



# Best Practices

## Municipal Safety Traffic Initiatives

# 2023

# Traffic Safety Awards



## Table of Contents

Alvin . . . . .	3	Irving . . . . .	10
Andrews . . . . .	3	La Porte . . . . .	10
Arlington . . . . .	4	Lewisville . . . . .	11
Austin . . . . .	4	Mesquite . . . . .	11
Azle . . . . .	5	Midland . . . . .	12
Balch Springs . . . . .	5	Missouri City . . . . .	12
Bay City . . . . .	6	Nacogdoches . . . . .	13
Cedar Hill . . . . .	6	San Antonio . . . . .	13
College Station . . . . .	7	San Elizario . . . . .	14
Columbus . . . . .	7	San Marcos . . . . .	14
El Paso . . . . .	8	Sullivan City . . . . .	15
Freer . . . . .	8	Victoria . . . . .	15
Harker Heights . . . . .	9	Watauga . . . . .	16
Helotes . . . . .	9	Woodsboro . . . . .	16

Honorable Mention	
Aransas Pass . . . . .	17
Benbrook . . . . .	17
Houston . . . . .	17
Lakeway . . . . .	17
Malakoff . . . . .	18
Marlin . . . . .	18
New Braunfels . . . . .	18
Wink . . . . .	18



A project of the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center  
In cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation





## MUNICIPAL TRAFFIC SAFETY INITIATIVES



# Introduction

The Texas Municipal Courts Education Center's (TMCEC) Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives grant, funded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), recently sponsored the traffic safety awards to recognize those municipal courts that have demonstrated outstanding contributions to traffic safety and eliminating impaired driving in their respective communities. The awards are a way for municipalities to increase awareness through traffic safety activities. All municipal courts in the State of Texas were eligible to apply.

Applicants were judged on their activities relating to increasing traffic safety while preventing impaired driving, traffic crashes, traffic fatalities, juvenile DUI, child safety seat offenses, red light running, and other traffic-related offenses. Twenty-eight courts received awards this year: nine low volume (serving fewer than 30,000 people), nine medium volume (serving 30,000 to 149,999 people), five high volume (serving 150,000+ people), and five new applicants. Eight courts received honorable mention.



With 4,489 fatalities, 2021 was the second deadliest year ever on Texas roads. This problem is particularly pronounced for children: 143 of the 4,489 deaths were children aged 14 or younger. No other state reached 100 child fatalities in 2021 and many had less than ten. Texas also led the nation in alcohol-impaired driving fatalities: 2,169 of the deaths involved a driver with alcohol in their system at the time of the crash. Preliminary estimates for 2022 indicate that these trends are persisting. Preventing these avoidable tragedies is crucial. Opening this brochure represents an important step in giving your city the resources and tools to do so. I encourage you to use the award-winning courts as models for your own

traffic safety initiatives. I also urge you to reach out to the TxDOT grant staff at TMCEC for free resources and support to maximize your initiatives' life-saving potential. Congratulations to all the 2023 MTSI Award winners!

**Judge Gary Ellsworth**

President, TMCA/TMCEC Board of Directors; Presiding Judge, Spearman Municipal Court



# Best Practices

## Alvin Low Volume



Representatives from the Alvin Municipal Court participated in the 27th Annual Tour De Braz bike race at Alvin Community College. Court staff organized and coordinated bike rest stops where refreshments and first aid kits were handed out to more than 280 riders. Registered participants were provided bicycle safety materials, notepads, and other materials to remind them of the importance of wearing a helmet and biking safely.

## Andrews Low Volume



The Andrews Municipal Court set up a booth at the annual "Safe Spot" Trick or Treat festival on Halloween. Visitors were invited to play *Toxic Bag Toss* while wearing impairment simulation goggles to learn the dangers of underage drinking and impaired driving. Individuals of all ages participated and were rewarded with a Driving on the Right Side of the Road *Save the Noggins* notepad for playing!





# Best Practices

## Arlington High Volume



Almost 2,000 older residents attended Arlington's Aging Well Expo in September. The Arlington Municipal Court set up an exhibit and provided CarSafe program flyers, children's safety books, and pedestrian safety cards to remind everyone of the dangers of walking in parking lots and on residential streets. The attendees had older pedestrian safety on the mind as an 83-year-old man had been killed the month before while walking on an Arlington frontage road.

## Austin High Volume



As part of Municipal Court Week, the Austin Municipal Court held a red light running mock trial for 84 local 6th graders. After the mock trial, the students heard from Jamie White, whose two-year-old daughter, Allie, was tragically killed by a distracted driver in a Round Rock parking lot.





# Best Practices

## Azle Low Volume

The Azle Municipal Court, in collaboration with Azle ISD, hosted its second annual municipal court coloring contest in 2022. 57 students participated in the contest with five winners receiving three traffic safety coloring books: *A Day in Municipal Court*, *Tex & Dot*, and *Buckle Up, Texas!*



## Balch Springs New Applicant

During National Night Out, the Balch Springs Municipal Court set up a traffic display consisting of a city street carpet covered with traffic safety stats and scenarios, such as three siblings struck and killed while waiting for the school bus, red light running crashes, and instances of distracted driving.







# Best Practices

## Bay City Low Volume

In May, the Bay City Municipal Court partnered with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Department of State Health Services to hold a free car seat inspection event at a local community college. Each child was given a copy of *Safe Not Sorry* and *Bernard in the Backseat*. Visitors either had their existing child safety seats inspected and adjusted or, if they did not have one, were given a free one complete with installation by a certified technician!



## Cedar Hill Medium Volume

The Cedar Hill Municipal Court staff spoke to the Mayor's Teen Council in April. The court's goal was to educate the students on the dangers of drunk driving. With spring events in mind, the court staff decorated the courtroom in black and gold and created a sober prom pledge banner for the students to sign along with their Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives sober prom pledge cards. A Cedar Hill peace officer also told the students about his personal experience responding to impaired driving incidents.







# Best Practices

## College Station

### Medium Volume



College Station Municipal Court staff participate in numerous events to educate the public on traffic safety. In June, court clerks discussed traffic safety issues at the city's Health and Safety Expo. Court staff also gave a presentation on traffic safety and driver responsibility to over 800 City of College Station employees at the city's Benefits Fair.



## Columbus

### Low Volume

For National Night Out, the Columbus Municipal Court set up a display with traffic safety tips attached to candies and various traffic safety books such as *Don't Monkey Around with Safety on Your Bicycle*. The court also featured a cornhole toss game where participants wore impairment simulation goggles.





# Best Practices

## El Paso High Volume

In celebration of Halloween, the El Paso Municipal Court participated in the second annual El Paso Streetcar Read and Treat. The event allowed 100 streetcar riders, dressed in their Halloween best, to stop at multiple locations around the downtown district. Court staff joined the riders to discuss how the City of El Paso strives to keep the public safe and handed out treats to the children. The staff also distributed traffic safety bags which included the *Tex & Dot* coloring book, *Bernard in the Backseat*, a glow stick, and other traffic safety materials.



## Freer Low Volume

Freer Municipal Court clerk Savannah Smith participated in a #EndTheStreak campaign in Laredo where she shared the court's success story building meaningful strategic partnerships with organizations such as TxDOT and Duval County Crime Stoppers. #EndTheStreak is a campaign that seeks to end Texas's string of more than 22 years without a deathless day on the roads.





# Best Practices

## Harker Heights Low Volume



As part of its teen court program, the Harker Heights Municipal Court, in collaboration with the police department, offered the “Building a Better Youth” program. Over this six-week course, juveniles were educated on alcohol and drug awareness, traffic laws, and professional development. Mothers Against Drunk Driving, local business owners, and even ex-NFL star Kavika Pittman inspired participants with powerful messages related to traffic safety.

## Helotes Low Volume

During Municipal Court Week, the Helotes Municipal Court displayed a wrecked vehicle in the City Hall courtyard. A banner adorning the vehicle read “Distracted Driving is Not Worth It.” Safe driving tips were also provided at the site of the vehicle. The Helotes Municipal Court truly encourages the “One Text or Call Could Wreck it All” campaign!







# Best Practices

## Irving High Volume

The Irving Municipal Court has forged a longstanding strategic partnership with Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Minors charged with alcohol offenses are required to attend a MADD Victim Impact Panel as part of their alcohol-related community service. Court staff also participated in Walk Like MADD, a signature event for raising drunk and drugged driving awareness.



## La Porte Medium Volume

Continuing its strong dedication to traffic safety, the La Porte Municipal Court staff marched in the La Porte Civic Club's Juneteenth Parade. The court distributed "STOP & THINK before you Drink! Designate a Driver!" fans in the shape of stop signs were distributed to parade spectators. Frisbees reading "Distraction SLOWS Your Reaction" were given out to the children in attendance.







# Best Practices

## Lewisville Medium Volume



The Lewisville Municipal Court coordinates with the local high school to offer numerous opportunities for students to learn about traffic safety. The court presented *Don't Drink and Drive "Stay Alive"* at the high school where they spoke about the importance of maintaining a clean driving record, the dangerous side effects of alcohol, and an underage substance abuse poster contest.

## Mesquite Medium Volume

For Dia De Los Muertos, the Mesquite Municipal Court set up a display table with plenty of traffic safety materials for table visitors. Court staff offered face painting, pedal car activities, and bean bag toss while wearing impairment simulation goggles. During Municipal Court Week, the judge showed a video about the dangers of speeding prior to each docket.







# Best Practices

## Midland Medium Volume



While only 2% of Texas's population is in the Permian Basin, 11% of Texas's traffic fatalities occur there, so the Midland Municipal Court takes its role in preserving public safety with the utmost seriousness. Court staff attended the Midland Public Library Summer Reading kickoff event where they distributed dozens of traffic safety books. The court also hosted story times at the court where they read children books from the *Don't Monkey Around* series and put on a Buckle Bear puppet show.

## Missouri City Medium Volume

The Missouri City Municipal Court hosted a criminal justice class for one of the local high schools where students were given the chance to try to operate a pedal kart while wearing impairment simulation goggles. The court gave each participant a backpack filled with educational materials related to motorcycle safety, school bus safety, no texting while driving, domestic violence awareness, and more!







# Best Practices

## Nacogdoches

### New Applicant

Children interacted with Nacogdoches Municipal Court staff, police officers, and first responders at the city's Touch a Truck event in June. Touch a Truck exposed children and teenagers to the various larger vehicles on our roads, such as ambulances, fire trucks, and SWAT vehicles. The court staff handed out traffic safety coloring books and bicycle safety information.



## San Antonio

### High Volume

Most months, the San Antonio Municipal Court hangs banners throughout the courthouse that highlight NHTSA's monthly traffic safety initiatives. A year-round public information display provides court visitors with vital traffic safety information. The court also plays impaired driving prevention videos on a constant loop in the court lobby and for appearance and juvenile dockets.







# Best Practices

## San Elizario

### Low Volume



Community education is vitally important for the San Elizario Municipal Court. At the city's largest annual event, the Back-to-School Safety Fair, the judge offered a brief mock trial demonstration to show students how the court system works. The court also distributed over 300 bags of essential school supplies mixed with traffic safety books.

## San Marcos

### Medium Volume

In an effort to encourage a positive relationship between the people of San Marcos and the San Marcos Municipal Court and other city departments, the city hosted Party in the Park, where court staff spoke with children and parents about traffic safety and distributed notebooks and buckle up activity books.





# Best Practices

## Sullivan City New Applicant

Seeking to bring awareness to pedestrian safety and the new Lisa Torrey Smith Act, the Sullivan City Municipal Court displayed a “Stop for People in Crosswalks” banner in court. The court also utilized social media to promote Click It or Ticket and a no refusal weekend over Labor Day to inform the public of the dangers of driving impaired or without a seatbelt.



## Victoria Medium Volume



A marquee program established by the Victoria Municipal Court is the child safety program. The program is funded utilizing child safety funds received from Victoria County vehicle registrations. In May, the City of Victoria hosted a child passenger safety technician certification class through a partnership with Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Passenger Safety and KidSafe Initiatives and the Yoakum District of TxDOT.





# Best Practices



## Watauga New Applicant

The Watauga Municipal Court's social media presence is outstanding. Traffic safety dominates its Facebook page, where the court posts topics related to speeding in school zones, pedestrian awareness, and driving under the influence of drugs. The court utilizes NHTSA's safety months, such as October being pedestrian awareness month, to guide its social media output.

## Woodsboro New Applicant

In October, the Woodsboro Municipal Court promoted a safe zone on Halloween called "Trunk or Treat" for the youth in the community at the town square. The goal was to provide a safe, secure, and fun area for children and their families while pushing back on the "scary" aspects of Halloween. The court handed out goody bags with safety tips printed on the outside of the bag that included bike reflectors, a copy of *Bernard in the Backseat*, and candy.







# Best Practices

## Honorable Mention

### Aransas Pass



### Benbrook



### Lakeway



### Houston







# Best Practices

## Honorable Mention

Malakoff



New Braunfels



Marlin



Wink





# Best Practices

## 2024 Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Awards

**Purpose:** To recognize those who work in local municipalities and make outstanding contributions to their community in an effort to increase traffic safety. This competition is a friendly way for municipalities to increase traffic safety awareness in Texas.

**Eligibility:** Any municipal court in the State of Texas. Entries may be submitted on behalf of the court by the following: judge, court clerk, deputy court clerk, court manager, court administrator, bailiff, marshal, warrant officer, city manager, city council member, law enforcement representative, or community member.

**Awards:** Twelve awards are anticipated:

- Four low volume courts: serving a population below 30,000;
- Three medium volume courts: serving populations between 30,000 and 149,999;
- Two high volume courts: serving a population of 150,000 or more; and
- Two “new applicant” courts: courts that have not applied since 2018.
- New in 2024! One “Trailblazer” award for the court with the most innovative traffic safety initiatives.

For two municipal court representatives, award recipients receive free conference registration, round-trip travel (including airfare or mileage within state and federal guidelines), lodging, and meal reimbursement at the 2024 Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Conference.

**Honorable Mention:** If there are applications that are reviewed and deemed outstanding and innovative, at the discretion of TMCEC, honorable mentions may be selected. Honorable mention courts, if any, will receive free registration for one court representative to attend the 2024 Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Conference.

**Deadline:** Entries must be postmarked or emailed no later than Friday, December 29, 2023.

**Presentation:** Award recipient and any honorable mention courts will be notified by February 19, 2024 and honored during the Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Conference scheduled for April 3-5, 2024 in San Antonio.

**Details:** For complete award details, submission guidelines, and application form, visit [www.tmcec.com/mtsi/mtsi-awards/](http://www.tmcec.com/mtsi/mtsi-awards/). The application typically becomes available the first week of November.

### Winning Strategies

- Speak to local groups on the importance of traffic safety
- Build community partnerships to promote safety
- Add traffic safety content to your website
- Invite students to your court or visit schools to promote safety
- Host traffic safety exhibits at community events
- Create meaningful sentencing alternatives for traffic defendants, especially juveniles and minors, using deferred disposition
- Remind jurors and court observers of the importance of compliance with traffic laws
- Participate in Municipal Court Week and National Night Out
- Display a TxDOT traffic safety poster
- Promote traffic safety through social media

\*Awards program and Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Conference are dependent on continued funding



TEXAS MUNICIPAL COURTS  
EDUCATION CENTER  
2210 HANCOCK DRIVE  
AUSTIN, TX 78756  
[www.tmcec.com](http://www.tmcec.com)

Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Austin, TX  
Permit No. 114

**TMCEC MISSION  
STATEMENT**

To provide high quality judicial education, technical assistance, and the necessary resource material to assist municipal court judges, court support personnel, and prosecutors in obtaining and maintaining professional competence.

Address Correction Requested

---

# **TMCEC Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives**

2210 Hancock Drive  
Austin, Texas  
78756

TELEPHONE:  
512.320.8274



FAX:  
512.435.6118

E-MAIL:  
[tmcec@tmcec.com](mailto:tmcec@tmcec.com)

[www.tmcec.com](http://www.tmcec.com)

