

AUSTIN MUNICIPAL COURT

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2022

OCTOBER 2021 - SEPTEMBER 2022

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDING JUDGE AND CLERK OF THE COURT

Post pandemic, the Austin Municipal Court (AMC) has continued to modernize processes to provide core services to the public in a safe and efficient manner. Since re-opening, we quickly ramped up to provide all services in person. We learned a lot during the pandemic and will continue to strive to ensure a safe environment consistent with Covid precautions and updated technology at multiple locations. At the Central Booking Facility (CBF), we maintained equipment to magistrate individuals remotely as well as in person, accommodating social distancing for both the safety of our staff and those in custody.

Travis County will be reengineering the entire magistration process at CBF to hold adversarial bond hearings essentially creating an entirely new court. This program is called "Counsel at First Appearance" and will require reassessments of space needs, processes, and staffing requirements to accommodate the new approach. This may also require modifications to the current City/County inter-local agreement. However, AMC has committed to help with procedure and plans to inform stakeholders, so resources are in place for an effective program.

After years of preparation, AMC switched to a new case management system, eCourt, which was created with a software development contractor and a team of employees, led by Deputy Court Clerk, Kim Wingard. This was a monumental undertaking which required collaboration across multiple stakeholder groups internal and external to the Court. The CMS team, HR, and court management did an excellent job of training and implementing the system which is more efficient for the Court as well as the public.

The dedication, professionalism, and innovation of staff continues to produce incredible accomplishments. Ms. Grubb and I are honored to serve as the court clerk and presiding judge and are extremely proud of the way the staff of AMC consistently steps up to meet challenges with such extraordinary dedication. Our annual report highlights some of these efforts and the work our department completed. Moving forward, we hope to continue to foster an environment emphasizing public service and positive outreach through education and community activities.



Judge Sherry Statman
Presiding Judge



Mary Jane Grubb Clerk of the Court

To impartially administer justice in a fair and efficient manner so that trust and accountability are exemplified to the public we serve.

Vison To be the most effective, efficient, and impartial Municipal Court in Texas.

CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS

times

The Court's goal is to provide services to all customers effectively and efficiently, working collaboratively with diverse stakeholder groups, with a focus on upholding our mission and vision in every aspect of court operations.

Customer Service & Communications

Customer Service and Communications staff engaged in an increasing number of customer interactions while supporting each other collectively to provide services through multiple mediums.

18.418 **Live Chat** 3,156 Less than 3 **Customers Served In-Person** minute average in-person wait

3,655 **Pieces of Mail Processed**

Calls Received

Customer Emails Processed

88,975

23,328

Compliance

Compliance staff assisted customers by offering support to those needing help to comply with the terms of court orders. The unit prepared door hangers to be delivered in the field, making direct contact with customers to provide updated information on their cases and court options. **Compliance Calls Received**

8,160

Door Hanger Customer Visits

2,888

Applications for Payment Arrangements Received and Verified

2,028

Strategic Outcome: Safety

Strategy #1 Improve positive outcomes in the justice system by understanding the perspectives of those who interact with the adult and juvenile justice systems (crime victims, defendants, etc.). Increase information-sharing across partner organizations, with an initial focus on increasing access to services and alternatives to adjudication (formal decision by a judge)



Youth Services

Youth Services served youth and families in person and remotely by continuing to offer classes, assessments, meetings, and dockets virtually throughout the year removing barriers to ensure high appearance rates and successful compliance with court orders.

208

Youth Who Successfully Completed Courses (at no cost to their family)

Calls Made to Juvenile Defendants

1,605

Juvenile Cases Terminated

563

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

AMC participated in many community outreach events striving to educate the public on the importance of driving safely, answering questions about court services, and fostering community relationships.

- Presented classes to city employees and high school students
 - Alive at 25
 - What Do you Consider Lethal?
- Attended multiple events throughout the community distributing traffic safety materials
 - Driving Safety Summit (TXDOT)
 - · Presented at City Council Meeting
 - CityView story segment

 Partnered with other organizations to increase awareness of dangerous driving behavior

- City of Austin Youth Council engagement
- SpeakUp4Safety social media campaign
- Partnership with Vision Zero
- Partnership with Freedom Wheels



Outreach Events

19

Participated in citywide school supply drive



• Commissioned local artists to paint murals in the courtrooms



Strategy #5 Enhance communication and collaboration between City Council, City staff, and community members to enhance transparency, trust, and shared decision making. Ensure collaboration is strengthened by accessible, timely, and accurate information sharing.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Caseflow Management

Staff processed the pandemic induced backlog of pending warrant cases and played a critical role in reviewing search warrant cases spanning over a 10 year period.

Warrant Cases Processed

14,903



Courtroom Support

Staff scheduled more than 15,000 cases pending docket dates due to the pandemic closures and cancellations. Virtual dockets were phased out for adults as the focus shifted to in-person dockets including: administrative hearings, bench trials, jury trials, walk-in dockets, and appearance dockets.

Dockets Conducted

2,183





CENTRAL BOOKING

Staff implemented operational changes as a result of new legislative mandates related to bail reform. While these changes resulted in a strain on resources, they also highlighted the commitment and resilience of the unit. Staff also developed an improved plan for adverse weather conditions to ensure continuity of 24/7 operations.

Class C Arraignments

4,112

Felony and A/B Misdemeanor Magistration

44,085



Reopened the hearing office in City Hall providing an additional location in the downtown area for customers to address boot & tow or civil parking issues.

Parking Hearings Held

1,346



Equity Action Team

A team comprised of a cross-section of employees including individual contributors, management, and the judiciary worked together to complete the Equity Assessment Tool, which is a citywide initiative. The purpose was to closely examine policies, practices, budget allocations, and programs to assess their impacts on equity. Three strategies were developed to guide the court's actions in future years to ensure programs and services are viewed through an equity lens.

Strategic Outcome: Safety

Strategy #1 Improve positive outcomes in the justice system by understanding the perspectives of those who interact with the adult and juvenile justice systems (crime victims, defendants, etc.). Increase information-sharing across partner organizations, with an initial focus on increasing access to services and alternatives to adjudication (formal decision by a judge).



INNOVATION

Case Management System (CMS) Team

AMC implemented a new software system, eCourt, to manage cases filed at the Municipal Court and Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC). The implementation was managed by a special team comprised of employees across the court, working on the project for more than five years.

Highlights of the implementation include:

- Extensive training and collaboration with stakeholders in multiple agencies and jurisdictions
- Developing procedural training documents
- Trouble shooting and staff support throughout implementation



1.536

Information Technology Systems (ITS)

Staff supported the CMS team with eCourt development and implementation:

- Signature pad deployment
- Credit card reader deployment
- JAVA installs for printing and scanning
- Set up training lab for staff
- Performed multiple database backups
- Continued to support former case management system for reporting purposes



- Updated server array and moved from end of life hardware which provided better stability and overall performance
- Purchased new array for new servers and configured to work with new servers
- Added a new backup system to new array and migrated all servers to new array



Finance

- Streamlined supply ordering process timelines while eliminating paper and physical signatures
- Created an internal petty cash procedure to ensure an efficient review process
- Updated procedures for maintaining small fund accounts to ensure accuracy and transparency
- Developed and tested a new deposit procedure with the CMS team and operational staff, due to eCourt implementation
- Following the establishment of the Local Consolidated Fee (LCF) by the Texas Legislature, the Municipal Court, with the assistance of the City's Budget Office, consolidated the three previously established funds with the LCF into one special fund



Strategic Outcome: Safety
Strategy #8 Collaboratively and comprehensively assess the vulnerabilities and interdependencies that exist for critical City infrastructure. Prioritize actions and investments to prevent and mitigate the identified risks.

Helpdesk Tickets Resolved

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- In preparation of the eCourt implementation, staff attended nearly 100 hours of training per person
- Prepared over 21,000 pages of eCourt how-to process documents, created 161 binders, and published 51 training videos
- Published a 10-page newsletter that included a knowledge review, photo collage, and definitions of court terms
- Cross-training & unit collaboration continued for coverage of staff shortages during the eCourt training initiative
- Court wide emergency planning was conducted, including testing alarm systems, annual fire drill, and active attack training

eCourt Implementation Training Hours per Staff Member

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

99

 AMC partnered with the City of Austin's Healthy Connections and delivered "Crucial Conversations with Teen Drivers" as a Healthy Rewards seminar for city employees who have teen drivers

Management and Human Resources developed a recruiting resource tool with new strategies and partnerships to attract a more diverse candidate pool for AMC positions

Raised for City of Austin Combined Charities Campaign

\$2,852

Austin Municipal Court has 178 employees (including fulltime and temporary employees) across both AMC and DACC.



New Hires 15



Promotions

8

Municipal Court Week

During Municipal Court Week there was no shortage of events and opportunities to show appreciation to staff and have a little fun. The Court's celebrations committee hosted multiple events with treats, prizes, and games that provided a break from the everyday routine of work life.



Strategic Outcome: Government that Works for All
Strategy #11 Improve our competitiveness as an employer to attract,
efficiently hire, and retain a diverse, highly skilled workforce across the entire
City organization.





Years



EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

2022 MUNICIPAL TRAFFIC SAFETY INITATIVES AWARD

Austin Municipal Court – 2022 Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives (MTSI) Award For the third year in a row, AMC won the Municipal Traffic Safety Initiative Award. The Texas Municipal Courts Education Center's (TMCEC) Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives grant, funded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), sponsored the traffic safety awards to recognize municipal courts that have demonstrated outstanding contributions to traffic safety and eliminating impaired driving in their respective communities. https://www.tmcec.com/mtsi/mtsi-awards/



PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION - EDUARDO GUAJARDO



Eduardo Guajardo (Youth Services) was selected to represent AMC during a proclamation in honor of Public Service Recognition Week at the May 5th Council meeting. Eduardo was chosen as he has consistently shown commendable and outstanding customer service. He is cognizant of the Spanish speaking families he serves and consistently advocates to remove barriers to their success.

COURTROOM SUPPORT - UNIT OF THE YEAR

The past year presented unprecedented demands in the ways which the Court ensured access to justice. Courtroom Support expanded, trained, and staffed a successful run of virtual docket types assisting a total of 9,444 customers with 15,410 cases. After exclusively conducting virtual hearings for a period of time, the unit phased back into the courtrooms and ran a hybrid of both in-person AND virtual courtroom operations. The undertaking demonstrated high levels of excellence reflective of the PRIDE values of the City.



ISAAC HERNANDEZ - SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR



Throughout the year, Isaac effectively balanced an extensive number of administrative responsibilities as a supervisor while masterfully training two new hearing officers and one new clerk. Isaac instructed the new hearing officers how to conduct hearings, explained complex parking ordinances, shared deescalation techniques, helped draft carefully worded emails/findings, clearly communicated expectations, and provided extensive, constructive feedback for improvement with the overall goal of providing superb customer service and advancing justice. In addition, Isaac frequently visits the hearing offices checking in with the hearing officers and updates them on assignments, projects, and policy changes. Overall, Isaac is an amazing supervisor and exemplifies the PRIDE values of the City.

EMPLOYEES OF THE QUARTER

FIRST QUARTER



Melissa Degollado Compliance (AMC)



Guillermo Abreu Communications (AMC)



Haley Bonds
Communications
(AMC)



Jenna Pywell
Homeless Services
(DACC)



THIRD QUARTER



Megan White
Customer Service
(AMC)



Bonnie Harvey
Compliance
(AMC)



Donna Ortiz CMS (AMC)



Erica Campos Court Services (DACC)

SECOND QUARTER



Onyea Davenport
Courtrooms
(AMC)



Sam Overton
Customer Service
(AMC)



Kimberly Longley
Compliance
(AMC)



Yvonne Mboss
Homeless Services
(DACC)

FOURTH QUARTER



Estella Carrillo
Communications
(AMC)



Karina DeLaCruz Compliance (AMC)



Ricardo Torres

Communications
(AMC)



Tammy Taylor ITS (DACC)



YEARS OF SERVICE



Dometra Gilbert (AMC)

5 YEARS



Irene Medina-Tusing (AMC)

5 YEARS



Sarah Yochim (AMC)

5 YEARS



Onecimo Garcia (AMC)

5 YEARS



Robert Kingham (DACC)

5 YEARS



Garland Gardner (AMC)

5 YEARS



Lori Cruz (AMC) 10 YEARS



Bonnie Harvey (AMC) 10 YEARS



Marantha McCabe (DACC) 10 YEARS

Deanna Logan

(AMC)

5 YEARS



Tomas Salinas (AMC) 10 YEARS



Christopher Anderson (DACC)

15 YEARS



Judge Statman (AMC) 15 YEARS



Wes Boyett (AMC)

15 YEARS



Brett Sullivan (DACC)

15 YEARS

YEARS OF SERVICE



Judge Coffey (DACC) 20 YEARS



Judge Evans (AMC) 20 YEARS



Jean Garcia (AMC) 20 YEARS



Judge Herrera (AMC) 20 YEARS



Judge Jenkins (AMC) 20 YEARS



Luz Lozano (AMC) 20 YEARS



Donna Ortiz (AMC) 20 YEARS



Celina Segovia (AMC) 20 YEARS



LETTER FROM DOWNTOWN AUSTIN COMMUNITY COURT'S PRESIDING JUDGE AND COURT ADMINISTRATOR

Downtown Austin Community Court's mission is to administer justice equitably and compassionately to foster trust and accountability, and to utilize a person-centered and housing-focused case management model to help individuals experiencing homelessness achieve long-term stability. Throughout fiscal year 2022, DACC's staff continued to provide high quality services across all units despite ongoing challenges related to the pandemic. In line with DACC's commitment to continually evolve to meet identified needs for individuals engaging with DACC, as well as to address needs of the Austin community, enhancements were made across the department.

Both DACC and AMC transitioned to a new eCourt system for court operations. Thanks to the dedication of court and information technology staff working tirelessly to ensure a smooth process, the new system is operational. DACC's Court Services continued to provide individuals the option to resolve cases through participation in case management and other activities such as obtaining identification documentation or seeking health, mental health, or treatment services to help in their journey out of homelessness. In the depths of the pandemic, DACC's Community Service staff were dedicated to the emergency response. In 2022, the Community Service program resumed allowing individuals to complete public service hour requirements, and completed beautification projects, public space cleaning, and graffiti abatement at over 1,200 sites in the community.

In the 2021 and 2022 winter seasons, DACC was an integral part of the City's emergency response for cold weather events by serving as the embarkation hub for Cold Weather Shelter operations, connecting individuals with access to transportation, basic needs, and overnight shelter. Additionally, DACC enhanced voluntary walk-in case management services by incorporating a peer support specialist in the lobby, helping to build trusting relationships and improve connections to services for individuals seeking assistance. Though DACC is still operating on an interim basis out of One Texas Center while the process advances to secure and prepare a permanent facility, staff has ensured that the quality and scope of services are able to continue without interruption.

DACC celebrated its 23rd anniversary of serving the Austin community, and the milestone of connecting over 400 individuals experiencing homelessness to long-term housing solutions since October 2015. Compassionately serving individuals experiencing homelessness through a person-centered approach is at the heart of DACC's work, and DACC remains grateful to be part of the City's efforts to end individuals' experience with homelessness. In the coming year, DACC looks forward to continued collaborations with community stakeholders, City leadership, and the individuals DACC serves as we work together to ensure individuals have access to proactive services that meet their needs.



PRESIDING JUDGE MICHAEL COFFEY



COURT ADMINISTRATOR
PETER VALDEZ

DACC TOP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Housing Milestone

DACC celebrated its 23rd anniversary of serving the Austin community, and the milestone of connecting over 400 individuals experiencing homelessness to long-term housing solutions since October 2015.

Walk-In Case Management

DACC fulfilled 9,621 requests for voluntary Walk-in Case Management services last year for individuals experiencing homelessness, connecting people with access to social services, basic needs, and providing linkages to physical and mental health, and substance use services. Walk-in Case Management also serves as a diversion from criminal justice involvement by meeting people's needs before situations escalate to involving law enforcement.





Violet Keepsafe Storage Program

Safe and free storage services for individuals experiencing homelessness through the Violet KeepSafe Storage program ensuring storage access for over four hundred and fifty program participants providing employment and opportunities for individuals with lived experience.

Community Service Program

DACC's Community Service program enables individuals to fulfill public service requirements benefiting the Austin Community. Over 48 acres of public space improvements, graffiti abatement, and beautification projects were completed at more than 1,200 sites across the City.



Strategic Outcome: Economic Opportunity & Affordability Strategy #8 Define and enact our response to homelessness focusing on efficient and effective use of our resources to address disparities, prevent homelessness, and support housing stability.

Cold Weather Shelter Operations

DACC served as the Embarkation Hub for the City's Cold Weather Shelter Operations, assisting individuals with access to transportation, shelter, and basic needs during winter weather events.





AMC and DACC's SD23 goals are in alignment with the eight (8) goals that were developed by the City Council and outlined in Resolution 20171214-060.

Goal #1

Provide prompt, effective, efficient and impartial administration of justice and processing all cases filed with the Court.

KPI 2361: Ratio of cases terminated to cases filed.

Description: This measure reflects how well AMC is keeping up with the incoming caseload. If cases are not disposed in a timely manner, a backlog of cases awaiting disposition will grow. It is important that the Court is disposing at least as many cases as are being filed. (AMC)

Target: 100% Result: 109%

GOAL REACHED: 109%

CASES FILED: 151,253

Goal #2

Provide accurate, readily accessible information through multiple channels to the public and to all individuals participating in Municipal Court cases about (1) the Court's procedures, (2) the rights and duties of defendants in cases before the Court, and (3) alternative sentencing options that allow individuals to resolve their cases when they cannot afford fines or costs.







KPI 9426: Efficiency rate of information delivery to customers within processing time standards.

Description: Efficiency rate of information delivery to customers within processing time standards, which includes email and mail worked within 72 hours, calls answered within 3 minutes, and customers served within 10 minutes. This helps ensure the court is providing a level of service to all customers within a time frame that is reasonable and fair. Tracking this result will help determine business decisions around customer service and address any inefficiencies. (AMC)

Target: 89%
Result: 92%

92%

EFFICIENCY RATE OF INFORMATION DELIVERY TO CUSTOMERS WITHIN PROCESSING TIME STANDARDS - AMC

Goal #3

Minimize jail commitments for non-payment of fines whenever effective alternatives are available.

KPI 9142: Percent of defendants remanded to jail on Class C charges only.

Description: This is the percentage of defendants remanded to jail on only Class C charges; they do not have any higher charges they were remanded for. This percentage reflects defendants remanded to jail for municipal court cases only. (AMC)

Target: 1% Result: 0%



PERCENTAGE OF DEFENDANTS REMANDED
TO JAIL ON CLASS C CHARGES

Goal #4

Make alternative sentencing options available whenever appropriate under the law and ensure sentencing is consistent with all federal and state laws restricting jail commitments.



ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING IN LIEU OF CONVICTION

FINE-ONLY SANCTIONS/SENTENCING

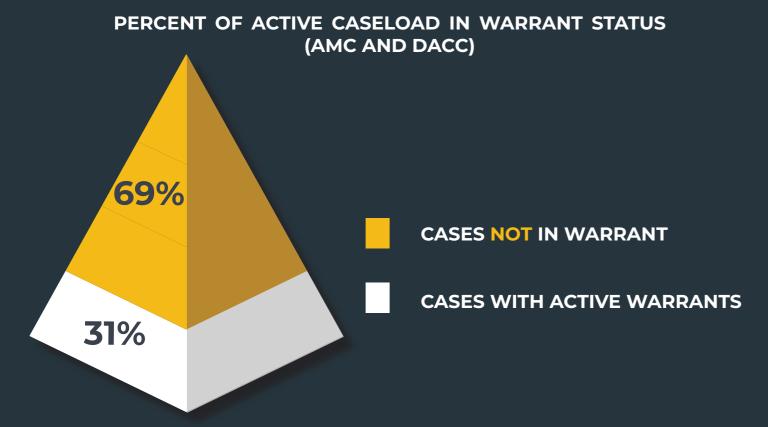
ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING

KPI 9428: Percent of alternative sentencing offered.

Description: This measure captures alternative sentencing (deferrals, driving safety courses, diversion programs for youth, scheduled community service hours, scheduled youth diversion classes). At this time, the scheduled community service hours exclude AMC cases; however, this information will be captured in the newly implemented software, eCourt, and will be factored into FY23 metrics. (AMC/DACC)

Target: 29% Result: 21%

We were below 29% in fiscal year 2022 due to working through the pandemic-related backlog of cases. Although all cases are scheduled, many were outside the fiscal year time period. In addition, community service hours ordered at AMC are not yet factored into the calculation; therefore, the result is understated.



WARRANTS INCLUDE THOSE FOR NON-APPEARANCE (NEVER APPEARED TO ANSWER CHARGE) AND NON-COMPLIANCE (APPEARED BUT FAILED TO COMPLY WITH COURT ORDERS).

Goal #5

Minimize the issuance of warrants whenever alternatives are available and through imposition of alternative sentences.

KPI 9425: Percent of active caseload in warrant status.

Description: The number of Class C Misdemeanor cases in an active warrant status for both DACC and AMC compared to total active cases for both courts. This includes both capias and capias pro fine warrants.

Target: 32%

Result: 31%

Goal #6

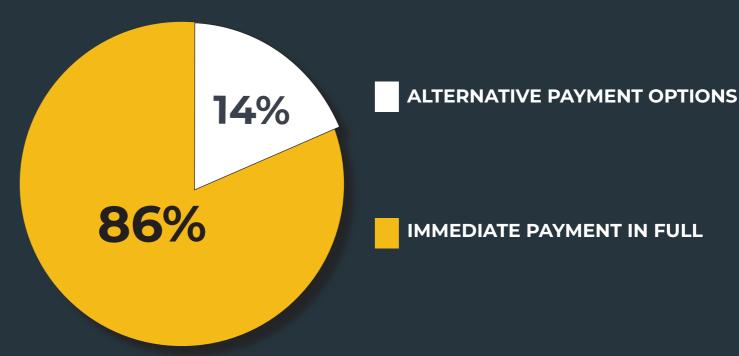
Minimize unintended adverse consequences of Class C fines and fees on low-income individuals and families.

KPI 9427: Percent of alternative payment options in lieu of immediate payment in full.

Description: This measure captures the percent of cases that have alternative payment options (payment plans, extensions to pay, judicial waivers, credit for time served, community service) in lieu of immediate payment in full. (AMC/DACC)

Target: The FY22 & 23 targets were set at 39% based on a calculation method that changed in September of 2022. The target for FY24 will likely be set at 14% which is based on the new calculation method and FY22 data.

Result: 14%



PERCENT OF ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT OPTIONS IN LIEU OF IMMEDIATE PAYMENT IN FULL (AMC AND DACC)

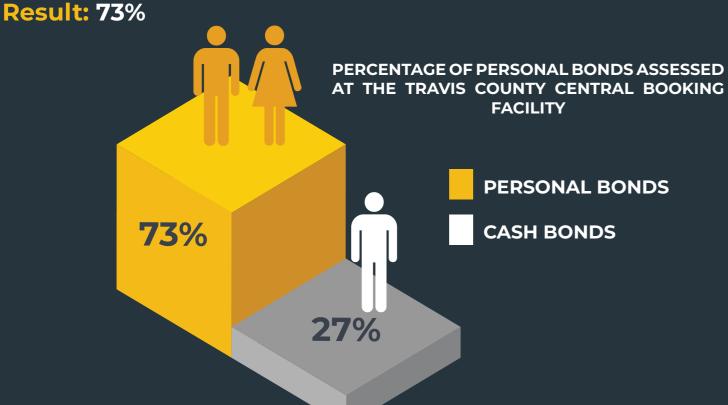
Goal #7

Perform timely magistration at the Travis County Central Booking Facility to minimize the timeframe between a person's arrest and their opportunity to be released from detention, and when setting bonds, hewing closely to the minimum bond necessary to secure a defendant's presence in court, and prioritizing release on personal bonds when possible.

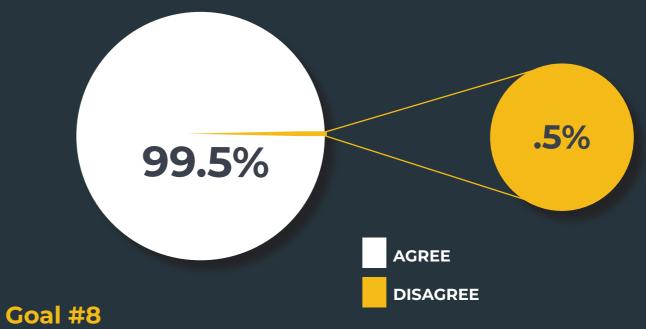
KPI 9400: Percent of personal bonds assessed at the Travis County Central Booking Facility.

Description: Percentage of the total bonds for all offense levels at the Travis County Central Booking Facility assessed as personal bonds (non-monetary).

Target: 80%



PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO BELIEVE THEY WERE TREATED FAIRLY DURING JUDICIAL PROCESSES (AMC AND DACC)



Treat all people with respect and dignity and to create a culture of sensitivity to the diversity of income levels and circumstances of individuals residing in Austin.

KPI 2479: Level of customer satisfaction as indicated by the City of Austin Survey.

Description: This measure is taken from the annual City of Austin Community Survey and reports the total percent of favorable responses received. This survey is prepared and conducted by sources external to the City of Austin. It is a statistically valid survey that can represent the opinion of Austin's general population with a 95% confidence interval and +/- 3% margin of error. (AMC/DACC)

Target: 82% Result: 99.5%

Special Note: The City of Austin Community Survey for 2022 has not been released; therefore, the results provided are captured in our internal customer service surveys.

