

The Judicial Centers of Excellence Program

A Judicial Branch Initiative

1

Presentation Overview

- Introduction to the Judicial Centers of Excellence Program
- Who can participate?
- Program Overview
- Four Performance Areas
- Five Compliance Areas
- Becoming a Judicial Center of Excellence

2

Introduction

The Judicial Centers of Excellence Program is a Judicial Branch Initiative, implemented by the Texas Judicial Council, to identify, support, and promote courts doing noteworthy work in judicial administration for the State of Texas. The program evaluates courts across **Four Key Performance Areas and Five Compliance Areas.**

3

Who Can Participate in the Program?

The Judicial Centers of Excellence Program is scalable and designed to work with and support courts at any level in the State of Texas—including Justices of the Peace.

There are five Justices of the Peace recognized as Centers of Excellence in the **state:** Judge Mark Russo—JP 3 Rockwall County

- Judge J.R. Woolley—JP 2 Waller County
- Judge Evelyn McLean—JP 3 Williamson County
- Judge Sylvia Holmes—JP 3 Travis County
- Judge Valencia Nash—JP 1-2 Dallas County

4

Program Structure

Broadly, courts are evaluated across the following performance and compliance areas:

Performance Areas:

- Governance
- Court Operations
- Caseflow Management
- Access and Fairness

Compliance Areas:

- Judicial Reporting
- Court Security
- Fines and Fees
- Indigent Defense
- Guardianship Abuse, Fraud, and Exploitation

5

Governance:

Governance is centered around the policies and rules which undergird local court administration in Texas.

This area is focused on the court's role in a county as both a branch of government and an integral part of the local communities they serve.

Key Questions:

- Do you ensure that an interpreter, online service, or phone service is available for magistrations in a language other than English?

6

Court Operations:

Court operations focuses on the day-to-day business processes involved in running a court. It is concerned with the office policies and procedures a court employs to facilitate dockets, manage staff and human resources, and analyze data key data with an eye for improvements.

Key Questions:

- Is your court staff, including senior staff, cross trained in job duties so that those duties are adequately performed in case of employee sick or vacation leave?

7

Caseflow Management:

Caseflow management evaluates how a court manages its caseloads via technology, court processes, and data management.

Key Questions:

- Does your court track the number of cases disposed by the court and can it produce a report?
- Does your court regularly review criminal cases at 15 years or older for administrative review and dismissal?

8

Access and Fairness:

Access and fairness examines a court's efforts to deepen and expand access to the court itself through improvements in technology, prominent and accessible signage, language services for non-native speakers and those with impediments, and other initiatives centered around expanded services to the community.

Key Questions:

- Does your court have written language access policies for Spanish speakers or American sign language?

9

Presentation Roadmap

- Introduction to the Judicial Centers of Excellence Program
- Who can participate?
- How is the program structured?
- Four Performance Areas
- ***Five Compliance Areas***
- Becoming a Judicial Center of Excellence

10

Judicial Reporting:

The court clerk works to ensure that monthly case data is accurately and regularly reported to OCA and other relevant agencies.

Key Questions:

- Does your court ensure that all magistrate's order of emergency protection are properly reported into the Protective Order Registry either by the magistrate conducting the magistration, or by relevant support staff?

11

Court Security:

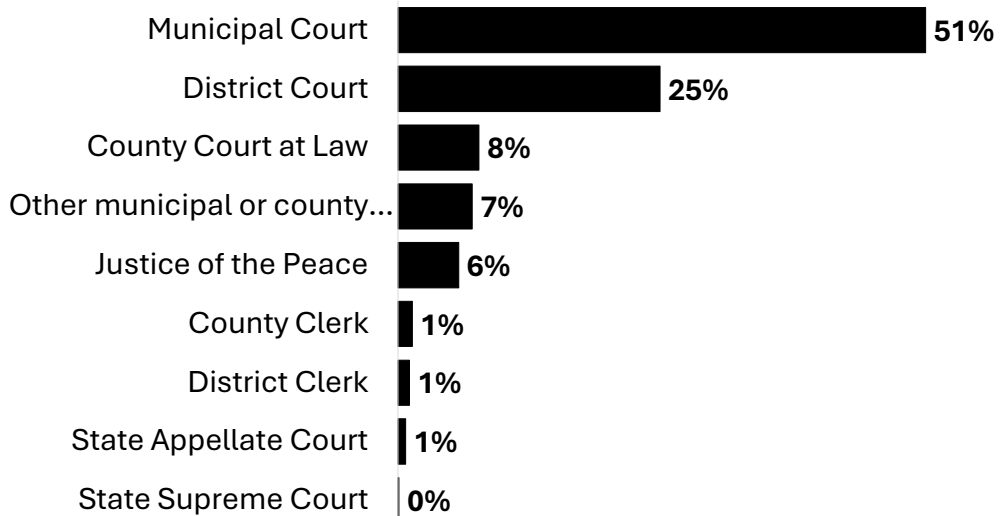
Courts must be active in promoting court security and are aware of the reporting requirements as they relate to security incidents.

Key Questions:

- Has your court identified a procedure with local law enforcement to ensure that all security incidents at the courthouse are accurately reported to OCA?

12

Security Incident Reporting FY 24



13

Indigent Defense:

The court participates in the implementation and planning of their county's indigent defense plan.

Key Questions:

- Does your court ensure that all relevant higher courts and county offices can access relevant magistration information from the court if need be?

14

Fines and Fees

Courts are up to date on the statutory requirements for collecting fines and fees, including notice requirements, determining ability to pay, and providing alternatives to payment where appropriate.

Key Questions:

- When issuing fines and fees, does the court itemize all associated fines, costs, and fees in full for the defendant?

15

Moving Through the Program

1. Court Review
2. Document Review and Check-Ins
3. Onsite Visit
4. Interview with OCA Administrative Director
5. Final Report
6. Proposal for recognition before the Texas Judicial Council

16

Current Courts

- Judge Antonia Arteaga
- Judge Karin Crump
- Judge Titiana Frausto
- Judge Angela Williams
- Judge Brad Cummings
- Judge Brian Holman
- Judge Shequitta Kelly
- Judge Josh Herrera
- Judge Ryan Luna
- Judge Jennifer Dillingham

17

Questions?

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18