



# MUNICIPAL COURT BRIEFING

PR-24-030

December 3, 2024

# Overview

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- Court Updates
- April 2024 – September 2024 Number of Defendants
- National Center for State Courts CourtTool Metrics
  - ▣ Clearance Rate
  - ▣ Age of Pending Caseload
  - ▣ Trial Date Certainty

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## Court Updates

April 2024 - September 2024

# Court Updates

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- 40,000/45,000 Reduced Backlogged Cases
- Juvenile Traffic Safety Course
- Developing for 2025
  - ▣ State Mandated Youth Diversion Program
  - ▣ Teen Court Program

# Juvenile Traffic Safety Course

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- ❑ Course created for Juvenile defendants with driving and jaywalking violations
- ❑ Conducted Bimonthly by Killeen Police Department Traffic Unit
- ❑ Purpose is to teach young drivers the importance of safe, responsible driving
- ❑ Attendance mandatory to have violation dismissed

# Youth Diversion Program

- Texas Youth Diversion and Early Intervention Act
  - ▣ passed by the 88th Texas Legislature in 2023 as House Bill 3186
  - ▣ requires redirecting children accused of certain Class C misdemeanors away from formal prosecution
  - ▣ Until January 1, 2025, municipal judges and justices of the peace can only order child defendants to complete a class or some other program after a case has resulted in a conviction or deferral of disposition
  - ▣ Youth Diversion makes these strategies available at the front end of a case where they can be more effective

# Youth Diversion Program

- ❑ “Diversion” is defined as an intervention strategy aimed at redirecting a child otherwise facing formal criminal prosecution while holding them accountable for their actions
- ❑ Currently, a citation or complaint filed against a child (age 10-16) leads to a court appearance possibly followed by a trial, criminal sentence, or deferred disposition
- ❑ These can result in fines and fees owed and a criminal record
- ❑ Diversion allows an alternative process that focuses on preventing further criminal conduct without imposing fines or punitive measures unrelated to the child's accountability and rehabilitation

# Youth Diversion Program

- Youth Diversion strategies include, but not limited to:
  - ▣ Mentoring
  - ▣ Counseling
  - ▣ Mental Health Screening
  - ▣ Rehabilitation Programs
  - ▣ School-related Programs
  - ▣ Tutoring
  - ▣ Drug/Alcohol Testing
  - ▣ Teen Court



# Youth Diversion Program

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- The ability to divert youth defendants only applies to offenses committed on or after January 1, 2025
- All justice and municipal courts are required to adopt a youth diversion plan by January 1, 2025

# Youth Diversion Program

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- Two Diversion Programs
- “Intermediate Diversion”
  - ▣ Juvenile Case Manager must advise a child and the child’s parent, before a case is filed, that the case may be diverted
- “Diversion by Judge”
  - ▣ Requires a charge to be dismissed by the court if the child does not contest the charge, is eligible for diversion, and accepts the terms of the diversion agreement

# Teen Court Program

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- Teen Court Trials for Juvenile Offenders
- Juvenile Offenders Will Complete Requirements for Punishment
- Cases Will be Dismissed Once Completed
- Teen Court Attorney Program
  - ▣ Provide Educational Training through Practical Experience
  - ▣ KISD Student Volunteers
    - Prosecutors
    - Defense Counselors
    - Jurors

# Teen Court Program

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- Overall Objectives
  - ▣ Improve Understanding of Criminal Justice System
  - ▣ Reduce Recidivism of Juvenile Offenders
  - ▣ Increase Interest in Legal Professions

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## Number of Defendants

April 2024 - September 2024

# April 2024 Defendants

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- 1,753 defendants serviced by clerks in lobby
- 1,734 defendants set for court dockets
- 382 defendants who appeared for court dockets

# May 2024 Defendants

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- 1,986 defendants serviced by clerks in lobby
- 2,596 defendants set for court dockets
- 623 defendants who appeared for court dockets

# June 2024 Defendants

16

- 1,640 defendants serviced by clerks in lobby
- 1,589 defendants set for court dockets
- 435 defendants who appeared for court dockets



# July 2024 Defendants

17

- 2,124 defendants serviced by clerks in lobby
- 1,693 defendants set for court dockets
- 488 defendants who appeared for court dockets

# August 2024 Defendants

18

- 1,991 defendants serviced by clerks in lobby
- 1,448 defendants set for court dockets
- 341 defendants who appeared for court dockets

# September 2024 Defendants

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- 1,890 defendants serviced by clerks in lobby
- 1,795 defendants set for court dockets
- 595 defendants who appeared for court dockets

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## National Center for State Courts CourtTool Metrics

April 2024 - September 2024

# Clearance Rate

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- The number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases
- The clearance rate measures whether the court is keeping up with its incoming caseload

# Clearance Rate

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		Clearance Rate	
Month/Year	Actual	Comments	National Time Standards
April 2024	128.22%	Old cases were dismissed/waived	100% or higher
May 2024	33.59%	In May and June, we cleared Collections cases, this reactivated cases and substantially lowered the percentages for these months.	
June 2024	73.64%		
July 2024	193.90%	Cases recalled from Collections	
August 2024	86.08%	Status was changed for all collections cases	
September 2024	157.22%	Cases recalled from Collections	

# Age of Pending Caseload

- The age of the active cases that are pending before the court, measured as the number of days from filing until the time of measurement
- Cases that are filed but are not yet disposed are what make up the court's pending caseload

# Age of Pending Caseload

Month/Year	Actual Data				National Time Standards	Comments
	% of Pending Cases 1-60 Days Old	% of Pending Cases 61-90 Days Old	% of Pending Cases 91-180 Days Old	% of Pending Cases Older than 180 Days		
Apr. 2024	4%	2%	4%	90%	75% of cases disposed within 60 days; 90% within 90 days; 98% within 180 days	The Court is still addressing a significant backlog with a docket clean up.
May 2024	5%	2%	4%	90%		
Jun. 2024	3%	3%	4%	90%		
Jul. 2024	4%	2%	4%	89%		
Aug. 2024	3%	2%	5%	90%		
Sep. 2024	4%	2%	6%	90%		



# Time Date Certainty

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- The number of times cases disposed by trial are scheduled for trial
- This metric provides a tool for management to evaluate the effectiveness of calendaring and continuance practices

# Trial Date Certainty

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National Time Standards	Month/Year	Actual Data				Comments
		Number of Trial Settings - Bench Trials	% of Cases Disposed - Bench Trials	Number of Trial Settings - Jury Trials	% of Cases Disposed - Jury Trials	
90% of cases disposed with 2 or fewer trial settings	Apr. 2024	0	0%	2	0%	Plea deals
	May 2024	1	0%	1	0%	Trial Cancelled
	Jun. 2024	0	0%	1	0%	Trial Cancelled
	Jul. 2024	0	0%	1	0%	Plea deal
	Aug. 2024	0	0%	0	0%	No Trials Held
	Sep. 2024	0	0%	3	0%	Two plea deals One continuance

# Summary

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# End

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Questions