Transcript from *Criminal Justice System* by SE Texas Criminal Justice

In this screencast, we'll discuss ever so briefly, the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system in the US is interdependent. That means it's composed of multiple different organizations, each having its own goals, histories, and operating procedures. The CJ system is often expressed through this diagram, which illustrates the three different subsystems: police, courts, and corrections.

There's overlap in the diagram because the three subsystems overlap into each other. An example of this are peace officers working in the corrections bubble to monitor sex offenders in the communities. The police sub system consists of law enforcement agencies on four different levels. First, the federal level. The state level. The county level. And finally, city or municipal police departments. It's estimated there are 17,000 separate agencies in the United States and about 900,000 law enforcement officers.

The next subcomponent of the criminal justice system is the courts. There are four major levels of criminal courts. First, the federal level. The federal court system is comprised of trial and appellate courts, which terminate at the US Supreme Court. Before we continue, it's important to note the US uses what's called a dual court system. Courts exist at both a federal and state level. There are 51 different court systems in the United States today, the federal court system and each of the 50 states court systems. The next level in that court component of the criminal justice system is found at that state level. Each state has its own independent structure, and states differ very greatly from each other. There are a few similarities, though. State court systems all have their final Court of Appeal, usually referred to as that state Supreme Court. State and federal courts also share the US Supreme Court as the ultimate final court. Any appeal in any of the 50 states or the federal government may go all the way to the US Supreme Court. The final two levels consist of county and municipal and justice courts. These courts handled lower-level offenses, typically misdemeanors and city ordinances.

There are five interconnected layers in the final subcomponent of the criminal justice system, which is corrections. The federal corrections function is performed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, which operates more than 175 prisons. Each state has its own corrections agency, which operates prisons and possibly functions like parole and probation oversight. There are also county jails in Texas. Each county jail is typically the responsibility of the sheriff. Another aspect of the correction subcomponent involves punishment other than incarceration, namely monetary fines. Finally, the first line of rehabilitation community supervision, which is commonly known as probation.