



Best Practices

Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives

2025

TRAFFIC SAFETY AWARDS

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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 (TMCEC) is pleased to present this year's Best Practices publication! Best Practices highlights those municipal courts that have demonstrated exemplary traffic safety outreach initiatives. Each court was formally recognized at the annual Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives (MTSI) Conference, which was held in Waco from April 2-4, 2025. TMCEC presented traffic safety awards to 26 municipal courts and honorable mention to 18 municipal courts at this TxDOT-sponsored event. Baytown Municipal Court was also honored with the Trailblazer Award for the second straight year, which is given to the court with the most innovative traffic safety initiative of the year. For more information about the awards, including how your city can apply in 2026 and a video showcasing the courts' safety initiatives, please visit tmcec.com/mtsi/mtsi-awards/.



The Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC) recently presented the 2025 Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Awards to recognize municipal courts that have demonstrated outstanding contributions to traffic safety and reducing or eliminating impaired driving in their respective communities. This program is funded by a generous grant from the Texas Department of Transportation.

The awards highlight the efforts of Texas cities to increase traffic safety awareness through various activities. All municipal courts in the State of Texas were eligible to participate and applicants were judged on their activities and events to increase public awareness of traffic safety strategies and prevent other dangerous conduct including impaired driving, traffic crashes and fatalities, impaired driving by juveniles, child safety seat offenses, running red lights, and other traffic-related crimes. This year, 26 courts received awards: seven low volume (serving fewer than 30,000 people), eight medium volume (serving 30,000 to 149,999 people), five high volume (serving 150,000+ people), and five new applicant courts. And a special congratulations to the Baytown Municipal Court for receiving the "Trailblazer" award for the second year for submitting the most innovative traffic safety initiative of the year. Eighteen courts received honorable mention.

With 4,283 fatalities, 2023 saw a slight reduction (-2.81%) in fatalities on Texas roads. While this is good news, it is still far too many. The problem is particularly pronounced for children. In 2022, 156 children aged 14 or younger died on Texas roads. Texas also leads the nation in alcohol-impaired driving fatalities: In 2022, 2,152 of the traffic fatalities in Texas involved a driver with alcohol in their system at the time of the crash. Of those, 1,869 were legally intoxicated with a blood alcohol content of .08 or above. Preliminary estimates for 2024 and 2025 indicate that these trends are persisting. Preventing these avoidable tragedies is crucial and is the primary reason for enforcing traffic laws.

Opening this brochure represents an important step in giving your city the resources and tools to promote safer roads. I encourage you to use these 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 2025 MTSI Award winners!

Judge Bonnie Townsend
President, Texas Municipal Courts Association

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Trailblazer Award – Baytown



Baytown Municipal Court Staff

For the second year in a row, the Trailblazer Award for the most innovative traffic safety initiative of the year goes to the Baytown Municipal Court. Following the success of the Court’s innovative traffic safety escape room in 2023, the Court created a Traffic Safety Challenge that mimicked the concept of the television show *The Amazing Race* in 2024. Kids were separated into teams and had to successfully complete stations related to various traffic safety topics before advancing. For example, one station required teams to label and understand key safety components of a vehicle. This fun, interactive, and innovative challenge made a lasting impression on all participants.



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Alvin – Low Volume



Alvin Municipal Court Staff

In response to the rising number of fentanyl-related deaths, the Alvin Municipal Court actively promotes fentanyl awareness through various initiatives. The Court displays a large retractable banner in the lobby featuring warning signs and facts related to this extremely powerful and deadly drug. The Court also continuously plays a traffic safety video that incorporates messages from TxDOT's #EndTheStreak and *Drive Sober. No Regrets.* campaigns.

Angleton – New Applicant

In July, Hurricane Beryl hit the City of Angleton hard. The Angleton Municipal Court leveraged the city's Facebook page to share vital information about safely navigating downed power lines and trees on the roads. The Court also used social media to inform the public that when traffic lights are not working, such as during a blackout, an intersection effectively becomes a four-way stop, according to the Transportation Code.



Angleton Municipal Court Staff

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Anthony – New Applicant



Anthony Municipal Court Staff

To enhance its commitment to public safety, the Anthony Municipal Court certifies its court clerks as car seat and car fit technicians who offer free fittings and evaluations on a regular basis. In August, the Court partnered with TxDOT to host a one-day car seat clinic and checked 15 car seats, distributed 12 new car seats, and disposed of 11 unsafe or outdated car seats.

Arlington – High Volume

Over 2,000 children and adults attended the City of Arlington’s 2024 Trunk or Treat. Attendees were given a Tootsie Roll as a reminder to “slow their roll” and avoid speeding and aggressive driving. Skittles were distributed with the message “It is OK to chase rainbows as long as you use a crosswalk.” Judge Teresa Evans from the Arlington Municipal Court prompted attendees to read the messages before engaging in discussion with her on the topics.



City of Arlington Local Food Bank Drive



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Austin – High Volume



Four juvenile case managers at the Austin Municipal Court are licensed to teach the National Safety Council's 4-hour interactive traffic safety class: *Alive at 25*. The course, which is available in both English and Spanish, is offered at no cost to juvenile defendants with traffic violations. The Court reached 62 young drivers with this curriculum in 2024.

Austin Municipal Court High School Student Visit

Azle – Low Volume

The Azle Municipal Court, working closely with the Azle ISD Police Department, participated in *Nickel for Nicole*. Nicole LeGrow, a student from Plano, was killed by a distracted driver in 2010. To honor her memory and bring awareness to the dangers of distracted driving, students taped a nickel to the dashboard of their vehicle. These nickels serve as a constant reminder to drive safely.



Azle Municipal Court Staff

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Balch Springs – Low Volume



Balch Springs Municipal Court Staff

The Balch Springs Municipal Court hosted a mock trial with students from Floyd Elementary School. The defendant was charged with walking on the street when there was a sidewalk available. This provision of the Transportation Code is particularly significant for Floyd Elementary because many of the surrounding streets do not have sidewalks: students need to know the law and best practices in this situation. This is a great example of tailoring outreach to the needs of the community!

Bay City – Low Volume



Bay City Back to School Bash

The Bay City Municipal Court juvenile case manager and court clerk visited three local schools to conduct traffic safety outreach. Along with giving presentations on car seat safety, they set up an obstacle course with child-size traffic signs such as Yield, Stop, and Work Zone. Students were invited to navigate the course with impairment simulation goggles as the court representatives explained precisely what each sign requires drivers to do.



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Burnet – New Applicant



Burnet Municipal Court Staff

In its first year conducting traffic safety outreach, the Burnet Municipal Court partnered with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service’s Watch UR BAC program to bring the Reality Education for Drivers (RED) to town. During the program, the judge, police officers, and EMS spoke with 11 young adults about traffic crashes and told impactful stories from immediately after the crash and in the ER. Given the program’s success, the court has already scheduled three RED programs for 2025.

Carrollton – Medium Volume

During the City of Carrollton’s *Future Public Employee Day*, city employees take their children to various city departments to learn more about them. The Carrollton Municipal Court converted the courtroom into a traffic safety simulation where they engaged with employees and children about driving, bicycle, and pedestrian safety. The kids navigated a traffic course where they were quizzed on traffic signs at two intersections before arriving at the prize table.



Carrollton Municipal Court Staff

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Cedar Hill – Medium Volume

The Cedar Hill Municipal Court participated in more than ten traffic safety events in 2024. For the third year in a row, the Court conducted a Sober Prom Pledge event. Decorating the court with a prom theme including cake and balloons, the Court placed sober prom pledge cards at each table setting. The judge, who is also a neurologist, explained the negative effects alcohol and drugs have on the brain and urged them to avoid these substances at prom.



Cedar Hill Municipal Court Staff

Corpus Christi – High Volume



Corpus Christi Municipal Court Staff

The Corpus Christi Municipal Court partnered with DPS to host “Talk with a Trooper,” a program to reach individuals charged with No Driver’s License. A Trooper came to the court to discuss the legal and safety-related consequences of driving without a license. Those put on deferred disposition for No Driver’s License were required to take the course as a condition. Moving forward, the court plans on making Talk with a Trooper a monthly event.



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Dallas – High Volume



Dallas Municipal Court Staff

In collaboration with AAA and as part of the Dallas Municipal Court’s new *Drive Friendly Dallas* initiative, the Court brought the *Teen Driver Safety Class* to a North Dallas recreation center. This free event focused on helping teens understand the consequences of various unsafe driving behaviors. In promoting the event, Mayor Eric Johnson proclaimed August 17 as Teen Driver Safety Awareness Day and recognized the municipal court’s efforts to increase traffic safety on Dallas roads.

Edinburg – Medium Volume

In 2024, the Edinburg Municipal Court participated in a staggering 53 traffic safety events. One event was during National Child Passenger Safety Week where the Court hosted a car seat check and installation day. Forty families either had their current seat checked or received, free of charge, one of the 50 brand new car seats purchased by the Court.



Edinburg Municipal Court Judge and Local Students

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Freer – Low Volume

November 7, 2024 marked 24 straight years without a deathless day on Texas roads. On this date, the Freer Municipal Court obtained permission from families that lost loved ones to traffic crashes to hold a “wake” with a casket outside the court. Names of the deceased were displayed on the casket and a vigil commenced at sundown. Countless members of the public stopped by to reflect on these devastating losses and were reminded that these deaths were completely preventable.



Freer Municipal Court Staff

Friona – New Applicant

The Friona Municipal Court encouraged local schools to utilize MTSI’s Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills-correlated traffic safety lessons. Working closely with the Court, Friona Junior High taught the You’re Not the Boss of Me lesson to illustrate the intersection of traffic safety and civic engagement. The Court also visited Friona Elementary School to educate 5th graders on the dangers of underage drinking and impaired driving.



Friona Municipal Court Staff



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Harker Heights – Medium Volume

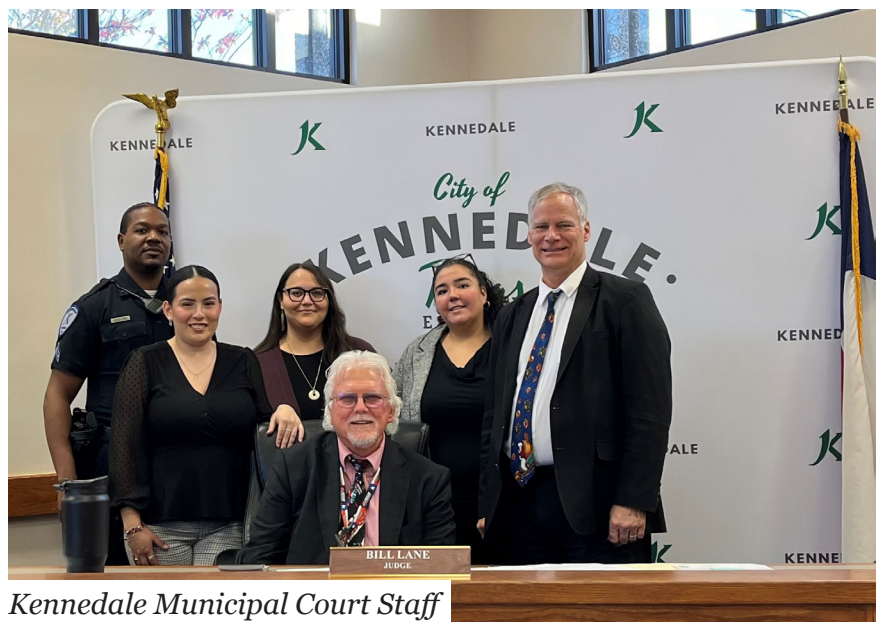


The Harker Heights Municipal Court bolstered its already successful teen court with a new program: *Building a Better Youth*, or “BABY.” BABY is a required component of each sentence imposed in teen court. It involves a tour of the county jail and traffic safety presentations by speakers ranging from authors to professional football players.

Harker Heights Municipal Court Staff

Kennedale – Low Volume

The Kennedale Municipal Court’s first ever bicycle safety event was a huge success! The Texas Medical Association measured and fitted 50 kids with new bicycle helmets, the Court handed out bicycle safety literature and reflectors, and a local bike shop inspected bicycles for safety. An obstacle course was also set up to teach participants how to ride a bike as safely as possible.



Kennedale Municipal Court Staff

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La Porte – Medium Volume

Representatives from the La Porte Municipal Court attended the Bayshore Elementary School's Career Day to talk about the role of municipal court in society and the importance of traffic safety to 65 5th grade students. The Court also brought a bean bag toss game and invited students to play while wearing impairment simulation goggles to highlight the dangers of underage drinking and driving under the influence.



La Porte Municipal Court Staff

Lakeway – Low Volume



Lakeway Municipal Court Staff

Over the summer, the Lakeway Municipal Court commissioned a *100 Deadliest Days of Driving* banner that was placed on various busy roads for one week at a time. The Court also published an article in the City of Lakeway e-newsletter promoting teen driving safety and encouraging parents and teens to engage in conversation about traffic safety using AAA's *Parent/Teen Driver Agreement* as a guide.



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Mesquite – Medium Volume



For Municipal Courts Week, a crashed vehicle was displayed outside the Mesquite Municipal Court and distracted and impaired driving posters were hung throughout the court's lobby. Furthermore, before each docket that week, the judges asked defendants traffic safety trivia questions. Prizes such as traffic safety pledge shirts and pins were given for correct answers.

Local Students at the Mesquite Municipal Court

Midland – Medium Volume

The Midland Municipal Court, in collaboration with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, TxDOT, and Midland Teen Court, hosted an event where a DPS Trooper gave an impactful speech about the horrors he has witnessed on Texas roads as a result of impaired and distracted driving. Participants also watched two video presentations, *Allie's Way* and *Sydnee's Story*, which both portray the devastation caused by distracted driving.



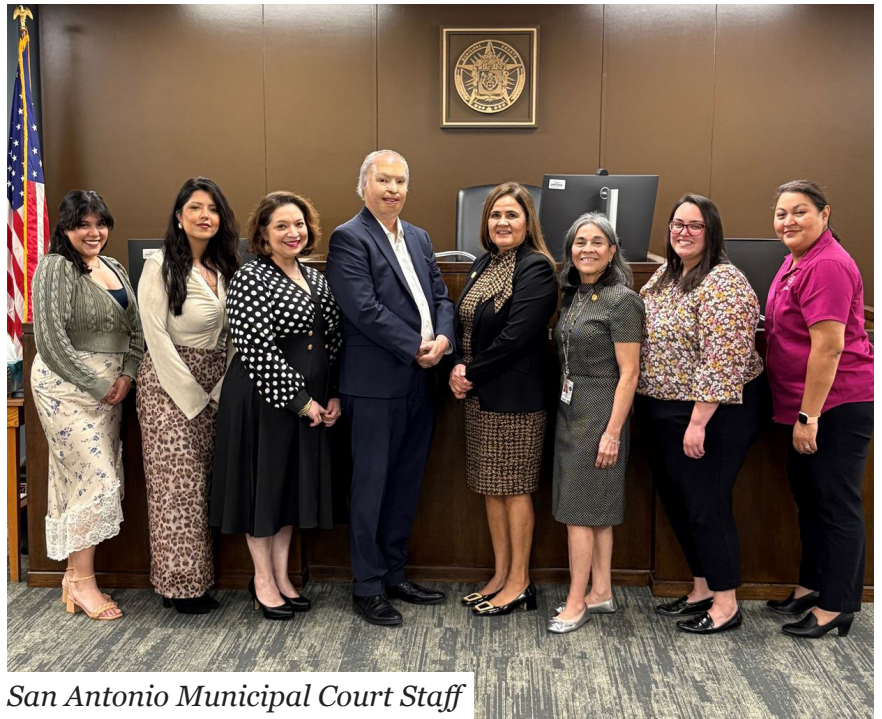
Midland Municipal Court Staff

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San Antonio – High Volume

In February, the San Antonio Municipal Court hosted *Senior Summit 2024: Rise to Graduation*. This inaugural event supported high school seniors and addressed the challenges they may face in completing their education. The Court focused on the lasting consequences of traffic offenses and how they can complicate goals such as getting into college and finding employment. Each attendee received a traffic safety swag bag for their participation in the Summit.



San Antonio Municipal Court Staff

Temple – New Applicant



Temple Municipal Court Staff

The Temple Municipal Court believes that educating its own staff on the public policy behind traffic laws is paramount. For example, court clerks are trained to describe statutory Driving Safety Courses to defendants not primarily as a way to get their case dismissed or save money, but rather as a means to become a better driver. To this end, the judge provides hands-on coaching to clerks on the way in which they speak to defendants. This maximizes the probability that, following their day in court, their behavior will undergo a positive change.



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Victoria – Medium Volume



Victoria Municipal Court Staff

The Victoria Municipal Court’s juvenile case manager program partnered with Mid-Coast Family Services to provide classes for young defendants on topics such as alcohol, vaping, and marijuana and how they affect the brain. For adults, the Court continued its joint venture with the Billy T. Cattan Recovery Outreach Center to provide tools to defendants who are struggling with substance misuse and addiction.

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Aransas Pass Municipal Court Staff

*Aransas Pass
Honorable Mention*

*Arcola
Honorable Mention*



Arcola Municipal Court Staff

*College Station
Honorable Mention*



College Station Municipal Court Staff



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*Eagle Lake
Honorable Mention*



Eagle Lake Municipal Court Staff



El Paso Municipal Court Staff

*El Paso
Honorable Mention*

*Georgetown
Honorable Mention*



Georgetown Municipal Court Staff

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Houston Municipal Court Staff

*Houston
Honorable Mention*

*Hutchins
Honorable Mention*



Hutchins Christmas in the Park Tree Decorating Contest



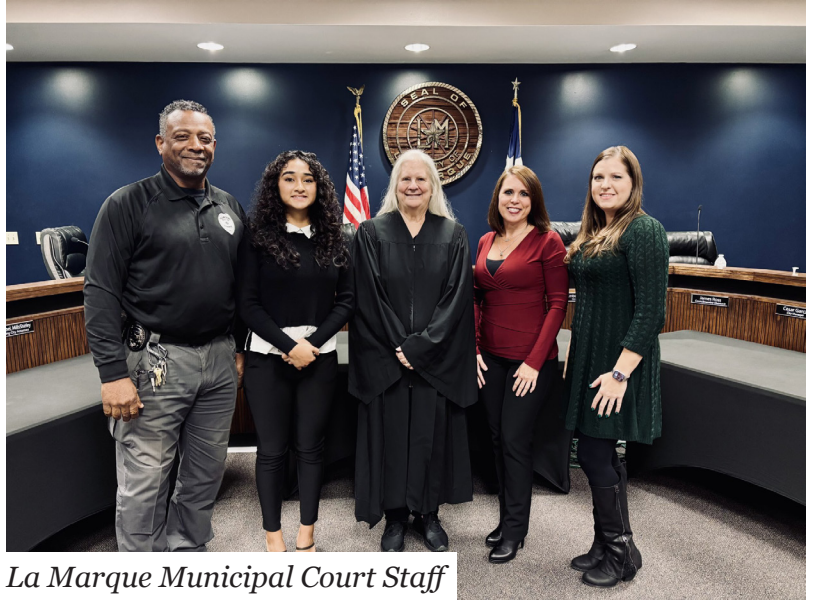
Irving Municipal Court Staff

*Irving
Honorable Mention*



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*La Marque
Honorable Mention*



La Marque Municipal Court Staff



League City Municipal Court Staff

*League City
Honorable Mention*

*Lewisville
Honorable Mention*



Lewisville Municipal Court Staff

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*Lufkin
Honorable Mention*

Lufkin Municipal Court Staff

*Mansfield
Honorable Mention*



Mansfield Municipal Court Staff



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Manvel Honorable Mention



Manvel Municipal Court Staff



San Elizario Trunk or Treat

San Elizario Honorable Mention

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San Marcos Municipal Court Staff

*San Marcos
Honorable Mention*

*Seabrook
Honorable Mention*



Seabrook Municipal Court Staff

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