



City of Dallas

May 20, 2024

Overview of Community Courts

Quality of Life Committee Briefing

**Matthew Saliba, Section Chief
Community Courts**

**Jill Haning, Section Chief
Community Prosecution**

Agenda



- Timeline
- Overview
- Success stories
- Enhancements



Community Courts Timeline



2004

South Dallas
Community
Court

2010

South Oak Cliff
Community
Court

2016

Northeast
Community
Court & Veterans
Treatment Court

2008

West Dallas
Community
Court

2014

Adult Drug
Treatment Court

2017

Downtown Night
Court



Purpose of Community Courts



- The purpose is to rehabilitate individuals and restore the community where offense(s) occurred.
- Individuals with eligible citations are directed to appear at a community court for timely and efficient adjudication.
- Social service coordinators provide individual needs assessments.
- Community service coordinators provide individuals with the opportunity to perform community service, in lieu of fines and court costs.



Community Courts Locations



South Dallas Community Court

2922 MLK Blvd, Building A Dallas, Texas 75215



Serves Southeast Police and Code Divisions

South Dallas Court Docket: Every Thursday at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm

South Dallas Court Docket: Every Wednesday at 4:00 pm

Northeast Community Courts

6742 Greenville Ave Dallas, Texas 75231



Serves Northwest, North Central, and Northeast Police and Code Divisions

Northeast Court: Every Monday at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm

West Dallas Community Court

2828 Fish Trap Road, Dallas Texas 75212



Serves Southwest Police and Code Divisions

West Dallas Court Docket: Every Tuesday at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm

South Oak Cliff Community Court

2111 S. Corinth Street Road, Dallas Texas 75215



Serves South Central Police and Code Divisions

South Oak Cliff Court Docket: Every Monday at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm

Downtown Night Court

2014 Main Street, Dallas Texas 75201



Serves Central Police and Code Divisions

Downtown Night Court Docket: Every Thursday at 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm



Mentor Court Recognition



- In 2008, the South Dallas Community Court was one of three sites to be selected by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance to serve as a National Mentor Court.
- In 2018 and 2023, the South Dallas Community Court was again designated as a National Mentor Court after a competitive selection process.
- As a mentor court, the South Dallas Community Court supports the Center for Justice Innovation in advancing the community court model and hosts site visits from jurisdictions that are seeking to start or enhance a community court.



Community Courts Collaboration



The community courts are a collaboration between:

- Judiciary: 4 judges
- Court and Detention Services: 3 court clerks
- City Attorney's Office:
 - 2 municipal prosecutors
 - 6 social service coordinators and supervisor (non-treatment courts)
 - 3 social service coordinators and outreach coordinator (treatment courts)
 - 5 community service coordinators and supervisor
 - 1 assistant manager
 - 1 section chief



Community Courts Focus on Rehabilitation



- Individuals, who choose to participate in the community courts program, plead “guilty” or “no contest” and are assessed by social services staff.
- The assessment identifies underlying issues or barriers in the individual’s life.
- The individual receives comprehensive case management and wrap-around service referrals, focused on resolving underlying issues or barriers in the individual’s life.



Community Courts Focus on Restoration



- Individuals who participate in the community courts program are assessed for community service hours in lieu of court fines and costs.
- Community service restores the community where the offense occurred while rehabilitative/educational programs restore the individual.



Quality-of-Life Offenses Include



- No driver's license
- Suspended license
- No vehicle insurance
- Disorderly conduct
- Loud noise
- Noise from idling of commercial motor vehicles
- Public intoxication
- Consumption of alcohol within 18ft of a public street
- Pedestrian in the roadway
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Possession of alcoholic beverage in motor vehicle
- Urinating/defecating in public



Quality-of-Life Offenses Include



- Graffiti
- Possession of graffiti implements
- Possession of shopping cart
- Manifesting the purpose of engaging in prostitution
- Manifesting the purpose of selling illegal drugs
- Sleeping in a public place
- Solicitation of prohibited substance
- Solicitation to occupants of vehicles on public roadways
- Park curfew
- Smoking prohibited in certain areas
- Unattended motor vehicle



The Community Courts Difference



- **Relationship building:** The community courts have established rapport with the community and individuals using a unique approach to swift and restorative justice.
- **Reducing barriers to services:** Participants receive comprehensive case management and wrap-around services from social service coordinators who are on-site in each of the community courts.
- **Offering treatment:** High risk/high need individuals have access to substance use disorder and mental health treatment through the South Dallas Drug Court and Veterans Treatment Court.



Examples of Wrap-Around Services



- Short-term case management
- Drug treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Housing referrals
- Financial education referrals
- Digital literacy referrals
- Health and wellness referrals
- Life skills class referrals
- Education referrals
- Transportation assistance
- Job training/placement referrals
- Resource referrals (identification, clothing, food, school supplies)
- In-court interpretation services



The Community Courts Difference



- **Eliminating financial hardship:** Instead of court costs and fines, individuals perform supervised community service in the community where the crime was committed.
- **Offering resources:** For residents who cannot afford to make necessary changes to comply with city code requirements, the community courts team assists through community service projects.



Examples of Community Service



- Yard care
- Hedge trimming
- Litter pickup
- Minor painting
- Food pantry assistance
- Neighborhood community projects
- Rehabilitative classes
- Collaboration with city departments



Community Courts Success Stories



An individual entered the South Dallas Drug Court with multiple citations. This individual had a substance use disorder and a co-occurring mental health disorder. The South Dallas Drug Court worked with this individual through many episodes of relapse to provide treatment and wrap-around services. In 2024, this individual completed all phases of the South Dallas Drug Court to graduate and had all citations dismissed.



Community Courts Success Stories



In 2023, an individual entered the South Dallas Community Court with a citation for failure to protect the exterior surface of this individual's home. The community court assisted this individual with finding home repair resources, so that this individual could successfully repair this individual's home. Additionally, the community court assisted this individual with obtaining an a/c unit from a local non-profit organization. After this individual completed a code class, performed community service hours, and abated the violation, this individual completed the community courts program, resulting in dismissal of the code enforcement citation.



Community Courts Enhancements



1. Translating informational flyers into the top five languages spoken in Dallas: Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Amharic, and Chinese.
2. Placing new signage in high foot-traffic locations around the community courts to increase public awareness.
3. Updating community courts' electronic footprint across media platforms.
4. Organizing outreach events at strategic locations.



Community Courts Enhancements



5. Providing law enforcement partners training on how to access the community court.
6. Establishing a transfer program to ensure that eligible individuals can access the services provided by the community court.
7. Collaborating with Dallas Animal Services to assist pet owners comply with specific violations.
8. Re-establishing the Prostitution Diversion Initiative (PDI).



Questions





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