



2023

Annual Report

October 2022 - September 2023

Austin Municipal Court

and Downtown Austin Community Court

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDING JUDGE AND CLERK OF THE COURT



The Austin Municipal Court (“AMC”) is dedicated to continuous improvement and public service. It is with great pride we share a reflection of our accomplishments, progress, and growth highlighting our successes in overcoming staffing resource challenges, adapting to new software, onboarding many new staff members, fostering team collaboration, and conducting an operational analysis.

AMC implemented a hiring freeze in the spring of 2022 in preparation for the implementation of our new case management system (CMS), eCourt. This decision resulted in a high vacancy rate which required a lot of work, dedication, and collaboration from existing staff to maintain operations and provide a high level of service delivery. Throughout the year, we focused on hiring new staff which required extensive training, communication, and acclimation. Our teams demonstrated remarkable strength and resilience. Through open communication channels, we worked cohesively to tackle complex challenges.

Throughout the year, we engaged in a comprehensive internal review of our processes, procedures, and technical documentation. This initiative allowed us to identify areas for optimization and standardization that will result in increased operational efficiency and elevated quality standards.

As we move forward, we will update and streamline our documentation to ensure clarity, accessibility, and compliance with regulations and industry best practices. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are committed to pursuing excellence in all aspects of our work. 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.



SHERRY STATMAN
Presiding Judge



MARY JANE GRUBB
Clerk of the Court

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

Vision: *To be the most effective, efficient, and impartial Municipal Court in Texas.*



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INNOVATION

Caseflow Management and Central Booking

- Successfully cross-trained all Caseflow Management leads and clerks at Central Booking establishing a monthly rotation to maintain skill sets, remain current on procedures, and provide coverage as needed.
- Resumed the warrant confirmation process for the first time post pandemic. This required extensive training, revision of procedures, and coordination with multiple agencies.



- Staffed Central Booking throughout winter storm Mara to maintain continuity of operations. Clerks and judges worked long hours to ensure adequate coverage and provide essential services.

**FELONY AND A/B
MISDEMEANOR
MAGISTRATIONS** **35,571**



- Coordinated to cover shifts while understaffed. Central Booking was the unit most impacted by the hiring freeze resulting in remarkable teamwork to accomplish covering additional shifts, learning new software, and training new staff members under extraordinary conditions.

Judiciary

At the Travis County Central Booking Facility (“CBF”), we have consistently and firmly advocated for innovation and safety including retaining equipment to magistrate individuals remotely as well as in person and accommodating social distancing for both the safety of our staff and those in custody. Travis County will be reengineering the magistration process at CBF to hold bond hearings in a program referred to as Council at First Appearance (CAFA). AMC contributed to planning both procedure and designs to remodel unused space into a new courtroom and offices.



**CLASS C
MISDEMEANOR
MAGISTRATIONS** **5,226**

**5,251 WARRANT CASES
PROCESSED**

Customer Service

- Reopened our location inside the Jaime Padron North Substation after being closed due to social distancing restrictions throughout the pandemic. This customer service center is staffed by two court clerks and provides limited services in the northern region of the City. Judges, prosecutors, and court appearances are not available at this location.

Customers Served
In Person **20,835**

Average Wait Time **2.8**
minutes

- Worked closely with Communications staff, along with other units, to reallocate resources to address a shifting workload from in-person interactions to an increasing demand in the areas of emails, chats, phones, and work queues.

4,019 Pieces of Mail
Processed

3,652 Number of Live
Chats Interactions

86,640
Calls Received

18,635
Emails Processed



Communications

- Increased teleworking opportunities by creating, establishing, and implementing an internal payment line so teleworking staff can transfer payments to clerks onsite to maintain compliance with payment card industry (PCI) standards.
- Successfully reallocated resources to eliminate a backlog of email communications due to the eCourt transition.
- Revamped and developed new business writing training curriculum, assessment, and template for clerks to better support the increased volume of emails at court.





Compliance

- Conducted a rigorous call campaign during the Warrant Amnesty program making more than 3,100 outbound phone calls.
- Focused on professional development resulting in multiple promotions throughout the court including those to supervisor and lead positions.
- Performed research (skip tracing) to support the work of the doorhanger program, dialer campaigns, mail campaigns, and accounting processes to ensure accurate information delivery.

2,338
Applications for
Payment Plans
Processed

7,580
Compliance Calls
Received

3,599
Number of Skip
Traces

1,142
Door Hanger
Customer Visits

Civil Administration

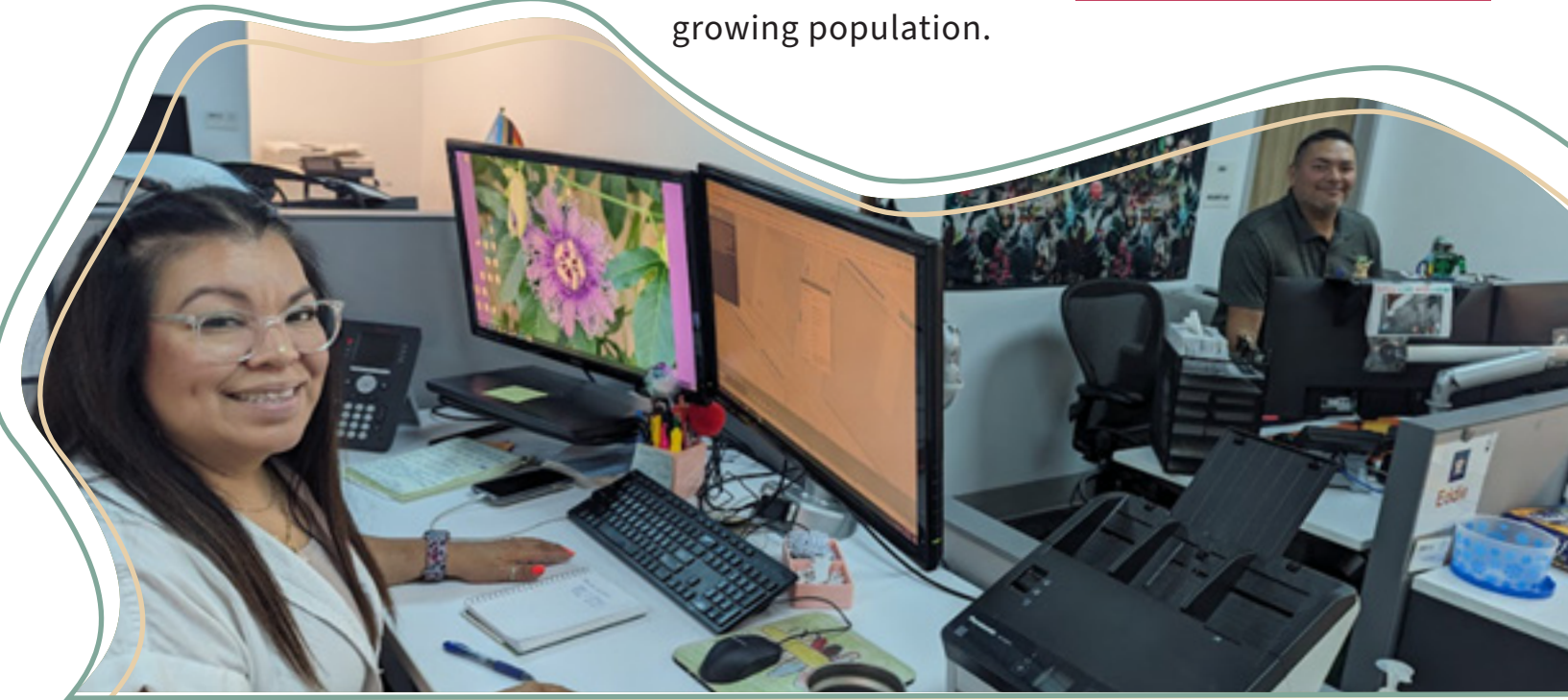
- Created Stay of Impoundment procedure and order. City ordinance grants authority to hearing officers to stay impoundment in certain instances. This procedure and order account for individuals relying on their vehicles as their sole means of shelter, with the goal of not applying the law in a disproportionate manner to individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Created a lead associate hearing officer position. Leads work on quality control, auditing of cases, and communicating constructive feedback as necessary. The expansion of parking enforcement, multiple locations, and the growing workload reinforced the unit’s need for a lead. This position can operate as both quality control and adjudicate the civil parking cases that come before the court, magnifying the unit’s ability to address Austin’s growing population.

69
Parking Hearings
Held at City Hall

292
Parking
Hearings Held at
Bergstrom Tech

1,154
Parking Hearings
Held by Mail and
Email

49
Parking Hearings
Held Remotely





5,086
*Cases Set on
Mitigation (Walk-in)
Dockets*

Courtroom Support

- Expanded access to justice by staffing additional dockets during the Warrant Amnesty program.
- Gained proficiency as a team in understanding eCourt and its application to courtroom processes.
- Reopened the jury assembly room that was closed due to COVID-19 precautions. This new space was not available in our previous downtown location and has garnered positive feedback on juror surveys.

Youth Services

- Instrumental in hosting three outside agencies providing positive experiences and educational opportunities to include mock trials and traffic safety classes.

2,095
*Cases Set on Trial
Dockets*

16,628
*Cases Set on
Appearance Dockets*

- Reintroduced offsite classes and assessments at local public libraries, reducing transportation challenges and increasing access.
- Juvenile case managers conducted nearly half of these classes in Spanish or Spanish and English, ensuring equity and breaking down language barriers for youth and families.
- Exceeded goals for appearance rates at juvenile dockets.

176
*Youth Successfully
Completed
Courses*
(at no cost to the family)





Finance

- Conducted extensive research to identify and properly dispose of more than 500 outdated items including old monitors, monitor stands, keyboards, and mice in partnership with the City's Surplus office and Community PC program for donation throughout the community.
- Updated all credit card readers and purchased additional power cables to serve as backup for the operational units. Coordinated with leadership to ensure all readers are consistently charged and receive software updates as they are released.
- Revised and streamlined travel procedure creating new forms and a flowchart to improve understanding and ease of use by staff.

\$37,393,565
Operating Budget



Human Resources

- Performed extensive work and collaboration with supervisors and managers from almost every unit to post positions including court clerk assistant, court clerk lead, clinical case manager, associate hearing officer, court operations supervisor, human resources advisor, case manager, administrative specialist, and facility services manager.
- Implemented retention plans for four work groups (ITS, clinical case managers, substitute judges, and Central Booking). These groups typically experience high turnover and/or work in unique environments. Initiatives were developed and utilized to reduce turnover, increase employee morale, and recognize differentiators in assignments.

722
Applications Received

139
Hiring Assessments Conducted

45
Employment Offers Extended

35
Positions Posted

16
Internal Promotions





Administration, Facilities, and Security

- Conducted assessment to ensure the physical layout of the court was optimized for efficient operations and best use of space. Adjustments were made to improve the organization of the facility.
- Reintroduced a spring cleaning program designed to maintain a clean, safe, and professional facility for employees and the public we serve.
- Exceeded goals for completing public information requests within 10 business days of receipt.
- Established new vendor and ordering process for court employees to purchase approved court apparel. The process was streamlined to make it super easy for employees to order, pay for, and receive their items. Over 90 items were purchased, promoting pride in our department and court-wide unity.
- Updated the Emergency Action Plan and established standard-

ized schedules for testing security systems and conducting evacuation drills; conducted a shelter in place exercise.

- Created an appreciation wall recognizing the employees of the quarter with their picture.
- Transitioned to 100% physical security panic buttons and standardized placement throughout the building.

280
*Facility Work Orders
Opened*

275
*Facility Work Orders
Closed*

1,194
*Public information
requests processed*





CMS Team

The court went live with eCourt in September of 2022. The previous software was at the end of its life and failing; therefore, we moved forward with implementation although there was outstanding logic, interfaces, and reports still in development. This fiscal year, we focused on Phase 1 implementation work as follows:

- Interfaces associated with notices, auto-dialer/text, DPS convictions, web warrants, and electronic citations.
- Initial version of the eCourt public case detail and payment portal, along with the officer and attorney portal.



Information Technology Services (ITS)

- Completed server equipment relocation and the decommissioning and retirement of outdated servers contributing to departmental streamlining and modernization efforts.
- Coordinated with Central Technology Management (CTM) to set up the previous courthouse location to accommodate the Violet KeepSafe program.
- Partnered with CTM to become the first department to migrate all personal drives to OneDrive setting the precedent for other departments.



13
Number of New Technologies Implemented

1,296
Help Tickets Resolved

275
Number of Programs, Queries, Reports Developed or Modified

Percentage of ITS Helpdesk Surveys with a Score of Satisfactory or Above

98%



Policy, Procedure, Technical Documentation, and Audit Review

Throughout the year, all operational units conducted a review of current policies, procedures, technical documentation, and audits that need to be revised or created to be in alignment with new processes in eCourt. Focus for next year will be placed on revisions and development of new documentation where needed. Although not impacted by the new CMS, the units of shared services also conducted a review to identify any gaps and opportunities to provide clear guidance.

Strategic planning

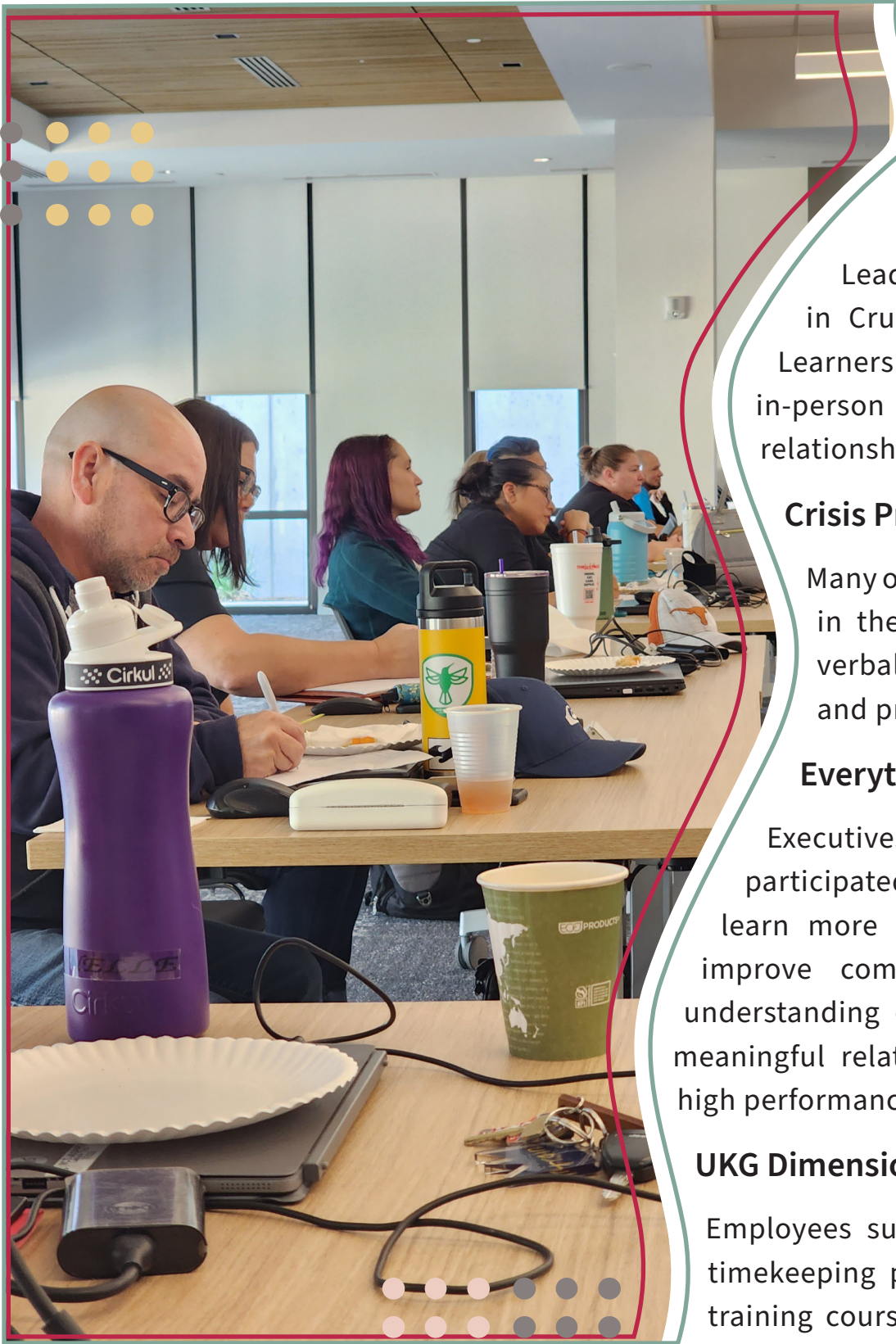
The management and leadership teams began work on the next iteration of AMC's strategic plan. New goals and strategies were proposed in the following areas:

- ✓ Recruitment and retention of knowledgeable staff
- ✓ Procedural fairness
- ✓ Efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance
- ✓ Facilities and infrastructure management
- ✓ Community engagement, marketing, and public information.

We will continue working to refine and develop iterative short- and long-term business plans.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



There were multiple training and development activities completed by staff in addition to continuous internal training on the new CMS.

Crucial Conversations

Leads and juvenile case managers participated in Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue. Learners took part in a hybrid of online activities and in-person sessions to improve communication and relationships at work and in their personal lives.

Crisis Prevention Institute

Many of our customer-facing employees participated in the Verbal Intervention class to learn how to verbally de-escalate tense or disruptive situations and prevent escalation.

Everything DiSC

Executives, managers, supervisors, and leads participated in style assessments and training to learn more about themselves and their coworkers to improve communications and interactions. Increased understanding of behavior in the workplace will cultivate meaningful relationships and support the development of high performance in teams.

UKG Dimensions

Employees successfully transitioned to a new electronic timekeeping platform. This included a rigorous six-week training course for HR employees who, in turn, provided

training to all employees on the appropriate usage of the new system to include a parallel period in which dual entry was required in both the old and new systems.

StepOutside

Operational and shared services staff attended this developmental program designed to increase human connection in the workplace to improve communication, foster cross functional teams, reduce turnover, and enhance efficiencies.

Cash Handling

More than half the staff completed cash handling training required biannually by the City. The training was provided through two sessions to include internal policy and procedure review on dual control.



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, removing barriers, and fostering community relationships.



Municipal Court Week

Municipal Court Week is held the first full week of November each year and is a statewide recognition of the work of municipal courts and the important role they play in their communities. This was the first year we were safely able to celebrate the relocation of the main court in 2020; therefore, a community open house was included in the weekly festivities. Other activities included hosting mock trials for a local middle school which included a presentation on the dangers of distracted driving presented by Allie's Way; staffing an informational table at City Hall on Election Day; and presenting to local high school students through the AustinCorps program.



Warrant Amnesty

AMC and DACC resumed the Warrant Amnesty program for the first time since 2019. We utilized media to include public service announcements and interviews on television and radio both in English and in Spanish to reach individuals with outstanding warrants. The purpose of the program is to encourage individuals



Over 3,400
*Community Members
Reached*



to voluntarily appear to resolve outstanding warrants by removing barriers to their successful compliance with court orders. Individuals who appeared during the campaign had their warrant fees waived. The program ran from February 6th-March 3rd. There were 1,288 warrants cleared, \$71,620 in warrant fees waived, and \$96,907 collected in outstanding fines, fees, and court costs. In addition, 1,085 civil parking cases were cleared resulting in \$23,641 collected in outstanding fines.

Other events included participation with community partners:

- National Teen Driving Safety Week
- Youth Career Fest
- Chinese New Year Resource Fair
- Pop-Up ATX at Givens Recreation Center
- Lively Middle School Personal Mock Trials (second time)
- Riverside Togetherness Project Resource Fair-Día del Nino
- 6th Annual Burnet Springs Fiesta Fair
- Brownie Park Block Party
- Austin ISD Back to School Bash
- National Night Out
- Hosting What Do You Consider Lethal class for the attendees of Givens Recreation Center's summer program.



ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

AMC strives to maintain a culture that is respectful and supportive of staff, promotes continuous improvement, encourages open communication and appreciation for diversity, and most importantly, makes the workplace enjoyable.

City Olympics

Staff continued a burgeoning tradition of seeking glory at the City Olympics, fielding two kickball teams for the second year in a row. Some of the attributes that make AMC employees the best of the best in the office were displayed on the kickball diamond: grit, perseverance, and the ability to find joy in each other (even when taking a loss). Maybe there was only one win, but it was surely the loudest win of the weekend!

Celebrations Committee Events

The Celebrations Committee is comprised of a cross section of employees with the purpose of engaging coworkers for input on various awards

and recognition activities taking place each year. The committee then plans and delivers fun quarterly events for staff appreciation, encouraging team building and comradery.

Volunteering

AMC is very proud of staff who endeavored on some team building events that were also beneficial to the community. The Compliance unit volunteered at Zilker Botanical Gardens where they pulled weeds, spread pecan mulch, and buried waterlines in the beds. The customer facing leadership team volunteered at the Central Texas Food Bank helping sort, inspect, carry, bag, and organize 400 bags of food totaling over 4,000 pounds of carrots and potatoes to help make 3,300 meals for Central Texans.





School Supply Drive

- Participated in the citywide school supply drive which is a voluntary effort organized by City of Austin employees to benefit local students.

Combined Charities

- Participated in the voluntary annual event for employees to give to charitable organizations. Funds collected are distributed by the City of Austin to support a wide range of non-profit organizations.

Mentoring

- Many staff members participated in mentoring through the Seedling Mentor program supporting its mission to mitigate the impact of parental incarceration on children in Central Texas through school-based mentoring.

Hosting PE classes through the City's Health Connections Program

- One benefit of our new location is to have enough space to host PE classes for staff and other city employees. These classes support organizational health and improve wellness. We hosted 12 weekly strength training classes for AMC and other City employees.

Blood Drive

- We partnered with We Are Blood to host a blood drive for staff and other tenants in our building. We proudly provided 21 units of life-saving blood donations.

Heritage and Cultural Celebrations

- In addition to the various heritage and cultural events sponsored by the City, the AMC staff are encouraged to suggest and lead internal celebrations. The events are organized, communicated, and championed by our employees.

Historical celebrations have included Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo, Spanish Heritage Month, and more. This year staff chose Pride Month for internal celebration. There were many events and decorations throughout the month of June honoring the LGBTQ+ community.

Employee Appreciation

- AMC's annual awards and recognition program includes appreciation lunches, team building events, pop-up activities, and annual gifts to show appreciation for our awesome employees and the amazing work they do throughout the year. Much of this is developed with feedback received through staff surveys.



UPCOMING OBJECTIVES



- Relocate the northern customer service center to a larger facility to allow adequate space for staff and customers.
- Update manual forms book to be used in the event we don't have access to the CMS. This allows clerks to provide needed documents during an internet loss or power failure.
- Revise and/or create policies, procedures, technical documentation, and audits to be in alignment with new CMS and other organizational changes.
- Maintain a consistent inventory of door hangers for the court processor to make field visits to contact customers and provide options to resolve outstanding cases.
- Continue internal control framework project to establish proper business processes/procedures through a lens of embedded risk management.
- Address the increasing volume of customers handling civil parking matters through online services by improving access, user ease, and increasing visibility on options to resolve through electronic means.
- Implement community service alternative sentencing option for civil parking cases.
- Digitize trial evidence that has historically been physically filed and stored.
- Processing all cases within work queues and

- sustaining them at an efficient level. Will require continued troubleshooting and analyses to refine and finalize work assignments in the new CMS.
- Continue work with Travis County to define and develop the CAFA program to include identification of roles, responsibilities, space needs, and resources.
- Work with stakeholders to review emergency protective order processes to ensure efficiency and compliance with regulations.
- Introduce a new Human Resource Information System (HRIS) platform, Workday. This new system will provide better self-service for employees and integrate our application tracking and HRIS systems into one, which will provide more streamlined processes in the employee lifecycle.
- Continue the Everything DiSC model to develop and enhance emotional intelligence.
- Transition all users to the Windows 11 platform.
- Continue development of the strategic plan.



EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Employee of the Quarter

1st Quarter



Meredith Davis



Jessica Pepin



Katherine Alcauter



2nd Quarter



Lamesha Arnold



Melissa Degollado



Mayra Luna



3rd Quarter



Eduardo Guajardo



Rocio Flores



Isamar Garcia



Gilbert Camancho

4th Quarter



Dometra Gilbert



Edgardo Gaitan



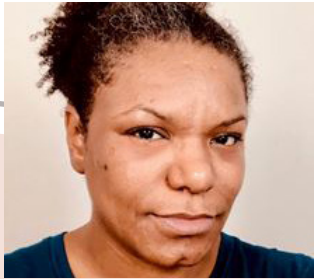
Alina Carmona-Loza

Years of Service

Five Years



Judge Jeffers



Alyssa Means



Eduardo Guajardo



Judge Seelig



Judge Sigman



Judge Guerra



Judge Harris Schultz



Dan Burchette



Jennifer Walton



Heidi Holmes



Ken Gore



Anderson Wolf



Kim Wingard

Fifteen Years



Stacy McKenzie



Gabriella Huizar



Evelyn Acosta



Debbie Cowan



Michael Tang



Lynn Evans

Twenty Years

Twenty-Five Years

Ten Years

Awards and Recognition

2023 Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Award

For the fourth 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/>



Supervisor of the Year

David Tackett was selected as the supervisor of the year for Central Booking which is a unit that operates 24/7. David was extremely responsive to all shifts and made significant efforts to keep the team, located in a different facility, included in court communication and activities. David demonstrates excellent communication skills, is patient, a great problem solver, and always approachable and professional.



Unit of the Year

The CMS team was recognized as unit of the year because in the most challenging of times, this team led eCourt into fruition. They looked ahead to make sure staff would have time to study, reference how-to documents, and provided great training. Even when it was extremely stressful, they were all very helpful and patient throughout pre and post implementation. Although it was hectic, the team was responsive and patient.



Public Service Recognition

Michael Tang was selected for public service recognition because he is a dedicated public servant who has worked in multiple units of the court more for more than 15 years. He works tirelessly for the court to ensure court cases are processed correctly in the CMS, specifically as it relates to cases scheduled before a judge on a docket.

LETTER FROM DOWNTOWN AUSTIN COMMUNITY COURT’S (DACC) PRESIDING JUDGE AND COURT ADMINISTRATOR

As a restorative justice and problem-solving court, and a pillar of Austin’s homelessness response system, Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) worked throughout 2023 to continue to provide high quality and person-centered services to the community, while innovating to create new service enhancements. DACC’s mission 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 remains at the core of our approach to services. While we have many things to celebrate this year, we’ve pulled several highlights to share with you here.

As of this year, we have resumed full court operations since the COVID-19 pandemic, while maintaining virtual options to allow better access to court services for the public. Additionally, DACC implemented a Clinical Diversion Program (CDP), which dedicates case managers to serve people as they’re engaging in court services. CDP aims to improve connection to case management and social services, while also improving appearance and case completion rates at DACC. DACC’s Homeless Services continued providing access to walk-in case management to over 50 people per day, while increasing opportunities onsite to access services through community partners. DACC’s housing-focused case managers also celebrated the milestone of connecting over 550 people to housing since October 2015. DACC has continued to be a core partner in the City’s emergency response operations, particularly for cold

weather events where DACC serves as the embarkation hub for Cold Weather Shelter operations. In 2023, and looking forward to the upcoming winter season, DACC will continue in this role to support unhoused individuals during winter weather events.

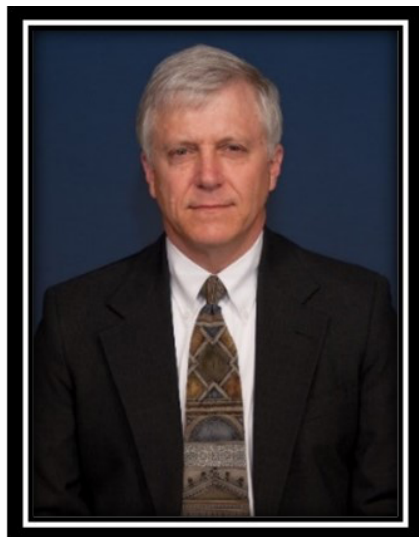
DACC oversees the Violet KeepSafe Storage program (VKS), which provides free and secure storage services for individuals experiencing homelessness. VKS was relocated in January 2023 from the parking garage of the old HealthSouth building to an indoor setting in Austin Municipal Court’s previous building located at 7th Street and Interstate 35. This has significantly enhanced the program by providing a climate-controlled environment for staff, program participants, and their belongings. DACC is grateful to Community Services and VKS staff for helping with a successful move in less than one day, ensuring continued access to program services during the transition.

After 22 years of public service at DACC, 2023 brought the retirement of Peter Valdez, III, LMSW. As DACC’s Court Administrator, Peter had an immeasurable impact creating compassionate and effective services for the people DACC serves. While Peter will be greatly missed, he has set DACC up for success by establishing a service culture throughout the department that will continue his legacy well into the future. As the newly appointed Court Administrator, Robert Kingham has hit the ground running to ensure a seamless transition



and prioritize sustaining high quality services, building and maintaining strategic partnerships, and initiating a strategic planning process to proactively plan for DACC’s future.

As we move into fiscal year 2024, we’re looking forward to new opportunities to enhance and expand how we serve the Austin community. This will include beginning our mobile court pilot, as directed by the City Council during the budget process, which will connect people in the community with solutions for resolving cases while providing immediate connection to services and resource navigation through case managers onsite. We also welcome the upcoming discussion around DACC’s jurisdiction, as directed by Resolution 20230608-044. DACC’s team of dedicated public servants will continue to work together to ensure we are creating a welcoming environment as we work to help people resolve court cases, complete municipal purpose jobs through our Community Services program, and help our unhoused neighbors end their experience with homelessness.



MICHAEL COFFEY
Presiding Judge

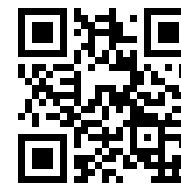


ROBERT KINGHAM
Court Administrator

Mission:

To administer justice equitably and compassionately to foster trust and accountability, and

To utilize a client-centered and housing-focused intensive case management model to help individuals experiencing homelessness achieve long-term stability.



DACC UNIT UPDATES

DACC’s mission is to administer justice equitably and compassionately to foster trust and accountability, and to utilize a person-centered and housing-focused intensive case management model to help individuals experiencing homelessness achieve long-term stability. DACC services are supported by work across four units, including Community Services, Court Services, Homeless Services, and Support Services. Established in 1999 as the first community court in Texas and the eighth in the United States, DACC has become a resource for other communities learning best practices for implementing community court models. Updates are provided below regarding data and accomplishments across all DACC units, staff recognition, and annual accomplishments this year related to organizational development.



Community Services

Community Service (CS) Program

- Participants fulfill community service hour requirements through public space cleaning, beautification projects, and graffiti abatement, and working at DACC’s Edgar Fincher III Program Garden, which donates all food and eggs to local providers who provide meals to individuals experiencing homelessness. The CS program accepts work requests from various City departments including, Austin Code, Watershed Protection, Austin Public Health, and Parks and Recreation.

1,323
*Number of
Community Services
Requests Completed*



Community Service Highlights

- DACC’s Community Service unit was highlighted in CityView, [available here](#), featuring the Edgar Fincher, III Program Garden and the important work of DACC’s Community Service staff (and chickens!). DACC was grateful and proud to see their impactful efforts highlighted and celebrated in citywide communications

17
*Acreage of Work
Completed*

9.4
*Average Number of
Days to Complete
Service Requests*

so more City employees and Austin residents can learn about their great work and how it benefits the Austin community.



Violet KeepSafe Program

Free storage for individuals experiencing homelessness located downtown with secure bins to store vital documents, family memories, clothing, bedding, and more, in order to reduce property loss, help keep the community clean, and reduce discrimination of individuals experiencing homelessness. VKS operates every day, 7:00am-7:00pm, and employs people with lived experience to improve service experience and create workforce opportunities.

VKS Highlights

In January 2023, Violet KeepSafe moved to the former Austin Municipal Court Building to enhance program services. This move transitioned services indoors, providing a better environment for staff, program participants, and their belongings, particularly during times of inclement weather in the summer and winter.

26,956
Number of
Interactions with
VKS Participants

855
Number of Active
Violet KeepSafe
Storage (VKS)
Participants





Court Services

DACC is a restorative justice, problem solving, and fine-only court with an emphasis on alternative resolutions and providing an immediate connection to onsite housing-focused case managers, basic needs, and social service resources. DACC resolves Class C criminal offenses in a defined catchment area, and 2021 Proposition B and State camping ban cases citywide.

New Clinical Diversion Program

- Effective March 6, 2023, DACC initiated the implementation phase of the Clinical Diversion Program (CDP). This program has dedicated case managers serving people as they're engaging in court services. This program was developed after a year of stakeholder engagement to help enhance and strengthen the process for connecting people coming through the court system to DACC's housing-focused case management services and social service continuum. CDP aims to improve connection to case management and social services, while also improving appearance and case completion rates at DACC.

160

*Number of Cases
Dismissed Through
Participation in CDP*

122

*Number of Clinical
Diversion Program
(CDP) Clients*

898

*Number of Cases
Filed*

3,142

*Number of Cases
Docketed*

DACC Mobile Court Pilot

- As part of the budget process, DACC was directed to implement a mobile court pilot, the executed resolution is [available here](#). This pilot is intended to connect people in the community with solutions for resolving cases while providing immediate connection to services and resource navigation through case managers onsite. DACC began the planning process and stakeholder engagement following this direction, and proudly began these services to the community in October 2023.

Resumed Full Court Operations with Enhancements

- DACC resumed all court operations including regular and arraignment dockets, while maintaining virtual options as a service enhancement for people engaging in court services.





Homeless Services

DACC provides an array of intensive, wraparound, short term, and outreach homeless services to meet the range of needs of Austin's homeless community.

Walk-in Case Management

- Provides assistance obtaining identification documents and signing up for public benefits, access to basic needs, and linkages to mental health, physical health, and substance misuse services. On average, over 50 people per day engage with walk-in case management services.

Intensive Case Management

- Person-centered, housing-focused services with low caseloads and wrap around supports. DACC's services have helped connect over 550 people to long-term housing since October 2015. Both DACC case management programs serve as a diversion from criminal justice involvement by meeting people's needs before situations escalate to involve law enforcement.

DACC-funded social service contracts

- DACC procures and manages contracts that directly serve DACC clients as part of wraparound supports that are critical for our community court model. These include, but are not limited to long- and short-term housing solutions, SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) application assistance and representative payee services, and substance misuse, mental health, and peer support services. DACC also manages contracts, such as the Expanded Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (EMCOT), that don't directly serve DACC clients because it creates efficiencies for other departments at minimal to no cost to DACC.

Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST)

- HOST includes a DACC housing-focused case manager, an APD officer, an EMS community health paramedic, and six staff from Integral Care who provide mental health services and peer support. HOST members work together to conduct proactive outreach to build trust with the homeless community and connect people to services and basic needs. DACC funds Integral Care staff and prioritizes HOST referrals for intensive case management to ensure individuals are connected to ongoing services.





Homeless Services Highlights

Monthly Housing Orientations

- These celebratory meetings provide resources and information for soon-to-be and newly housed clients that help them learn how to care for their homes, be good tenants, and set them up for long term success in housing. Comprehensive information is provided including cleaning and home care, food handling and appliances, safety and home features, working with property staff, how to handle damages, guests and pets, lease violations, and disturbances.

Functionalized Peer Support for Walk-in Case Management

- After seeing the benefits of incorporating a Peer Support Specialist (PSS) in the lobby to work with people seeking walk-in case management services, DACC has functionalized having a PSS available as part of our program model. The PSS enhances DACC’s services by welcoming individuals, being an open and friendly person that can start initial discussions, establish relationships with individuals in the lobby seeking services, and help with resource navigation services as needed.

Enhanced Collaboration with Community Partners

- DACC has expanded opportunities for community partners to provide services for DACC clients onsite. Integral Care conducts intakes improving access to services. CommUnityCare provides application support for the Medical Assistance program. Family Eldercare assists individuals with SOAR applications to help with access to public benefits.

Third Party Evaluation of DACC’s Intensive Case Management Program

- DACC partnered with the University of Texas at Austin to conduct a third party analysis of DACC’s Intensive Case Management program looking at operational protocols and identifying opportunities for program service delivery enhancements. This study led to an array of recommendations for service enhancements, and DACC has a plan for implementation established for FY 2024.



Number of Walk-in Case Management Interactions **13,562**

Average Daily Walk-in Case Management Interactions **54.4**

Number of Clients Connected to Housing **99**



165
*Number of Social
Service Contract
Payments Processed*

\$7,162,949
*Amount of Social
Service Contract
Payments Processed*

488
*Hours of Input
Gathered from
Austin Homelessness
Advisory Council
Members*

Support Services

Responsible for special projects and support for all DACC units, administration for the department, internal and external communications, technology support, community engagement, support for the DACC Advisory Board, and social service contracting. This unit also facilitates and supports the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which is a group of approximately 15 people with lived experience who meet biweekly to provide input on policies, programs, and practices impacting people experiencing homelessness, [shown here](#).

Support Services Highlights

Data Maximization Project

- DACC implemented this project to create a cohesive and comprehensive data strategy, including goal setting, actions, parameters, and system infrastructure developed with input from DACC staff and stakeholders. Phase 1 has been completed including extensive engagement and a gap analysis, which will help inform the implementation of a case management information system and external sharing dashboard, and create enhanced data program policies and procedures.

DACC Investments

- DACC is committed to investing in resources to ensure seamless services and the flexibility to continue to work out in the community to benefit the people we serve. Support Services staff developed a new inventory and tracking system for technology resources, resulting in necessary replacements of tablets for 40% of DACC staff, with plans for additional investments in fiscal year 2024, demonstrating DACC’s commitment to staff and maintaining high quality services for the community.



Geographic Service Area Project and Jurisdiction Expansion

- On June 8, 2023, City Council passed a resolution, “...directing the City Manager to support the Downtown Austin Community Court’s role as an integral part of Austin’s homelessness response system by initiating City Code amendments to expand DACC’s geographical service area for certain Class C misdemeanors utilizing stakeholder feedback and consultation with key court staff.” This followed an extensive stakeholder engagement process regarding DACC’s geographical service area and adjudicated cases, and the stakeholder report can be found [here](#). City Code amendments related to DACC’s jurisdiction are anticipated to be considered by Council at the beginning of FY24.

DACC Equity Team

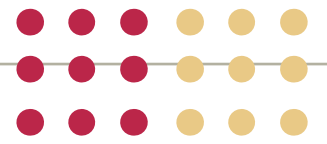
- DACC formalized an internal DACC Equity Team, which meets on a monthly basis with DACC leadership to work towards implementing departmental equity enhancements identified during DACC’s equity assessment process.

Stakeholder Support and Engagement

- DACC continues to provide support for the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) and the DACC Advisory Board, as both work towards developing recommendations of policies, programs, and practices impacting the work of DACC.



DACC ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



DACC Selected as CJ-MH Learning Site

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs’ Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)’s Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP) recently launched the Criminal Justice-Mental Health (CJ-MH) Learning Site Program (“Program”) to help improve outcomes for people with behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system. DACC was selected for the Program by using innovative practices to improve outcomes for people with behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system.

Conferences and Speaking Engagements

DACC is grateful to have the opportunity to share our work with other organizations and communities to help educate around community court best practices. The following are highlights:

NADCP (National Association of Drug Court Professionals) Rise 2023 Conference

DACC’s work was featured on a panel alongside community court leaders from other cities, and highlighted the best practices used by DACC to help other communities looking to implement similar programs.

2023 Texas Conference on Ending Homelessness

DACC’s work was featured in three separate panels including:

- **Homeless Services** – Overview DACC’s approach and the best theoretical practices for serving and connecting with individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Austin Homelessness Advisory Council** – Panel discussing six years of AHAC’s impact and improving outcomes, with a focus on the importance of providing meaningful support to people who are newly housed.
- **Violet KeepSafe Storage (VKS)** – VKS development and implementation, operational insights, and lived experience perspective regarding advocating for and benefits of free storage services for people experiencing homelessness.



2023 National Conference on Ending Homelessness

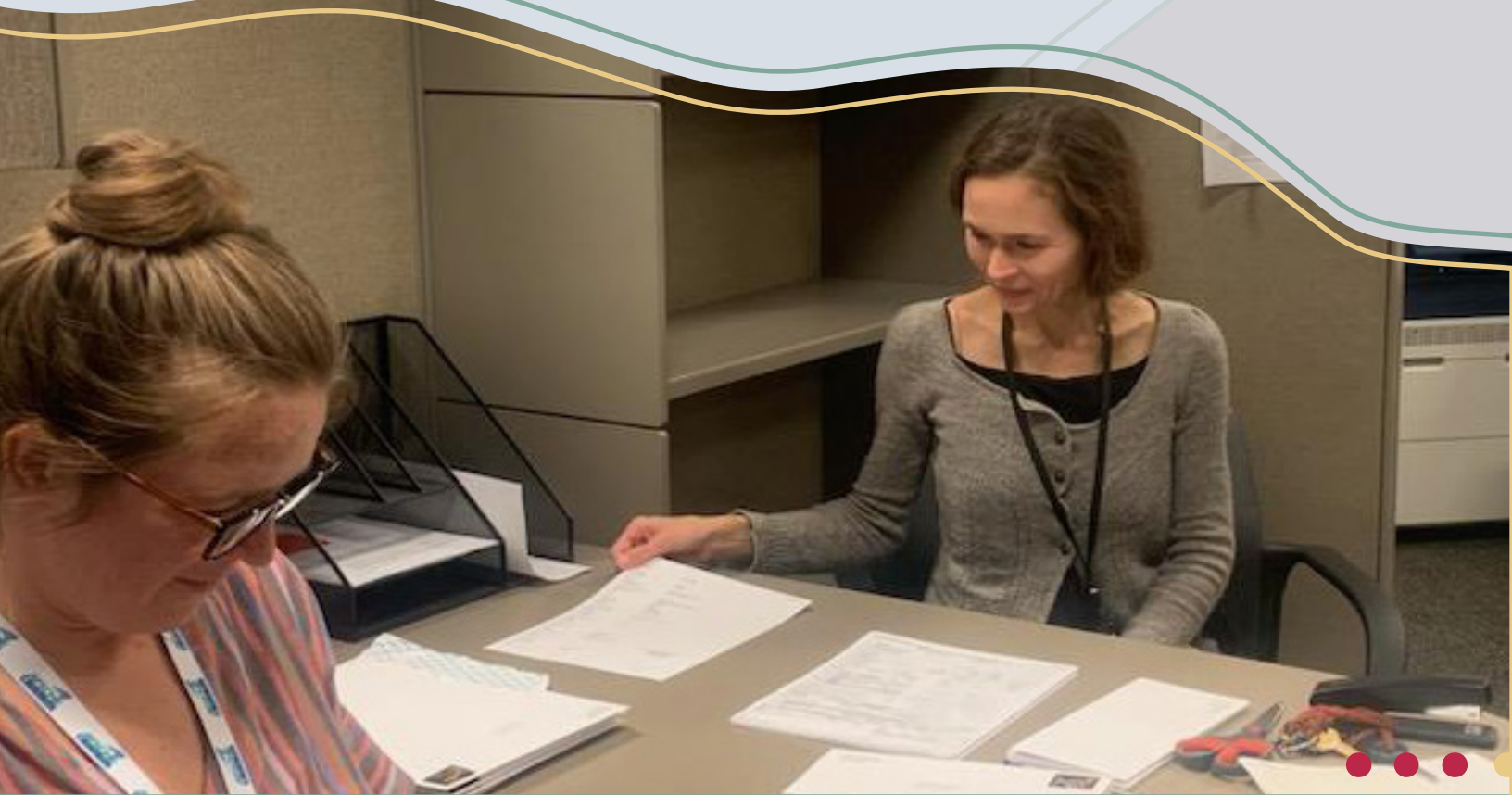
The Violet KeepSafe Storage program was featured during a session to educate attendees about the development and stakeholder process, and provide information, operational insights, and benefits of providing free storage services for individuals experiencing homelessness.

City of Austin and University of Texas at Austin Partnership Showcase and Workshop

DACC’s work with UT for the third-party evaluation of the Intensive Case Management program was showcased as part of the workshop to highlight successful collaborations between UT and the City of Austin, in addition to workshopping new ideas for partnership and discussing the City of Austin’s vision for the upcoming fiscal year.

Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) Recognition

On July 19, 2023, DACC received a certificate of appreciation from Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services (EMS), “In recognition of the countless hours you have dedicated over the last six years identifying resources, collaborating with other agencies, and coordinating efforts to serve our vulnerable populations at the Pop-up Resource Clinics.” DACC has a case manager on HOST, funds the mental health care staff from Integral Care on HOST, and prioritizes HOST referrals for services through DACC’s Intensive Case Management program.



Evaluation Impact & Next Steps

- Value of third-party evaluation
- Action plan & business practice modifications
- Data Maximization Project



Community Policing Dispatch Recognition

DACC was recognized in the May 2023 Issue of *Community Policing Dispatch*, an award-winning e-newsletter of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office). The COPS Office is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources. You can read the piece about DACC, titled “Celebrating the Evolution of Downtown Austin Community Court” [here](#).

Peter Valdez, III Retirement

After 22 years of dedicated public service, Peter Valdez, III, LMSW retired from DACC, and was recognized by the Austin City Council for his service and leadership with a Distinguished Service Award and street sign. Some of Peter's notable accomplishments during his tenure with DACC include:

Developing and implementing

- DACC's Intensive Case Management program, consisting of housing-focused case managers who serve high-risk/high-needs people experiencing homelessness and frequent utilizers of public systems.

- DACC's social service continuum by directly contracting with community-based providers to connect people experiencing homelessness with wraparound supports. Since 2015, DACC has successfully connected over 550 individuals to housing.
- Inclusion of DACC on the Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST), systems for prioritizing HOST referrals for DACC services, and contracting to support Integral Care employees on HOST.

Oversight of Violet KeepSage Program

- Bringing oversight of the Violet KeepSafe Storage program from Austin Resource Recovery Department to DACC. This program provides

free storage services for people experiencing homelessness.

COVID-19

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, dedicating 55% of DACC employees, including staff across all units, to assist the Emergency Operations Center in the intake process, program management, and daily operations of the Protective Lodging facilities serving people experiencing homelessness.
- DACC continued uninterrupted walk-in case management and intensive case management services throughout the pandemic, connecting individuals experiencing homelessness to basic needs, COVID-19 safety planning, and other resources.
- Collaborated with Austin Public Health

to create the COVID-19 Emergency Solutions Grant program that provided intensive case management and housing to high-risk people experiencing homelessness exiting City-funded Protective Lodges.

During the transition immediately following his retirement, Robert Kingham and Jennifer Sowinski each served in the role of Interim Court Administrator to help ensure a seamless transition and continuity of services for the community.



Employee of the Quarter

Quarter 1

Nicki James

Nicki James, a member of DACC's Homeless Services team, was recognized for her patience, inclusivity, and willingness to help. She is especially helpful with DACC's walk-in case management services, making a difference in the lives of the people she serves. Nicki is a true team player and approaches her work with a curious, learning spirit.



Quarter 2

So Yong Kim

So Yong Kim, a member of DACC's Homeless Services team, was recognized for going above and beyond for her clients time and time again, in addition to taking on leadership positions and participating as a valuable member of DACC's Equity team. So Yong is known for being kind, caring, patient, and a joy to work with for her clients and her fellow DACC team members.



Quarter 3

Brett Sullivan

Brett Sullivan, a member of DACC's Community Services team, was recognized for his positive energy and contributions at DACC. Brett's calm attitude when helping clients and his respectful approach when engaging with community service participants embody DACC's values and approach to public service. Brett makes community service work fun and treats the people DACC serves with care and kindness.



Quarter 4

Ana George

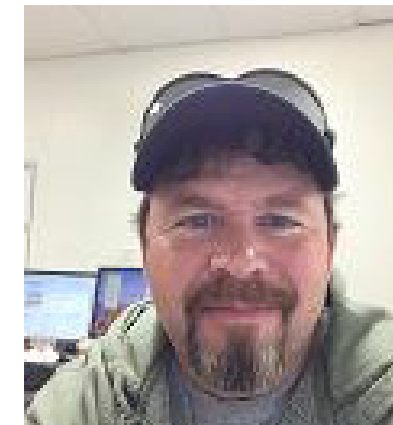
Ana George, a member of DACC's Homeless Services team, was recognized for tirelessly working with her clients, and always with a smile! Ana consistently goes above and beyond in her role, demonstrating exceptional dedication, teamwork and a strong commitment to DACC's values. Ana's contributions have had a significant positive impact on DACC's team, clients, and overall success. Ana's professionalism, leadership, and outstanding work ethic made her a deserving candidate for employee of the quarter.



Years of Service



Samuel Hernandez
10 Years



Jeremy Myers
15 Years





Austin Municipal Court

6800 Burleson Rd, Bldg. 310, Ste.175
Austin, TX 78744

512-974-4800

<https://www.austintexas.gov/municipal-court>

Downtown Austin Community Court

505 Barton Springs Road
First Floor
Austin, TX 78704

Mailing Address
P. O. Box 13464
Austin, TX 78711

512-974-4879

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/community-court>

