

# TEXAS MUNICIPAL COURTS FACE OF JUSTICE

BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THROUGH MODEL COURT WEBSITES & SIGNAGE

Center  
for  
Court  
Innovation



In 2018, the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (Austin, Texas) received a grant from the State Justice Institute (Reston, Virginia) to work with the Center for Court Innovation (New York, New York) to develop models of effective websites and court signage that reflect the concepts of procedural justice. This brochure provides information about that project and where Texas municipal judges and court support personnel can access the tool kits, exemplary webpages, and sample signage.

The project was guided by the evidence-based literature on the concept of procedural fairness (also referred to as procedural justice), which focuses on whether people experiencing the justice system perceive the procedures (and their treatment) as fair. The four key components of procedural fairness are as follows: Understanding, Voice, Respect, and Neutrality. How courts communicate with the public - both inside and outside of the courtroom - can be directly linked to these principles.

We wish to express our appreciation to the authors of the toolkits, who also served as the project staff, Emily La Gratta and Alejandra Garcia, as well as the State Justice Institute and Texas Court of Criminal Appeals for the funding.

The project would also not be possible without the court leaders who helped with the planning and piloted the prototypes. The following courts participated in the pilot website project:

Bee Cave Municipal Court  
Bryan Municipal Court  
Lewisville Municipal Court

Rowlett Municipal Court  
Uvalde Municipal Court  
Westlake Municipal Court

The grant team also visited several municipal courts to view signage and court processes. We also express our appreciation to these courts:

Austin Downtown Community Court  
Cedar Park Municipal Court

Austin Municipal Court  
Round Rock Municipal Court

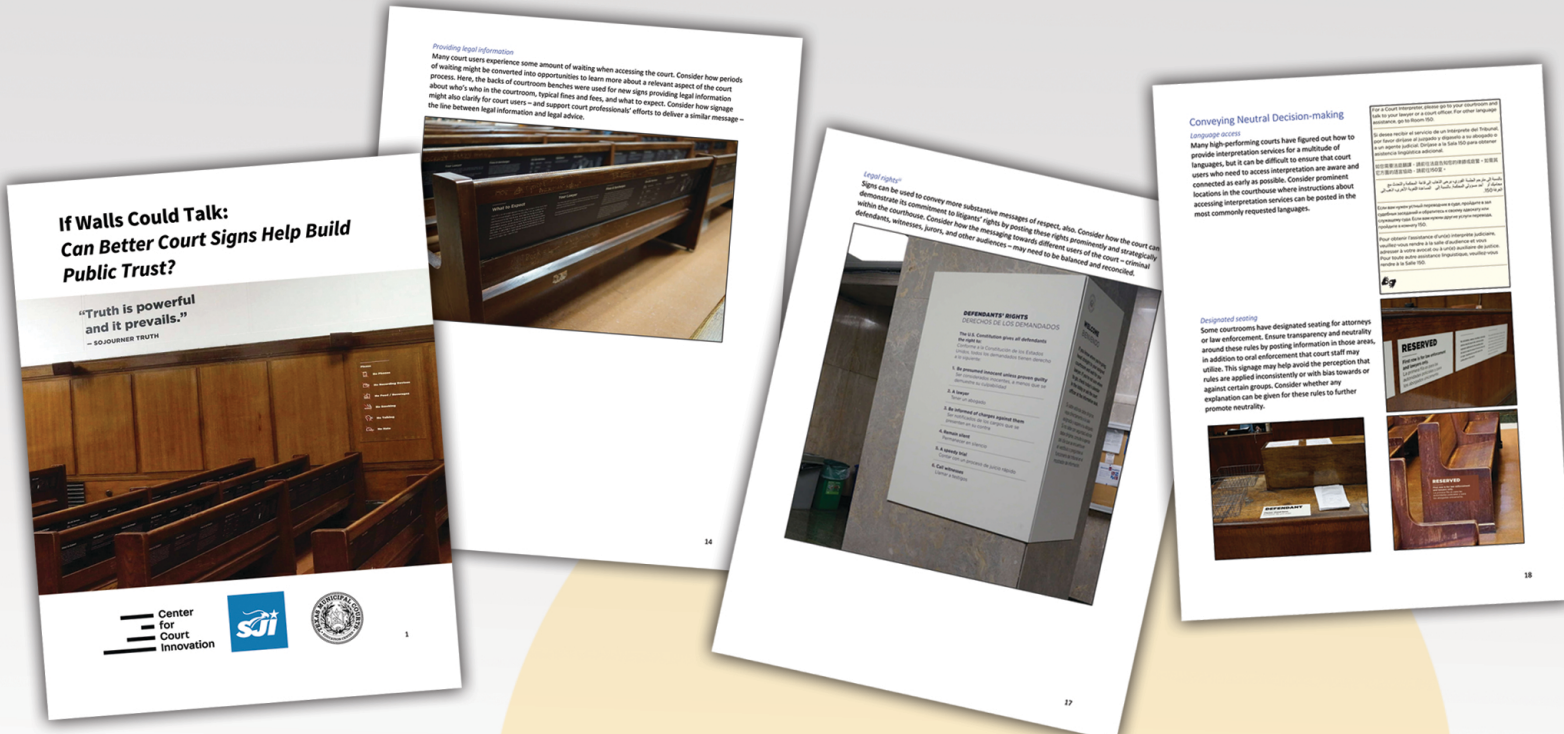
TMCEC has developed a webpage for easy access to these toolkits, prototypes, and sample signs. Go to: [www.tmcec.com/procedural-justice1/](http://www.tmcec.com/procedural-justice1/)  
For further information, contact [tmcec@tmcec.com](mailto:tmcec@tmcec.com) or call 512.320.8274.

# BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THROUGH MODEL COURT WEBSITES

The project developed an online toolkit for municipal court websites on how to incorporate principles of procedural justice. The end goal is to enhance court users' perceptions of fairness and improve trust and confidence in the justice system.



# IF WALLS COULD TALK: CAN BETTER COURT SIGNS HELP BUILD PUBLIC TRUST?











Signage can help build a culture of respect in your court. All courthouses benefit from messaging to those who enter their doors. Signage should be clearly written and professional in tone. We recommend that it build perceptions of trust and confidence, while helping court users navigate the building.

[www.tmcec.com/procedural-justice1/](http://www.tmcec.com/procedural-justice1/)

# MODEL SIGNS

## COURTROOM RULES






**Please | Por Favor**

-  **Follow court staff instructions**  
Siga las instrucciones del personal de la corte
-  **No Standing. Please take a seat.**  
Tome asiento.
-  **No Phones**  
No Teléfonos
-  **No Recording Devices**  
No Dispositivos de Grabación
-  **No Food / Beverages / Gum**  
No Comida / Bebidas / Chicle
-  **No Smoking / Tobacco**  
No Fumar / Tabaco
-  **No Loud Talking**  
No Hablar Fuerte
-  **No Hats**  
No Gorros

## Welcome / Bienvenido




Thank you for coming to court today. Please form a single line.  
Gracias por venir a la corte hoy. Por favor, forme una sola línea.

**Please / Por favor**

-  **Bring your ID and any needed paperwork**  
Traiga identificación y cualquier documentación necesaria
-  **Remove everything from your pockets**  
Vacíe sus bolsillos
-  **Bags subject to search**  
Bolsas sujetas a búsqueda
-  **Listen to the officer's instructions**  
Siga las indicaciones del agente judicial
-  **Silence your phone**  
Silencia su teléfono

Scissors, tools, cameras, and other dangerous items are not permitted in the courthouse. Possession of any illegal items, such as narcotics, knives, or other weapons, may result in arrest.

No se permite ingresar al juzgado con tijeras, herramientas, cámaras y otros artículos peligrosos. La tenencia de artículos ilegales como estupefacientes, cuchillos u otras armas podría resultar en la privación de su libertad.

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Thank you / Gracias





## Court Clerk Secretario del Tribunal

**This is the line for the Court Clerk.**

You're in the right place if you need to:

- Check on a court date
- See if you have a warrant
- Make a payment for a municipal court case
- Ask questions related to a municipal court case in this city
- File a document with the court

**Please have ready:**  
Tenga a mano lo siguiente:

-  **A valid photo ID**  
Una identificación con foto válida
-  **Case information (citation or correspondence from court)**  
Información del caso (citación o correspondencia de la corte)
-  **Method of payment**  
Medio de pago
-  **If you are not able to pay fines or costs, please provide proof of income so the court can determine whether you are eligible for alternatives.**  
Si no puede pagar multas o costos, presente un comprobante de ingresos para que el tribunal pueda determinar si es elegible para alternativas.

These model signs can be accessed at [www.tmcec.com/procedural-justice1/](http://www.tmcec.com/procedural-justice1/)

This document was developed under a grant from the State Justice Institute. Points of view expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the State Justice Institute.

For further information, contact [tmcec@tmcec.com](mailto:tmcec@tmcec.com).

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