

County Court Assistants Training Conference

April 11 – 13, 2018
Frisco, Texas



Constitutional County Courts

- ✓ One in each county (254)
- ✓ An estimated 163 have judicial duties
 - Original jurisdiction in civil actions (\$200 to \$10,000)
 - Probate and Guardianship
 - Exclusive original jurisdiction over misdemeanors with fines greater than \$500 or jail sentence
 - Juvenile matters
 - Appeals de novo from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record



What's New?

Misdemeanors Added in 2017		Civil Cases Added in 2017	
• New Cases	39,458	• New Cases	5,330
• Appealed from Lower Courts	2,741	• Appealed from Lower Courts	81
• Motions/Revoke	4,016	• Reactivated	49
• Reactivated	7,401	• All other cases	133
• All other cases	577		
• Total	126,998	• Total	17,387





OFFICE *of* COURT ADMINISTRATION



Misdemeanor Time Standards

COSCA	ABA	MODEL STANDARD
100% within 90 days	90% within 30 days 100% within 90 days	75% within 60 days 90% within 90 days 98% within 180 days

COSCA = Council of State Court Administrators

ABA = American Bar Association

Model Standards = National Center for State Courts www.ncsc.org



2017 Texas Disposition Rate

Total Disposed 64,397

Misdemeanors

Age of Cases Disposed	30 Days or less	31 – 60 Days	61 – 90 Days	Over 90 Days	Total Cases
Number of Cases Disposed	14,695	7,123	6,426	21,488	49,732
% of Total	29%	14%	13%	43%	



Statute Requirements

TITLE 1. CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CHAPTER 32A. SPEEDY TRIAL

Art. 32A.01. TRIAL PRIORITIES. (a) Insofar as is practicable, the trial of a criminal action shall be given preference over trials of civil cases, and the trial of a criminal action against a defendant who is detained in jail pending trial of the action shall be given preference over trials of other criminal actions not described by Subsection (b).

(b) Unless extraordinary circumstances require otherwise, the trial of a criminal action in which the alleged victim is younger than 14 years of age shall be given preference over other matters before the court, whether civil or criminal.

Acts 1977, 65th Leg., p. 1970, ch. 787, Sec. 1, eff. July 1, 1978.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1251 (H.B. [1396](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2015.



Civil Case Time Standards

TEXAS	MODEL STANDARD
Jury – 18 months from appearance	75% within 60 days 90% within 90 days 98% within 180 days
Non-Jury – 12 months from appearance	

Time to Disposition = The percentage of cases disposed within the established time guidelines.

Texas = Rules of Judicial Administration, Rule 6

<http://www.txcourts.gov/media/1437060/rules-of-judicial-administration-updated-with-amendments-effective-march-22-2016.pdf>

Model Standards = National Center for State Courts www.ncsc.org



2017 Texas Disposition Rate

Total Disposed 4,264

Civil Cases

Age of Cases Disposed	3 Months Or Less	Over 3 to 6 Months	Over 6 to 12 Months	Over 12 to 18 Months	Over 18 Months
Number of Cases Disposed	1,865	481	659	269	990
% of Total	43%	11%	15%	.06%	23%



Who Goes First?

1. Statute Requirements
2. Time Standards
3. Court's Availability
4. Courtroom Needs
5. Court Culture
6. Legal Culture
7. Best Practices



Differentiated Case Management (DCM)

DCM is a technique courts can use to tailor the case management process to the requirements of individual cases.

Differentiated Case Management

Why use it?

- Make more efficient use of justice system resources by tailoring their use to the needs of the individual cases.
- Serve the public more efficiently by providing **different** processing paths with timeframes and procedural requirements geared to the characteristics of each case.
- Achieve a just disposition according to the specific tasks and timeframe.



Differentiated Case Management (DCM)

What is needed?

- The court must acknowledge its responsibility for managing case progress
- The judge must agree that all cases filed are not alike and that they need **different** management and processing
- Participants must commit themselves to differentiate among cases for management and processing purposes
- A judge must assume leadership throughout the development and implementation process
- A coordinator must be assigned to coordinate the details of the DCM development and implementation process.



Differentiated Case Management (DCM)

Getting Started

- Assign cases early to **different** paths
- Issue-based assignment of processing paths
- Litigant choice
- Best use of resources

A Day in the Life of a Judge: Descriptions of Judicial Tasks Under Each Pathway, National Center for State Courts

<http://www.ncsc.org/civil-day-in-the-life>



What Can You Do?

- Training and Education
- Texas Statutes

www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us

- Studies and Data

OCA www.txcourts.gov/oca

Texas Association of Counties www.county.org

NCSC www.ncsc.org

- Colleagues
- Experience
- Professional Networking



Thank you!

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