level, however, there are approximately 40 fewer staff than required based on current operational practices. The required staffing level is 389 and the actual staffing level is 349. (This does not include the staffing of L-Pod.) The position classification requiring additional personnel is that of *detention officer*. At the time of the review, there were five detention officers and one sergeant on military leave, thus these staff members were currently unavailable to fill a post assignment. Specific post assignment rosters based on the current practice can be found in Appendix B.

As a result of the limited number of staff available, jail management staff has implemented several strategies to meet existing post responsibilities:

- **Responsibilities for multiple post assignments are merged together and performed by one employee.** Personnel detailed to one assignment often serve in multiple positions on a short-term basis to ensure responsibilities are being met.
- **Personnel initially not scheduled to work are assigned to a post to meet existing post responsibilities.** Security personnel do not normally accumulate overtime until they have reached 171 hours in the 28 day work period. As a result, personnel are frequently held over or called in at straight time to meet existing post responsibilities.
- **Voluntary overtime.** When an insufficient number of staff is available to meet existing post responsibilities staff are required to work at an overtime rate to meet post responsibilities. On average between February and September of 2011, 2,760 hours of overtime per 28 day work period had been worked to fill required post assignments.
- **Part-time detention officers.** At the time of the review there were six part-time detention officers available to fill a post between 18 and 32 hours per week.
- **Detention Officers work in a supervisory position.** Detention officers are routinely assigned to shift supervisory positions at all the facilities to minimize overtime expenditures. For example, one sergeant may be assigned to the Old Jail or Detention Center I/II on each shift. Due to the fact each sergeant is scheduled to work five days in a seven day period, there are two days where no supervisor is scheduled. As a result, a detention officer serving in an unofficial “corporal” role serves as the on-site supervisor.
- **Posts assignments are closed.** Post assignments that are required to be staffed are occasionally closed due to limited personnel. Booking, laundry, kitchen, recreation and visitation posts are frequently closed based on a review of daily personnel rosters and on-site observations because of lack of available staff.

The number and type of strategies used by the Jail Division to manage posts assignments are based on a few factors. First is to ensure the detention facilities operate in a manner that produces a safe and secure environment for the public, staff and inmates. Certain posts should never be closed. A second and equally important factor is to operate the facility in a manner consistent with national, state and local laws. One legal entity that has been charged with enforcing state standards in jails is the Texas Commission on Jail Standards.

Texas Commission on Jail Standards

The Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS) was established in 1975 as a result of several lawsuits filed against Texas counties for the conditions of confinement in local jails and for the lack of regulated and funded inspections of those jail facilities. House Bill 272 was signed into law establishing the commission’s authority and responsibility for inspecting jails and enforcing compliance with the standards that have been set forth.

One approach utilized by the commission is to conduct inspections of each jail and identify counties in need of planning, management assistance or to initiate enforcement action when necessary. Each operating facility is inspected at least annually to determine security, control, conditions, and compliance with established minimum standards. Newly constructed or renovated jails require occupancy inspection(s) to ensure that construction was completed in compliance with minimum jail standards.

On September 14, 2011, a TCJS inspection took place at the Cameron County Jail and there were no staffing related findings cited, however, there were several critical staffing related requirements referenced in the standards. In determining minimum staffing levels and responsibilities, the following rules are cited in the standards:

Rule 275.1 Regular Observation by Corrections Officers. Every facility shall have the appropriate number of corrections officers at the facility 24 hours each day. **Facilities shall have an established procedure for visual, face-to-face observation of all inmates by corrections officers at least once every hour. Observation shall be performed at least every 30 minutes in areas where inmates known to be assaultive, potentially suicidal, mentally ill, or who have demonstrated bizarre behavior are confined.** There shall be a two-way voice communication capability between inmates and staff at all times. Closed circuit television may be used, but not in lieu of the required personal observation.

Rule 275.3 Corrections Officers Pay. Pay for corrections officers should be equivalent to that of other appointed deputies of similar grade, status, and/or tenure whose daily duties require frequent, close, and risky contact with violators of the law.

Rule 275.4 Staff. Inmates shall be supervised by an adequate number of corrections officers to comply with state law and these standards. **One corrections officer shall be provided on each floor of the facility where 10 or more inmates are housed, with no less than 1 corrections officer per 48 inmates or increment thereof on each floor for direct inmate supervision. This officer shall provide visual inmate supervision not less than hourly.** Sufficient staff to include supervisors, correctional officers and other essential personnel as accepted by the commission shall be provided to perform required functions. A plan concurred by both commissioners' court and sheriff's department, which provides for adequate and reasonable staffing of a facility, may be submitted to the commission for approval. This rule shall not preclude the Texas Commission on Jail Standards from requiring staffing in excess of minimum requirements when deemed necessary to provide a safe, suitable, and sanitary facility nor preclude submission of variance requests as provided by statute or these rules.

In view of the TCJS standards, the following table was developed to identify minimum staffing requirements for the housing units based on the 1:48 staffing ratio cited in Rule 275.4.

**Exhibit 19
Cameron County Detention Centers
Texas Commission on Jail Standards – Staffing Ratio**

Location	Capacity	1:48 Ratio	Post Relief Factor	Total Staff Required	Comments
CRDC I					
A-Pod	146	4	4.89	19.56	Control Center plus six housing pods and ten cells.
B-Pod	144	3	4.89	14.67	Control Center plus six housing pods and eight cells.
C-Pod	144	3	4.89	14.67	Control Center plus six housing pods and eight cells.
CRDC I					
D-Pod	146	4	4.89	19.56	Control Center plus six housing pods and ten cells.
E-Pod	48	1	4.89	4.89	Control Center, 24 cells and dormitory. Requires two staff on floor to comply with movement procedures.
F-Pod	24	1	4.89	4.89	Infirmery, Medical/Mental Health, six cells.
CRDC II					
K-Pod	192	4	4.89	19.56	Control Center plus three pods. Protective Custody, Sex Offenders, Trustees. Requires additional staff to be in compliance with movement procedures.
L-Pod	128	3	4.89	14.67	<i>Closed due to staff shortages. No recreation space.</i>
M-Pod	36	1	4.89	4.89	Maximum Security single cells, additional staff required to be in compliance with procedures.
DC I					
X-Pod	96	2	4.89	9.78	Three dormitory pods plus cells. US Marshall
Y-Pod	96	2	4.89	9.78	Three dormitory pods plus cells. US Marshall
Z-Pod	96	2	4.89	9.78	Three dormitory pods plus cells. US Marshall
DC II					
V-Pod	96	2	4.89	9.78	Male reduced security housing.
W-Pod	96	2	4.89	9.78	Female Dormitory housing.
Old Jail					
1st Floor	36	1	4.89	4.89	Juveniles/Work Crew.
2nd Floor A/B	40	1	4.89	4.89	General Population.
2nd Floor C/D	45	1	4.89	4.89	General Population.
3rd Floor A/B	52	2	4.89	9.78	General Population.
3rd Floor C/D	85	2	4.89	9.78	General Population.
Overall Total				200.49*	Includes L-Pod which is closed due to staff shortage.

Source: MGT of America, Inc.

In order to be in compliance with rule 275.4 of the Texas Jail Standards, a minimum of 200.49 staff are required to provide direct inmate supervision within the housing units. Staffing at this level should be considered a baseline minimum number of positions required to staff the housing units when operating at full capacity and using the current work schedule. The fact that L-Pod is currently closed would reduce the housing unit staffing level requirement to 185.82.

As reported in the March 2010 inspection report completed by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, the staff assigned to the inmate housing control rooms located outside the living unit can be counted in the 1:48 staffing ratio as long as they provide direct visual inmate supervision from their assigned post. This staffing allowance has not always been case and the current practice used by the Jail Division includes the use of officers assigned to the housing unit control rooms when determining post assignments.

To determine whether there is a sufficient number of detention officers assigned to each facility, the table below shows a comparison between the TCJS required staffing levels and the current number of detention officers assigned to each facility.

**Exhibit 20
Cameron County Jail Division
TCJS Housing Staff Requirement**

Facility	TCJS 1:48 Ratio	Detention Officers Currently Budgeted	Difference
Housing Requirement			
Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center	117.36	168	50.64
Detention Center I/II	48.9	50	1.1
Old Jail	34.23	36	1.77
Total	200.49*	254	53.51*

Source: MGT of America, Inc.

*Includes L-Pod which is closed.

Based on the current number of detention officers at each facility, a sufficient number of detention officer positions are budgeted to fill required housing unit post assignments. A total of 200.49 officers are required to meet the 1:48 TCJS ratio and 254 officers are budgeted for the Jail Division. The fact that L-Pod is currently closed would reduce the housing unit staffing level requirement to 185.82. This leaves a total of 68.18 detention officer budgeted positions to fill the remaining officer posts. Since five detention officers are currently on military leave, a total of 63.18 actual officers are available.

Based on current operational practices, the remaining 63.18 detention officers are available to fill the following post responsibilities:

**Exhibit 21
Cameron County Jail Division
Additional Detention Officer Post Requirements - Current Practice**

Post Assignment	Number of Posts	Shifts	Staff Required	Comments
Intake/Release	3	3	14.67	Security supervision in Intake/Release Area.
Booking Officers	2	3	9.78	Inmate processing for Intake/Release.
Central Control	1	3	4.89	Remote surveillance and access control.
Central Control	1	2	3.26	Remote surveillance and access control.
E-Pod	2	3	9.78	Policy requires two staff present when opening cell door and providing escort.
M-Pod	2	3	9.78	Policy requires two staff present when opening cell door and providing escort.
K-Pod	1	3	4.89	Inmate escort and staff relief for housing area with an operating capacity of 192 inmates including three separate living units.
Classification	1	2	3.26	Initial risk assessment and housing assignment of inmate population.
Re-Classification	1	1	1	Maintain compliance with established policy
Transport	6	1	6	Inmate transport to and from court/medical and between facilities.
Property Control	1	1	4.89	Inventory, storage and control of property.
Clothing Exchange	1	1	1	CRDC. Issuance and retrieval of county issued clothing.
TLETS	1	1	1	CRDC. Review criminal history data base.
TDCJ Coordinator	1	1	1	TDCJ liaison and movement expediter.
Disciplinary Hearing Officers	2	1	2	One at CRDC and one at DC/Old Jail.
Kitchen Security	1	1	1	CRDC. Inmate worker supervision.
Laundry	3	1	3	Inventory control, inmate worker supervision, compliance with policy.
Recreation	4	1	4	Security supervision in recreation areas at each facility.
Visitation	4	1	4	All facilities. Visitation Security supervision.
One-on-One	Varies		Varies	Mental Health/High Risk direct observation.
Hospital Supervision	Varies		Varies	Inmate supervision while at a hospital.
Relief Supervisor	12	3	12	All facilities. Asst. Shift Supervisor.
Central Processing	1	1	1	CRDC
Infirmery Officer	2	1	2	DC and CRDC Medical Security.
Maintenance Officer	1	1	1	Maintenance Supervisor at CRDC.
Booking at DC I/II	1	1	1	New Arrival/Release Processing at DC.
Intake at Old Jail	2	1	2	Direct Court holding and intake.
Total			108.2	

Source: MGT of America, Inc.

A total of 108 detention officers are required to fill the additional posts. There are 63 staff currently available. As a result, several of the posts are often closed due to limited staffing levels. However, a few of the posts cannot be closed as a result of the nature of the post responsibilities, such as: central control, intake, booking, infirmary officer, property control, classification, one-on-one direct supervision or hospital supervision.

FINDINGS

The Jail Division is operating at or near the budgeted level, however, there are approximately 40 fewer staff than required based on current post responsibilities. The required staffing level is 389 when using the current work schedule and the budgeted staffing level is 349. The detention officer position is the only position that requires additional staff based on the current work schedule used.

In order to be in compliance with rule 275.4 of the Texas Jail Standards, a minimum of 200.49 staff are required to provide direct inmate supervision within the housing units. This staffing level should be considered a baseline minimum number of positions required to staff the housing units when operating at full capacity and using the current work schedule. The fact that L-Pod is currently closed reduces the current housing unit staffing level minimum requirement to 185.82.

A total of 68.18 detention officers are budgeted to fill the remaining officer posts. Since five detention officers are currently on military leave a total of 63.18 officers are available to fill the remaining detention officer posts.

Staff assignment records are not maintained in a manner that consistently identifies how staff is utilized or which specific post assignments are being filled.

As a result of the limited number of staff available, jail management staff has implemented several strategies to meet post responsibilities including: hiring part-time personnel, merging post assignments, closing non-critical post assignments, requiring staff to work additional hours at straight-time and paying personnel at an overtime rate.

Overtime is relied on extensively to meet staffing level requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 28:

The county should conduct a study to identify a staffing complement that provides sufficient personnel to cover each post assignment including personnel to cover during normal staff absences.

Complete a comprehensive post analysis of each facility that is conducted by personnel representing both the Jail Division and Auditor's Office.

RECOMMENDATION 29:

The county should institute a 12 hour work schedule in the jail to cover as many positions as possible.

Consider the use of a 12 hour staff work schedule in addition to the existing 8 hour work schedule.

RECOMMENDATION 30:

The Jail Division should maintain an updated relief factor that identifies required staffing levels.

Update the relief factor on an annual basis to ensure accurate data is used to determine net annual work hours. Given the fact that staff have regularly scheduled days off, vacations, use sick time, etc., staffing posts throughout the year will require more than one officer.

RECOMMENDATION 31:

The county should establish an employee time and attendance accountability system.

Implement a flexible automated attendance tracking system to record start and departure times for all personnel.

RECOMMENDATION 32:

The county should establish a relief factor based on net annual work hours of Jail Division personnel to assist in determining actual staffing requirements.

At a minimum, establish a relief factor for the detention officer and sergeant positions. A shift relief factor of 1.63 has been determined by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards.

RECOMMENDATION 33:

The Jail Division should expand the use of part-time employees.

Expand the use of qualified part-time detention officers to supplement the existing staffing levels.

RECOMMENDATION 34:

The Jail Division should develop a master roster for each facility.

A master roster may best be described as a planning schedule that identifies what posts are to be staffed, when they are to be staffed, and who will fill each post for a specified period of time. In addition, the master roster should include a report that identifies the personnel assigned to each shift and facility and their days off.

RECOMMENDATION 35:

The Jail Division should develop a daily roster.

Establish a daily assignment roster that identifies all staff assigned to the shift, their status including whether they are working, where they are working and any staff working overtime or using benefit time.

Managing Overtime

As a result of the limited number of staff available, jail management staff has implemented several strategies to meet existing post responsibilities. Although each strategy is routinely used the one that is least cost-effective is to work staff on an overtime basis. As noted previously, there are 40 fewer detention officers available than required to meet current post responsibilities. In order to fill required post assignments, secondary post assignments are often merged, non-mandatory posts are closed, and staff are required to work hours they were not originally scheduled to work.

The Cameron County Personnel Policy Manual states in section 7.05, Overtime and Compensatory Time, *Deputies and Jailers will receive compensatory time for time worked beyond the one hundred and seventy-one hours (171) per 28-day period. Payment for overtime is calculated at one-half the regular hourly rate.*

To determine the extent of overtime used and why it was used, a comprehensive review system needs to be in place at the beginning of the process. This system should include a document driven process that defines the approval process, documentation required, post closing order, reason for overtime, and a monthly report that identifies compliance levels and strategies to reduce overtime use.

Multiple staff interviews were conducted and it was determined that no comprehensive overtime tracking system is in place. Hours are collected and recorded to ensure payment, however, no descriptive system is in place to define why the overtime is required or to validate the overtime worked.

County personnel provided a wealth of information regarding the number of overtime hours worked by pay period. Personnel Exception Worksheets for the Jail Division were reviewed for the most recent 14 pay periods ranging from February to September 2011. On average, 1,380 hours of overtime per 14 day pay period were reported. In addition, approximately 34 hours on average of compensatory time were earned during the same reporting period. In total, approximately 1,414 hours of overtime and compensatory time are worked in a typical 14 day pay period.

The project team attempted to determine why the overtime was worked. However, due to the lack of supportive documentation it became extremely difficult. The names of the employees working the overtime and the corresponding hours worked were provided but no consistent system is in place to define the reasons for the overtime. As a result several staff interviews were conducted and the following reasons were cited:

- back-fill existing post vacancies;
- complete special details;
- provide one-on-one inmate supervision based on mental health or high risk concerns;
- provide inmate supervision while at an outside hospital/clinic; or
- staff shortages.

What is uncommon is there is no tracking system in place that captures what measures occurred or took place prior to overtime being approved. As a result, it is difficult to define why the overtime was worked and whether there were alternative options available that could have been chosen. Most jurisdictions have a document driven system that help ensure other options are considered before overtime is worked.

One method used by other jurisdictions is to classify post assignments as either “mandatory” or “non-mandatory” and to prioritize the staffing of existing posts. Some jurisdictions refer to these posts as “level one” or “level two” posts. Mandatory posts are posts that should not be closed on the shift. Non-mandatory posts are posts that could be closed on a short-term basis to avoid overtime expenditures. For example, prior to using overtime, non-mandatory posts should be considered for closure prior to authorizing overtime. Documentation supporting the decision-making process on overtime use should be maintained.

FINDINGS

No comprehensive overtime tracking policy is in place to ensure all available options are considered prior to authorizing the use of overtime. Data on overtime hours is collected but no data is consistently maintained that identifies the reason for the overtime and what steps were taken prior to authorizing the overtime to determine whether the authorization was appropriate.

Daily assignment rosters are not maintained at all facilities in a manner that identifies which posts are required to be filled, which posts are filled or how all staff scheduled are being used. It is difficult to determine, based on the documentation provided, whether all staff scheduled are assigned to a post and where the overtime is required.

In FY 2009, the overtime expenditure was \$477,496.11 and in FY 2010 the overtime expenditure was \$495,170.

RECOMMENDATION 36:

The county should develop an overtime authorization policy and procedure for the Jail Division that describes at a minimum: the authorization process including steps required to be taken prior to authorization; reason for overtime; documentation required; post designation; and monthly recapitulation reports.

Staff Turnover Impact

Each individual hired as a Cameron County employee represents a significant investment of time and money. A high rate of turnover reflects both an operating loss for the county as well as an operational inefficiency associated with lack of employee continuity and a loss of experience linked productivity. As of September 2, 2011, 184 detention officers had separated employment from the Jail Division during the past three fiscal years. There are currently 254 detention officers. There is a substantial cost associated with the hiring, training, separation and replacement of employees.

The position classification with the greatest rate of turnover in the Jail Division is the detention officer. Over 90 percent of all separations in the Jail Division are in the detention officer position.

During the last three fiscal years, the turnover rate has varied from approximately 21 percent to 29 percent.

**Exhibit 22
Cameron County Jail Division
Detention Officer Separations**

Position Classification	Number of Detention Officers Separated			Total
	FY09	FY10	FY11	
Detention Officers	65	60	59*	184

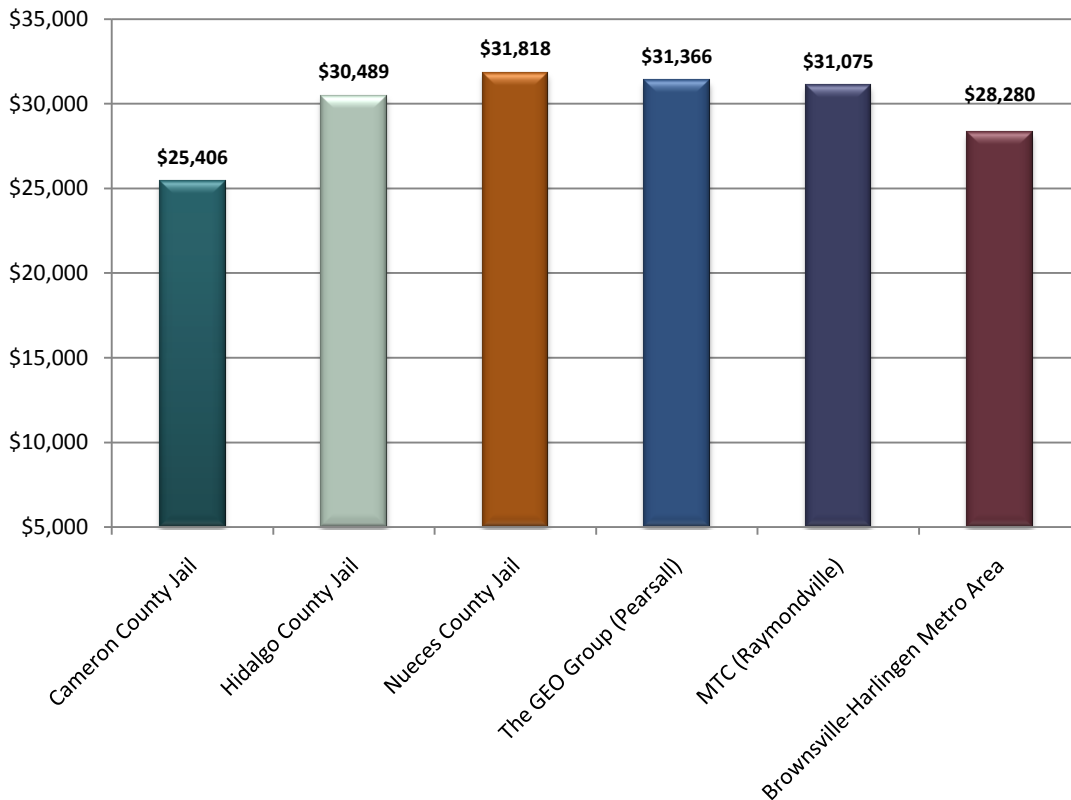
Source: Cameron County Auditor's Office.

* As of September 2, 2011.

Although a formal separation survey was not completed, several staff interviews were conducted to determine contributing factors to the high turnover rate. The following issues were mentioned.

- **Staff wages.** Staff wages are currently in the lowest 10th percentile for jailers in the Brownsville-Harlingen metropolitan area based on May 2010 Department of Labor occupational wage reports.
- **Shift rotation.** Detention officers currently rotate their shifts every other work period (56 days). As a result, staff is not able to establish a consistent schedule outside of work.
- **Staff shortages.** The facility operates on the principle of functioning at a minimum staffing level. Staff reported they often work multiple posts at the same time to meet existing post responsibilities.
- **Excessive hours worked.** Personnel routinely are required to work more hours than originally scheduled to cover post assignments. On average, approximately 2,800 hours of compensatory and/or overtime are earned in each 28 day work period.
- **Alternative employment opportunities are available within the area.** Staff can gain employment at a higher hourly rate for doing the same type of work within the valley and metropolitan area, as seen in the following table.

Exhibit 23
Detention Officer Salary Comparisons



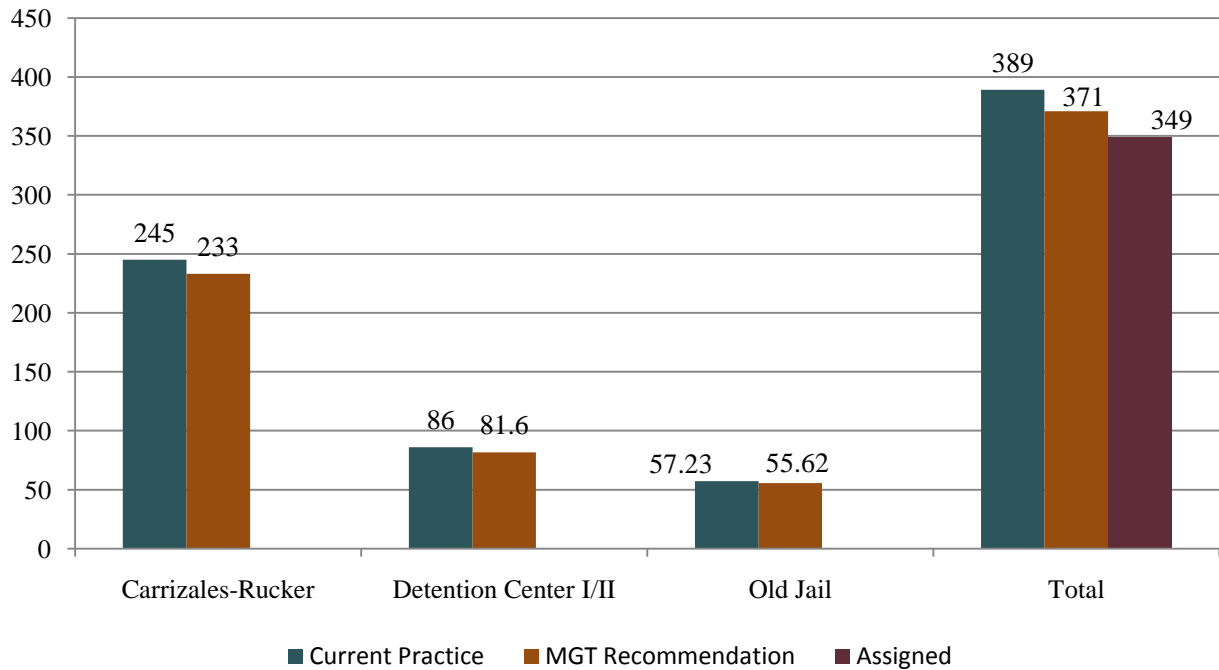
Source: MGT of America telephone survey; county website; U.S. Department of Labor, May 2010 occupational wage reports.

- The chart illustrates the salary for a detention officer at various local detention facilities. The salary ranges between \$25,406 and \$31,818.
- The average salary for the Cameron County detention officer is approximately 16 percent less than a detention officer working at the Hidalgo County Jail.
- Additional comparisons are made with two privately operated detention facilities. The MTC – Raymondville facility has a starting salary of \$31,075 for a detention officer and the GEO Group South Texas Detention Center located in Pearsall offers a starting salary of \$31,366. Average salaries were not available.
- Based on a review of the Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, May 2010 Occupational Employment and Wage survey, the median annual salary of correctional officers and jailers in the Brownsville-Harlingen metro area was \$28,280. This is approximately \$2,870 more than the average detention officer annual salary at the Cameron County Jail.
- Cameron County detention officers rank in the lowest 10th percentile in the area in hourly wage earned for a detention officer. This is based on the Department of Labor Bureau of Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage survey for May 2010.

Post Assignments and Staffing Level Recommendations

The following recommendations reflect minimum staffing level requirements at the current facilities. The post and staffing levels recommended for the Jail Division facilities reflect a change in work schedule, post assignments and the overall number of staff required. As a result of the recommendations, a minimum of 371 staff would be required to meet existing post responsibilities based on how the facilities are currently used. Any changes in housing space or adjustments in existing contracts would impact recommended staffing levels.

Exhibit 24
Cameron County Jail Division
Current Staffing Level Practice - MGT Staffing Level Recommendation



Source: MGT of America, Inc.

Recommended Work Schedules

The work schedules applied in determining the staffing recommendation reflect the most cost-effective and efficient work schedules based on the mission of the facilities, state mandates and physical plant designs. There is no overtime built into the established schedule. The work schedules that were selected took into consideration post requirements and the frequency in which the responsibilities were required to be met. All detention officer posts requiring seven day coverage for 24 hours are recommended to be filled by personnel assigned to a 12 hour work schedule. Application of this schedule would provide appropriate staff distribution and the opportunity for assigned staff to enjoy a three-day weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) every other week. Security post assignments requiring less than seven day coverage are recommended to be filled by personnel assigned to the traditional eight hour work schedule. As a result of the adjustment in work schedules, 11.73 fewer detention officers would be required. The specific recommended post analysis tables can be found in Appendix C.

Recommended Adjustments to Post Assignments

The following post adjustments are being recommended when compared with the current operating practices of the Jail Division.

RECOMMENDATION 37:

Mid-Day Shift Lieutenant. Currently at the CRDC there is a shift lieutenant assigned to the day and night shifts but no shift lieutenant assigned during the mid-day shift (2:00 pm to 10:00 pm) Monday through Friday. The shift lieutenant serves as the on-site ranking officer when administrative personnel are not on-site. To ensure consistency in supervisory coverage throughout the day, one five day shift lieutenant post is recommended to be added to provide facility supervisory coverage.

Central Processing. The central processing position is a five day detention officer post assigned to the Intake/Release/Booking area to assist in the processing of inmates. Six additional detention officer posts are being recommended to be filled Monday through Friday during the same time period in Intake/Booking. In view of budget constraints, post responsibilities should be absorbed by the additional staff assigned to the intake/release and booking areas and the position should be deleted.

Captain/Commander. Currently there is a captain and two commanders assigned to provide on-site supervision at the detention facilities. In addition, the jail administrator oversees the day-to-day operations of the Jail Division. The captain post responsibilities include all the facilities but most of the responsibilities are focused on the CRDC. One commander position is primarily focused on the CRDC and the other commander position covers the Old Jail and Detention Centers I/II. In view of budget constraints and the existing post responsibilities, one on-site supervisor can meet the existing post responsibilities at the CRDC and one supervisor can manage the supervisory responsibilities at the Old Jail and detention centers, provided the required lieutenant positions are filled. Delete one commander position.

Federal/State Transport. Re-evaluate the cost benefit of dedicating two detention officers to provide inmate transport for federal and state inmates. Evaluate the use of contractual services as an option.

Chief Cook. There is one chief cook position assigned to food services. In addition, there is a food services contract to provide food services to the jail division. Re-evaluate the cost benefit of having the county cook position filled in view of the existing food service contract.

Maintenance Officer. Currently there is a correctional officer assigned to a five day post to serve primarily as the on-site maintenance supervisor. Based on the employee's expansive skill level, the employee also assumes several additional responsibilities. The maintenance officer post responsibilities are not consistent with a detention officer position. Add a maintenance supervisor position and delete the detention officer position.

Custodian. In view of budget constraints, the five day custodian position responsibilities in the jail division can be provided under supervision by an inmate trustee in most situations.

Booking/Processing Clerk. In view of budget constraints, the five day booking/processing clerk position responsibilities should be absorbed by staff assigned as booking officers.

Payroll Clerks. There are two five day payroll clerk positions that are assigned to the Sheriff's Office. These positions are not directly assigned to the Jail Division. The two positions should be deleted from the Jail Division and recommended for the Sheriff's Office.

Recreation. There are two five day recreation officer positions assigned to Detention Center I/II. These two positions provide on-site security supervision while inmates are participating in recreational yard activity. In view of budget constraints, review current recreation schedules, access requirements and adjust the schedule in a manner where one five day recreation officer can meet post responsibilities.

Visitation. There are two five day visitation officer positions assigned to the Detention Center I/II to provide on-site security supervision during visitation periods. Modify the existing visitation schedule in a manner where it will meet state requirements but be overseen by one five day detention officer.

The post assignment adjustments outlined above combined with approved post assignments reflect the minimum staffing level requirements to meet existing responsibilities. Changes in service contracts (i.e., Aramark, USMS) or expanded use of housing space (L-Pod) will impact the number of staff required. In total, the recommended budgeted staffing level is 371 to meet existing post responsibilities and reduces overtime costs.

Appendix A: CAMERON COUNTY COURTHOUSE *FRONT DOOR SECURITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

CAMERON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

FRONT DOOR SECURITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Lobby operations are Monday through Friday, 7:30am to 5:30pm, and any other time as directed.
2. All security screeners must have a state certification as peace officer and must be commissioned as deputy sheriff or deputy constable. These premises are required to be manned by Texas Peace Officers. Peace Officers are required to be armed at all times while working at the front door screening area.
3. The front door security screening area will be exclusively used only by the screening staff except for screeners that are assigned to assist for that week. The Chief, Asst. Chief, Sergeant, and or OIC can authorize other personnel into the screening area. Eating food must be contained within the enclosure of the screening area. The screening area must be kept clean at all times.
4. Federal, State, County and Municipal Judges will be allowed to by-pass (including their carrying baggage) the security screening process. Only current and pasted judgeship will be recognized and allowed this privilege. (Employee entry side)
5. All attorneys will be allowed to by-pass the security screening process. Except: that all attorneys' carry baggage will be screened and inspected in the same manner as to the public. In addition, all attorneys will need to present a Bar card issued by any state identifying him or her as an attorney. A bone-fide legal assistant who presents a county issued identification card will be allowed the same privilege. Their carry baggage will be screened and inspected in the same manner as to the public. (Employee entry side)
6. All law enforcement officers will be allowed to carry their weapons into the courthouse. The officer can be in his official capacity and/or off duty, no law enforcement officer will carry a weapon as a party to the case involving a criminal case, a criminal family matter and or a civil family matter. (Employee entry side)
7. All employees will be allowed access into the courthouse by bypassing the security screening process. The employees' carry baggage will be screened and inspected in the same manner as to the public. In addition: all employees must wear their official federal, state or county issued identification card. From time to time, any and/or all employees will be screened and required to follow the same process as to the public. This is a privilege not a right. (Employee entry side or as directed)

8. No licensed carriers, no persons and/or no security officers will be allowed to carry any weapon into the courthouse. The only exception to this rule will be that all security officers must be in their official capacity and must be properly identifiable in a distinctive uniform. (For example: armored car personnel etc.) In addition, the security officer must state his business and location of the business within the courthouse. (Employee entry side or as directed)
9. All hand carried bags, backpacks, brief cases, fanny packs, and / or any other hand carried bags or shoulder bags includes wallets if deemed necessary will be screened and inspected through the x-ray machine. If a bag or case cannot be properly passed through the x-ray-machine, the bags or cases will be physically inspected of its' contents with the owner of the property present.
10. Phase One of Inspection: The personal property of the public will be placed into a screening tray and inspected by the screener at that post. The screener will not remove any personal property from a person unless it deems necessary to do so. The person will remove all items and objects from their shirt and trousers pockets. The property will then be placed into a screening tray, inspected and returned to the person. This is the first phase of the inspection process prior to entering the secured area of the courthouse. Note: If for any medical reason, a person that is allowed to by pass this screening process. The person will then proceed to the third phase inspection prior to entering the secure area of the courthouse.
11. Phase Two of Inspection: The person will then proceed to walk through the magnetometer without touching the walls of the scanner. If the person causes the magnetometer to sound, the person will be returned back through the scanner and asked again to remove any other items and or property from their pockets. The person will walk through the magnetometer for the second time. If the magnetometer should sound again, the person will proceed to the third phase of inspection. During this second phase of inspection, the person will not be allowed to proceed through the scanner for the third time.
12. Phase Three of Inspection: After failing to successfully pass the magnetometer process, the person will be scanned with the hand held metal detector Garrett Wand. If an item is detected, the person will remove the item from the location where detected and show the screener the item and or property. Once passing this screening process, the person will be allowed to claim their items and or property. The person will then be allowed to enter the secured area of the courthouse. If a person leaves the courthouse, the person will be required to follow the inspection process over again till cleared to proceed. If a person is allowed to bypass phase two for medical reasons, the person will be wanded accordingly and/or physically patted down.
13. All deliveries will pass through the x-ray machine. If the package or box that is too large for the x-ray machine, the package label should be read to find out its' contents and its' delivery destination. If the contents of delivery or package cannot be determined, the person on the labeling will be notified and advised to proceed to the security on the first floor. If the screener determines that the package is safe, the package will be allowed into the courthouse. All persons who provide services and deliveries will sign in and sign out at the front door.

14. The following items and or weapons are prohibited into the courthouse: all knives, pocket knives, Swiss army knives, finger nail clippers and toe nail clippers; scissors, nail files and tweezers; kitchen forks and spoons; bottle openers and can openers; safety pins, wallet chains and belt chains; handcuff keys, leather type multi-tool, all mechanic tools, measuring tapes, recoil key type chains, empty bullet casing type key chains, mace canisters, all aerosol cans, all types of razor blades, all nails, screws, nuts, stun guns and tasers. And any other item determined to be a safety hazard or a danger to others.
15. Any explosive device or prohibited weapon that is located during the x-ray screening process will be secured on the x-ray machine and not allowed to be touched or tampered with. A supervisor will be notified immediately of the incident.
16. Rotations of post will be done on a weekly basis. One week the screener will work the x-ray machine; the following week the screener will work the screening trays and proceed to the wand. This will allow each screener a fair and equal opportunity to learn all the duties of that post.
17. An elevator key on a key ring will be maintained and kept at the security entry point. This key will allow the front door security screeners to control all of the elevators in the building. This key when in use will bring all the elevators to the first floor, at which point the elevators will no longer function. The elevators will be locked and secured in place. After receiving clearance by the Fire Department and or courthouse supervisors, the elevators will be released and returned to normal operations.
18. It is very important to be watchful of all persons entering, or leaving the courthouse. It is also important to be observant of all activities taking place in and out of the courthouse.
19. If persons are found to be loitering or suspicious on county property, the security screener will act in his colors of office to investigate the incident. The screener will use his discretion to determine the person's business on or in of the courthouse. A file interview report will be filed out at the discretion of the deputy depending on the incident.
20. The front entrance to the courthouse will be manned at all times during normal working hours, after hours only on criminal cases and or during special functions. In case of an emergency in or out of the courthouse, only one to two deputies will be allowed to respond.
21. No person will be allowed to enter or re-enter the courthouse once the front doors are secured at 5:00pm. The only exception to this rule will be courthouse personnel and or any person with a Secura Key issued by the security department. All weddings taking place after hours or during weekends will require the judge or his/her staff to escort the parties into and out of the courthouse.

22. A dosimeter tag will be worn while operating the x-ray machine. The tag will be logged in and out according to the instructions by the RSO. No drinks or food will be allowed on top of the x-ray machine.
23. All screeners will be required to be familiar with all posted orders and directives.
24. All screeners will or may be required to perform other duties as needed including but not limited to working weekends and or working after hours. The County Emergency Management may or recall all security personnel of the courthouse during any county emergency and or disaster. The security screener will be required periodically to make contact with a supervisor to ascertain the status of a recall. All personnel will maintain a good contact telephone number. Remember: law enforcement officers in this county are under the 171-hour pay scale.
25. Screeners are encouraged and shall avoid lengthy conversations with the public that will distract them from their duties.
26. A minor incident should be recorded on a minor short incident report form and any other incident should be recorded on a Sheriff Dept. incident report form. All reports will be forwarded through the chain of command. Not all incidents are reportable but depending on the severity of the incident and or at the discretion of the deputy.
27. Any violations of Federal, State, or Local laws will be reported in an offense report form and submitted to the Chief's Office for filing. All appropriate documents will be forwarded to the District Attorney's office for prosecution.
28. Screeners will advise and remove all persons (other than law enforcements officers) located behind the screening area. This will prevent congestion and for the safety of the screeners and for others.
29. All prisoners brought to the courthouse by a law enforcement agency will be required to escort their prisoner through the county jail, through the tunnel and to the appropriate court. All law enforcement agencies will be required to inform security of their intent to make a custodial detention in the courthouse.
30. All law enforcement Custodial Evidence Officers will be allowed to enter the courthouse with their evidence pertaining to a trial regardless of the content of the item or property. No other person will be allowed to enter the courthouse with evidences pertaining to a trial unless cleared through the security department.
31. These policies and procedures are important for the safety of all persons in the courthouse. The security of the courthouse is the primary objective to avoid and or to prevent a major incident from taking place. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action and or up to including termination.
32. The best policy is to be safe rather than sorry later.

ESSENTIAL JOB REQUIREMENT

1. The Screener will be neat, clean and presentable to the public.
2. The Screener will be in a complete uniform with all issued equipment in their possession.
3. The Screener will have his / her issued two way radio in their possession and on at all times and ready to respond to any radio traffic.
4. No horse playing, joking or offensive words will be tolerated.
5. Reading material (other than orders or directives) will only be allowed on limited bases. Reading must not distract from duties.
6. The telephone calls should be short to avoid distraction of duties.
7. Cellular telephone calls should be short to avoid distraction of duties.
8. No children will be allowed into or around the screening area for their safety and the safety of others.
9. Lunch breaks will be taken at the scheduled time unless authorized otherwise.
10. Computer use will only be allowed on a limited basis. Computer use must not distract from duties.
11. All Screeners will not be allowed to leave his or her post without proper authorization by an immediate supervisor. (For example: restroom breaks, breaks etc)
12. Security Screeners personnel will or may be assigned to perform other duties or assignments as directed by a supervisor.

NOTE: THE FRONT DOOR COURTHOUSE SECURITY DEPUTY SCREENERS ARE THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE IN MAINTAINING PROTECTION OF ALL PERSONS IN THE COURTHOUSE. THESE POLICE AND PROCEDURES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND THESE CHANGES WILL BE OMMITTED OR ADMENDED. ALL CHANGES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL PERSONNEL IN THE SECURITY DEPARTMENT.

Failure to comply with set procedures my result in some form of disciplinary action and or up to termination.

Hon. Benjamin Euresti, Jr.
107th Judicial District Judge
Presiding Judge

Hon. Leonel Alejandro
357th Judicial District Judge

Raymond G. Shears, Jr.
Chief

Frank Sanchez, Jr.
Assistant Chief

Alfred Petrarca, III
Sergeant

Appendix B: JAIL DIVISION

CURRENT STAFFING PRACTICES

Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center

Cameron County Jail Division Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center - Current Staffing Practice						
Position	Shifts				Relief Factor	Staff Required Total
	Days	Mid-Day	Nights	M - F		
Administration						
Chief Jailer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Assistant Administrator	0	0	0	1	1	1
Commander	0	0	0	1	1	1
Captain	0	0	0	1	1	1
Administrative Secretary	0	0	0	1	1	1
Operations						
Training Office (Lieutenant)	0	0	0	1	1	1
Shift Lieutenant	1	0	1	0	1	2
Booking Lieutenant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Classification Lieutenant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Classification	1	1	0	0	1.63	3.26
Re-Classification	0	0	0	1	1	1
Floor Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Central Control	2	2	1	0	1.63	8.15
Booking	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78
Intake/Release	3	3	3	0	1.63	14.67
Central Processing	0	0	0	1	1	1
Property (Staggered shift)	2	1	0	0	1.63	4.89
Clothing Exchange/Inventory	0	0	0	1	1	1
TLETS	0	0	0	1	1	1
CRDC I Housing						
Housing Supervisor	1	1	1	0	1	3
Asst. Supervisor (Detention Off.)	1	1	1	0	1	3
A-Pod (146)	4	4	4	0	1.63	19.56
B-Pod (144)	3	3	3	0	1.63	14.67
C-Pod (144)	3	3	3	0	1.63	14.67
D-Pod (146)	4	4	4	0	1.63	19.56
E-Pod (48) (24 Secure Cells)	3	3	3	0	1.63	14.67
F-Pod Infirmary (24)	1	1	1	0	1.63	4.89
CRDC II Housing						
Housing Supervisor	1	1	1	0	1	3
Asst. Supervisor (Detention Off.)	1	1	1	0	1	3
K-Pod (192)	5	5	5	0	1.63	24.45
L-Pod (128) (OPEN)	3	3	3	0	1.63	14.67
M-Pod (36)	3	3	3	0	1.63	14.67

Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center (continued)

Cameron County Jail Division Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center - Current Staffing Practice						
Position	Shifts				Relief Factor	Staff Required Total
	Days	Mid-Day	Nights	M - F		
Security Support						
Disciplinary Hearing Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Infirmary Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Transportation Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Transportation Officer	0	0	0	4	1	4
Fed/State Transport	0	0	0	2	1	2
Deputy (Transport)	0	0	0	2	1	2
Laundry Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Kitchen/Recreation CRDC I	0	0	0	1	1	1
Recreation Officer CRDC II	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Civilian Support						
IT Technician	0	0	0	1	1	1
Payroll Clerk (Detailed to Sheriff)	0	0	0	2	1	2
Visitation Clerk	0	0	0	2	1	2
Booking/Processing Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Bonds Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
PBX Operator	0	0	0	1	1	1
Chief Cook	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance Tech IV	0	0	0	1	1	1
Custodian	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance I	0	0	0	1	1	1
Jail Infirmary						
Administrator	0	0	0	1	1	1
Registered Nurse	0	0	0	1	1	1
Licensed Vocational Nurse	0	0	0	10	1	10
Medical Aide	0	0	0	7	1	7
Clerk	0	0	0	2	1	2
X-Ray Technician	0	0	0	1	1	1
Administrative Assistant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total						260.58

Source: MGT of America, Inc., September 2011.

Detention Center I/II

Cameron County Jail Division Detention Center I/II - Current Staffing Practice						
Position	Shifts				Relief Factor	Staff Required Total
	Days	Mid-Day	Nights	M - F		
Administration						
Commander	0	0	0	1	1	1
Operations						
Facility Lieutenant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Floor Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Shift Sergeant	1	1	1	0	1	3
Asst. Shift Supervisor	1	1	1	0	1	3
Booking	0	0	0	1	1	1
DC I						
X-Pod (92)	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78
Y-Pod (92)	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78
Z-Pod (92)	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78
DC II						
V-Pod (96)	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78
W-Pod (96)	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78
Security Support						
Training Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
TDCJ Coordinator	0	0	0	1	1	1
Recreation DC I	0	0	0	1	1	1
Recreation DC II	0	0	0	1	1	1
Laundry	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation DC I	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation DC II	0	0	0	1	1	1
Infirmary	0	0	0	1	1	1
Civilian Support						
Records Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Finance Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Asst. Finance Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Front Desk Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance	0	0	0	2	1	2
Infirmary Staff						
Licensed Vocational Nurse	0	0	0	6	1	6
Medical Aide	0	0	0	4	1	4
Clerk	0	0	0	2	1	2
Total						86

Source: MGT of America, Inc., September 2011.

Old Jail

Cameron County Jail Division Old Jail - Current Staffing Practice							
Position	Shifts				Relief Factor	Staff Required Total	
	Days	Mid-Day	Nights	M - F			
Operations							
Lieutenant	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Floor Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Shift Sergeant	1	1	1	0	1	3	
Asst. Shift Supervisor (Officer)	1	1	1	0	1	3	
Intake	0	0	0	2	1	2	
Housing							
Infirmary/1st Floor (36)	1	1	1	0	1.63	4.89	
2 A/B (40)	1	1	1	0	1.63	4.89	
2 C/D (45)	1	1	1	0	1.63	4.89	
3 A/B (52)	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78	
3 C/D (85)	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78	
Security Support							
Disciplinary Hearing	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Visitation	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Recreation	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Laundry	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Civilian Support							
Maintenance	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Infirmary Staff							
Licensed Vocational Nurse	0	0	0	4	1	4	
Medical Aide	0	0	0	3	1	3	
Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Total							57.23

Source: MGT of America, Inc., September 2011.

Appendix C: MGT RECOMMENDATIONS

JAIL DIVISION STAFFING PRACTICES

Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center

Cameron County Jail Division Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center –MGT Recommended Staffing Practice						
Position	Shifts				Relief Factor	Staff Required Total
	Days	Mid-Day	Nights	M – F		
Administration						
Chief Jailer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Administrative Assistant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Commander (On-Site Supervisor)	0	0	0	1	1	1
Administrative Secretary	0	0	0	1	1	1
Operations						
Training Office (Lieutenant)	0	0	0	1	1	1
Shift Lieutenant	1	1	1	0	1	3
Booking Lieutenant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Classification/Hearing Lieutenant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Classification	1	1	0	0	1.63	3.26
Re-Classification	0	0	0	1	1	1
Floor Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Central Control	2	2	1	0	1.63	8.15
Booking	2	2	2	0	1.63	9.78
Intake/Release	3	3	3	0	1.63	14.67
Property (Staggered shift)	2	1	0	0	1.63	4.89
Clothing Exchange/Inventory	0	0	0	1	1	1
TLETS	0	0	0	1	1	1
CRDCI Housing (12-hr. schedule)						
Housing Supervisor	1	1	1	0	1	3
Asst. Supervisor (Detention Off.)	1	1	1	0	1	3
A-Pod (146)	4	N/A	4	0	2.33	18.64
B-Pod (144)	3	N/A	3	0	2.33	13.98
C-Pod (144)	3	N/A	3	0	2.33	13.98
D-Pod (146)	4	N/A	4	0	2.33	18.64
E-Pod (48) (24 Secure Cells)	3	N/A	3	0	2.33	13.98
F-Pod Infirmary (24)	1	N/A	1	0	2.33	4.66
CRDCII Housing (12-hr schedule)						
Housing Supervisor	1	1	1	0	1	3
Asst. Supervisor (Detention Off.)	1	1	1	0	1	3
K-Pod (192)	5	N/A	5	0	2.33	23.3
L-Pod (128) (OPEN)	3	N/A	3	0	2.33	13.98
M-Pod (36)	3	N/A	3	0	2.33	13.98

Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center (continued)

Cameron County Jail Division Carrizales-Rucker Detention Center –MGT Recommended Staffing Practice						
Position	Shifts				Relief Factor	Staff Required Total
	Days	Mid-Day	Nights	M – F		
Security Support						
Disciplinary Hearing Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Infirmary Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Transportation Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Transportation Officer	0	0	0	6	1	6
Deputy (Transport)	0	0	0	2	1	2
Laundry Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Kitchen/Recreation CRDC I	0	0	0	1	1	1
Recreation Officer CRDC II	0	0	0	1	1	1
Civilian Support						
IT Technician	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation Clerk	0	0	0	2	1	2
Bonds Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
PBX Operator	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance Dept. Manager	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance Tech IV	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance I	0	0	0	1	1	1
Jail Infirmary						
Administrator	0	0	0	1	1	1
Registered Nurse	0	0	0	1	1	1
Licensed Vocational Nurse	0	0	0	10	1	10
Medical Aide	0	0	0	7	1	7
Clerk	0	0	0	2	1	2
X-Ray Technician	0	0	0	1	1	1
Administrative Assistant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total						247.89

Source: MGT of America, Inc., September 2011.

Detention Center I/II

Cameron County Jail Division Detention Center I/II - MGT Recommended Staffing Practice						
Position	8 And 12 Hour Shifts				Relief Factor	Staff Required Total
	Days	Mid-Day	Nights	M - F		
Administration						
Commander	0	0	0	0	1	0
Captain (Old Jail/DCI/II)	0	0	0	1	1	1
Operations						
Facility Lieutenant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Floor Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Shift Sergeant	1	1	1	0	1	3
Asst. Shift Supervisor (Officer)	1	1	1	0	1	3
Booking	0	0	0	1	1	1
DC I (12-Hr. Shift Schedule)						
X-Pod (92)	2	N/A	2	0	2.33	9.32
Y-Pod (92)	2	N/A	2	0	2.33	9.32
Z-Pod (92)	2	N/A	2	0	2.33	9.32
DC II (12-Hr. Shift Schedule)						
V-Pod (96)	2	N/A	2	0	2.33	9.32
W-Pod (96)	2	N/A	2	0	2.33	9.32
Security Support						
Training Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
TDCJ Coordinator	0	0	0	1	1	1
Recreation DC I/II	0	0	0	1	1	1
Laundry	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation DC I/II Security	0	0	0	1	1	1
Infirmarary/Relief Officer	0	0	0	1	1	1
Civilian Support						
Records Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Finance Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Asst. Finance Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Front Desk Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance (Includes Old Jail)	0	0	0	2	1	2
Infirmarary Staff						
Licensed Vocational Nurse	0	0	0	6	1	6
Medical Aide	0	0	0	4	1	4
Clerk	0	0	0	2	1	2
Total						81.6

Source: MGT of America, Inc., September 2011.

Old Jail

Cameron County Jail Division Old Jail – MGT Recommended Staffing Practice						
Position	8- and 12-Hour Shifts				Relief Factor	Staff Required Total
	Days	Mid-Day	Nights	M - F		
Operations						
Lieutenant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Floor Sergeant	0	0	0	1	1	1
Shift Sergeant	1	1	1	0	1	3
Asst. Shift Supervisor (Officer)	1	1	1	0	1	3
Intake	0	0	0	2	1	2
Housing (12-Hr. Shift Schedule)						
Infirmary/1st Floor (36)	1	N/A	1	0	2.33	4.66
2 A/B (40)	1	N/A	1	0	2.33	4.66
2 C/D (45)	1	N/A	1	0	2.33	4.66
3 A/B (52)	2	N/A	2	0	2.33	9.32
3 C/D (85)	2	N/A	2	0	2.33	9.32
Security Support						
Disciplinary Hearing (Includes hearings at DC I/II)	0	0	0	1	1	1
Visitation	0	0	0	1	1	1
Recreation	0	0	0	1	1	1
Laundry	0	0	0	1	1	1
Civilian Support						
Maintenance	0	0	0	1	1	1
Infirmary Staff						
Licensed Vocational Nurse	0	0	0	4	1	4
Medical Aide	0	0	0	3	1	3
Clerk	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total						55.62

Source: MGT of America, Inc., September 2011.

Appendix D: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations – Building Maintenance	
Recommendation 1	Eliminate the carpentry supervisor position and have one maintenance supervisor over all maintenance staff.
Recommendation 2	Develop a long range (ten year) facility master plan.
Recommendation 3	Cameron County should evaluate the level of funding for the maintenance department.
Recommendation 4	Perform annual employee evaluations and a “customer satisfaction” survey.
Recommendation 5	Finish the initiative to enter into a performance contract for energy conservation.
Recommendations – Tax Assessor-Collector’s Office	
Recommendation 6	The chief deputy, working with the county’s human resources department, should ensure job descriptions are accurate in all areas, including FLSA status.
Recommendation 7	Position the front-line auto supervisor as a direct report to the chief deputy.
Recommendation 8	The Cameron County TAC should make updating its website a priority.
Recommendation 9	Cameron County should reconsider its policy of offering an early payment discount pursuant to Sec. 31.05 of the Texas Property Tax Code.
Recommendations – Courthouse Security	
Recommendation 10	The county should instruct the Courthouse Security Unit to modify its incident report to collect information to allow for meaningful assessment of threats and risks that can provide perspective on appropriate responses to threats and risks.
Recommendation 11	The county should instruct the Courthouse Security Unit to create a comprehensive policies and procedures manual.
Recommendation 12	The county should instruct the Courthouse Security Unit to prepare a formal training program and associated training materials for courthouse security bailiffs.
Recommendation 13	The county should work with all judges to help ensure courtroom bailiffs are free to help with other courthouse security duties when their courtroom related workload allows.
Recommendation 14	The Courthouse Security Unit should establish workload measures for the unit and begin collecting workload data as soon as possible.
Recommendation 15	The Courthouse Security Unit needs to formally track and account for all employee time, especially the handling of overtime earned and used, so that an accurate determination of the unit’s staffing needs can be established.
Recommendation 16	The county should instruct the Courthouse Security Unit to begin an effort to improve the overall management and operations of the unit.
Recommendations – Jail Operations	
Recommendation 17	Develop a Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.
Recommendation 18	Case Processing Enhancements-criminal justice partners should evaluate options to improve case processing.
Recommendation 19	Pretrial Services-criminal justice partners should consider investing in pretrial service programs to allow for diversion of eligible detainees from jail to supervision and treatment programs in the community.

Recommendations – Jail Operations (continued)	
Recommendation 20	Privatization of Correctional Services-the county should evaluate the benefits of privatizing correctional services, thus gaining additional control over correctional costs.
Recommendation 21	United States Marshals Service Contract-county officials should see if the federal government might be amenable to renegotiating the original CAP contract to obtain a higher per diem rate than is currently being paid.
Recommendation 22	Videoconferencing Expansion-judges and county officials, including jail staff, should investigate the potential for expanding the use of videoconferencing as a method to reduce prisoner transportation and for expediting case processing in the judicial system.
Recommendation 23	Establish a post analysis for the Jail Division that will identify appropriate staffing levels based on current responsibilities.
Recommendation 24	Cameron County should consider the use of an alternative work schedule that would result in staff being scheduled to work at a frequency more consistent with the work hours established in the Cameron County Personnel Policy Manual.
Recommendation 25	Cameron County should consider redefining the work period as 14 days to be consistent with the current established pay period.
Recommendation 26	Cameron County should instruct the jail administrative staff to develop a time management tracking system that records and monitors how staff utilize their time, including the time after they have been relieved from their post at the end of the shift.
Recommendation 27	The county should instruct the Jail Division to expand the existing staff work schedule to include both eight and 12 hour work schedules.
Recommendation 28	The county should conduct a study to identify a staffing complement that provides sufficient personnel to cover each post assignment, including personnel to cover during normal staff absences.
Recommendation 29	The county should institute a 12 hour work schedule in the jail to cover as many positions as possible.
Recommendation 30	The Jail Division should maintain an updated relief factor that identifies required staffing levels.
Recommendation 31	The county should establish an employee time and attendance accountability system.
Recommendation 32	The county should establish a relief factor based on net annual work hours of Jail Division personnel to assist in determining actual staffing requirements.
Recommendation 33	The Jail Division should expand the use of part-time employees.
Recommendation 34	The Jail Division should develop a master roster for each facility.
Recommendation 35	The Jail Division should develop a daily roster.
Recommendation 36	The county should develop an overtime authorization policy and procedure for the Jail Division that describes at a minimum: the authorization process, including steps required to be taken prior to authorization; reason for overtime; documentation required; post designation; and monthly recapitulation reports.
Recommendation 37	Post adjustments.