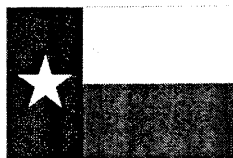
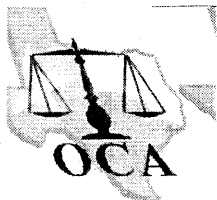


Collecting Court Fees & Fines



Justice Team
Texas Office of Court Administration

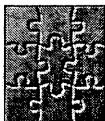
Texas Office of Court Administration

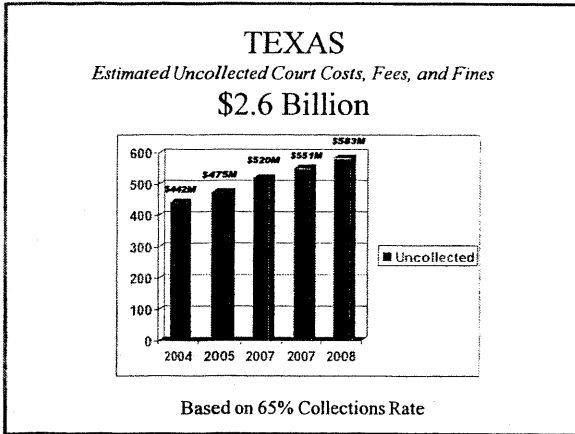


- State Agency
- Created in 1977
- Chief Justice - Texas Supreme Court
- Provides Administrative & Technical Support
- Serves Approximately 2,600 Courts in the State
- (512) 463-1625

Three-Part Presentation

- Collection/Compliance General Overview
- Collection/Compliance Keys & Component
- Collection/Compliance Tool Box





**The Effect on the Economy
on the Courts**

- Staff Reductions
- Budget Restrictions
- Increased Caseloads
- Increased Delinquency
- Increased Default

**General Attitudes About Court
Collections**

- Court Philosophy
"These people can't pay and it's not my job."
- Community Perception
"They don't expect us to pay and nobody cares."
- Government
"We don't have the time or money to invest."

COMMON SIDE-EFFECTS

- Presumption - "Can't Pay"
- Randomly Set Terms
- Weak Follow-Up
- Warrant As Solution
- Credit/Recycle
- Low Priority - Expectations
- Perception - Inconsistent
- High Default Rate
- Expensive Often Ineffective
- Expensive & Ineffective



Six Common Reasons for Non-Payment

- Negligent
- Confused
- Temporary financial difficulty
- Seasonal
- Unexpected disaster
- Deliberate



The Impact of Unpaid Fines

- Loss of Public Revenues
- Decrease In Services
- Increase in Taxes
- Weaker Government



THE ISSUE

“Lack of compliance in paying court fines and fees denies a jurisdiction revenue and, more important, calls into question the authority and effectiveness of the court and the justice system.”





Enforcement Model

“Basic Elements”

- Staff or staff time dedicated to collection activities.
- Expectation that all court costs, fees, and fines are generally due at the time of sentencing or pleading.
- In most cases, defendants unable to pay in full on the day of sentencing or pleading are required to complete an application for extension of time to pay.
- Application information is verified and evaluated to establish an appropriate payment plan for the defendant.



Enforcement Model

“Basic Elements”

- Payment terms are usually strict (e.g., 50% of the total amount due must be paid within 48 hours; 80% within 30 days; and 100% within 60 days).
- Alternative enforcement options (e.g., community service) are available for those who do not qualify for a payment plan.
- Defendants are closely monitored for compliance, and action is taken promptly for non-compliance. Actions include telephone contact, letter notification, and possible issuance of warrant.



Enforcement Model

"Basic Elements"

- A county or city may contract with a private attorney or a public or private vendor for the provision of collection services on delinquent cases (61+ days), after in-house collection efforts are exhausted.
- Application of statutorily permitted collection remedies, such as programs for non-renewal of driver's license or vehicle registration.
- Issuance and service of warrants, as appropriate.

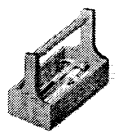
Keys to Success

- Judicial Understanding & Commitment
- Simplicity (*kiss*)
- Internal Communication & Cooperation
- Investment in Quality Staffing & Training
- Investment in & Efficient Use of Technology



Collections Tool Box

- Statutory Enforcement
- Location
- Validation
- Communication
- Compliance



LOCATION

Information Needed for Searches

- Social Security Number
- Next of Kin
- Place of Employment
- List of Friends / Other Family





Validation Internet Services

- usps.com
- whitepages.com
- phonevalidator.com
- freetranslator.com

Use the Free Stuff



Collection Tools

Post Cards

**TDJC Print Shops
250@ \$10.50**

**Gary Beard-Marlin
254 883-5561**

**Wayne Wilkins-Hondo
830 426-5325**

The Collections Team

Melissa Williamson- North Region (melissa.williamson@courts.state.tx.us)

Karolyn Williams- Houston Region (karolyn.williams@courts.state.tx.us)

Chad Graff East Region (michael.graff@courts.state.tx.us)

Daphne Webber- Central Region (daphne.webber@courts.state.tx.us)

Aaron Castillo- South Region (aaron.castillo@courts.state.tx.us)

Jim Lehman- Collections Program Mgr. (jim.lehman@courts.state.tx.us)

Office of Court Administration

TELE:(512)463.1625

www.courts.state.tx.us/oca
