

## MUNICIPAL COURTS DEPARTMENT

### Department Description and Mission

The mission of the Municipal Courts Department (MCD) is to provide an accessible legal forum for individuals to have their court matters heard in a fair and efficient manner while holding to a high standard of integrity, professionalism and customer service. The Department represents the City of Houston’s third branch of government and provides a legal venue for individuals charged with jurisdictional violations of State law and/or City Ordinance. The Houston Municipal Courts is the largest municipal court in Texas with the greatest number of cases filed annually.

The seven Divisions within MCD, Administrative Services, Court Operations, Cash Management, System Support, Collections and Compliance, Public Information, and Judicial Operations, work collectively to provide court services to the public. MCD also oversees various specialized dockets including Teen Court, Property Disposition, Impact, Prostitution Diversion, Veteran’s, Safe Harbor, and Homeless Outreach. Additionally, the Department manages the budgetary and operational functions of four Special Revenue Funds, Building Court Security (2206), Court Technology (2207), Local Truancy Prevention and Diversion (2211), and the Municipal Jury (2215), which are mandated by State law.

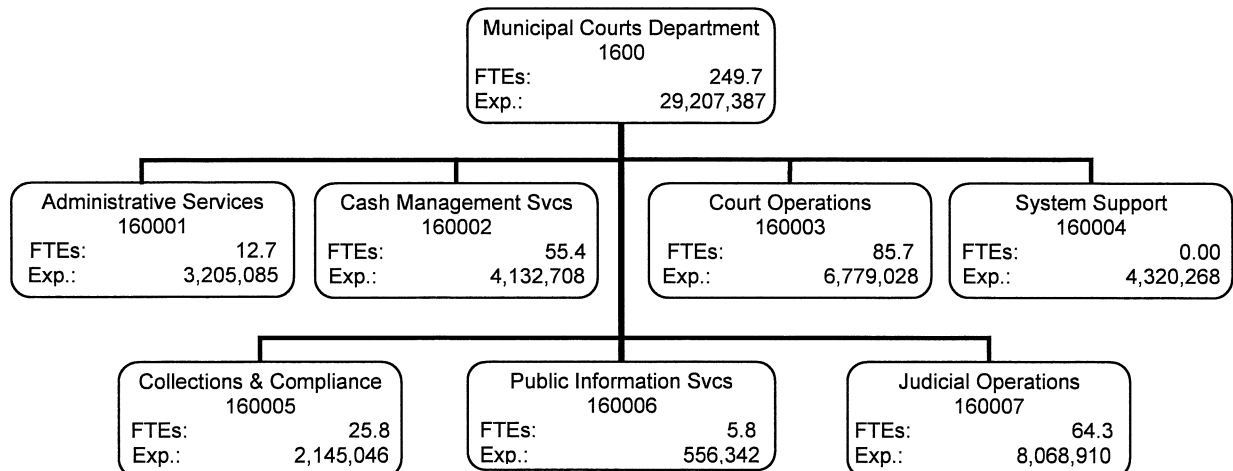
MCD’s staff is comprised of full-time Judges, including the Presiding Judge, the Associate Presiding Judge, the Administrative Judges, Associate Judges (part-time), Adjudication Hearing Officers (full and part time), three Deputy Directors, two Assistant Directors, and supporting court and administrative staff. Our mission is accomplished through the efforts of this dedicated team of professionals.

Full-service courts are located at the central Herbert W. Gee Courthouse, Southeast Command, Westside Command, and North Command. These Courts handle arraignments, jury and bench trials, and function as Annex courts for off-docket matters. MCD also operates Annex courts one day per week at the Kingwood and Clear Lake satellite locations. All jail dockets are held at the Joint Processing Center, including magistrate and blood search warrant services for law enforcement.

MCD has various fee-based initiatives including wedding service, notary service, driving record printing service, record expungement service, and the newly implemented passport service, which is available at two court locations, Central and Westside. These programs were implemented to provide greater public access to important services.

In partnership with the Administrative and Regulatory Affairs Department (ARA), MCD oversees parking citation disputes and boot hearings Monday-Saturday at the central location. MCD also partners with the Department of Neighborhoods to handle the civil adjudication hearing process for ordinance violations related to dangerous buildings, airport, and building code violations.

### Department Organization



**FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET**

**Business Area Budget Summary**

**Fund Name** : General Fund  
**Business Area** : Municipal Courts Department  
**Fund No. /Bus. Area No.** : 1000 / 1600

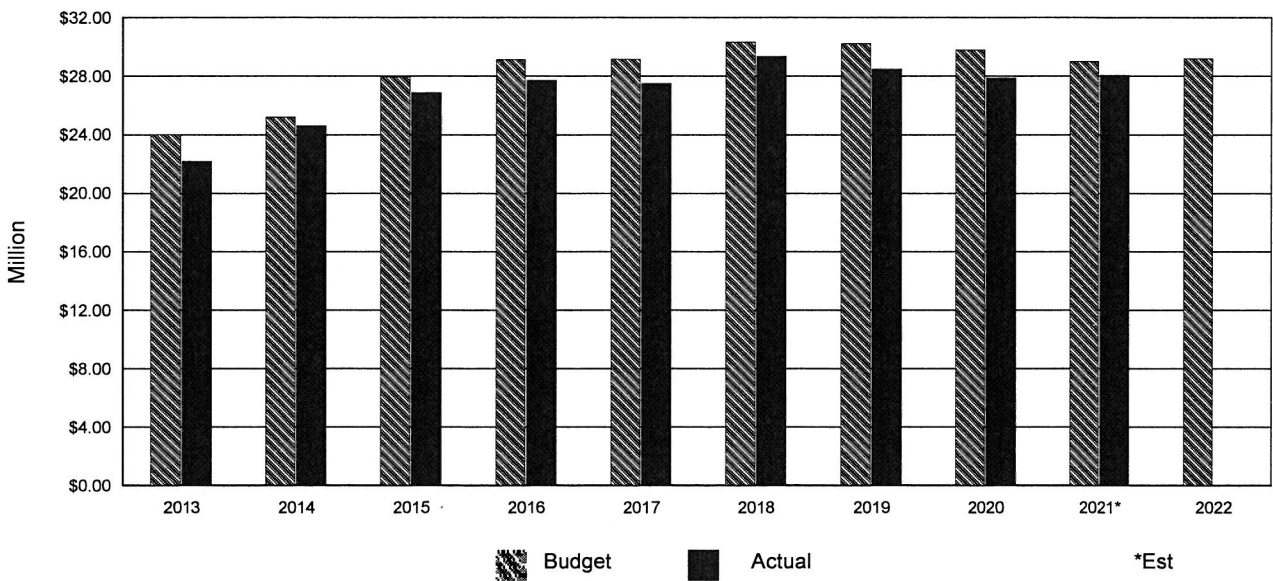
		<b>FY2020 Actual</b>	<b>FY2021 Current Budget</b>	<b>FY2021 Estimate</b>	<b>FY2022 Budget</b>
Expenditures	Personnel Services	22,431,037	22,720,448	22,006,456	<b>22,872,146</b>
	Supplies	92,739	128,498	90,499	<b>136,156</b>
	Other Services and Charges	5,212,870	6,024,652	5,818,901	<b>6,054,720</b>
	Non-Capital Equipment	2,970	13,838	13,838	<b>13,900</b>
	Total M & O Expenditures	27,739,616	28,887,436	27,929,694	<b>29,076,922</b>
	Debt Service & Other Uses	130,465	130,465	130,465	<b>130,465</b>
	Total Expenditure	27,870,081	29,017,901	28,060,159	<b>29,207,387</b>

Revenues	17,872,084	20,708,635	14,215,605	<b>16,244,193</b>
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Staffing	Full-Time Equivalents - Civilian	252.4	250.1	242.4	<b>249.7</b>
	Full-Time Equivalents - Classified	0.0	0.0	0.0	<b>0.0</b>
	Full-Time Equivalents - Cadets	0.0	0.0	0.0	<b>0.0</b>
	Total	252.4	250.1	242.4	<b>249.7</b>
	Full-Time Equivalents - Overtime	0.0	0.1	0.1	<b>0.0</b>

- Significant Budget Changes and Highlights**
- o The FY2022 Budget provides funding for benefits and pension contribution.
  - o The FY2022 Budget includes a reduction of \$693,566 for department savings initiatives.
  - o FY2022 includes the resumption of court operations including the Teen Court Program that were suspended due to COVID-19 in FY2021.
  - o FY2022 Budget includes the continuation of Amnesty Program(s) to assist the public in resolving delinquent cases and improving compliance with Court Orders.
  - o FY2022 includes the continuation of community outreach dockets including Homeless Recovery, Veterans, Prostitution Diversion, and Safe Harbor.
  - o The FY2022 Budget includes restoration of prior year's funding level from COVID-19 eligible redeployment costs that were funded out of the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) under the CARES Act 2020.

**Municipal Courts Department  
Current Budget vs Actual Expenditures**



**FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET**

<b>Business Area Performance Measures</b>				
<b>Fund Name : General Fund</b> <b>Business Area : Municipal Courts Department</b> <b>Fund No. /Bus. Area No. : 1000 / 1600</b>				
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>FY2020 Actual</b>	<b>FY2021 Target</b>	<b>FY2021 Estimate</b>	<b>FY2022 Target</b>
Average Defendant Wait Time: Trial by Judge (minutes)	25.4	30	24.5	30
Average Defendant Wait Time: Trial by Jury (hours)	1.2	2.0	N/A	2.0
Average Warrant Verification Time (minutes)	1.5	5	1.5	5
Customer Satisfaction Rating	94%	90%	96%	90%
Deferred Payment Compliance	N/A	57%	65%	57%
Deferred Payment Program Revenue	\$518,555	\$450,000	\$372,400	\$374,000
In-House Collection Revenue	\$1.5M	\$1.5M	\$1.1M	\$1.1M
Overall Cases Disposed to Cases Filed Ratio	89%	100%	98%	100%
Overall Juror Yield	26%	25%	N/A	20%
Quality Control Review of Cases	93%	50%	92%	50%
Quality Control Review of Transactions	86%	50%	90%	50%
Expenditures Adopted Budget vs Actual Utilization	93%	98%	93%	98%
Revenues Adopted Budget vs Actual Utilization	76%	100%	69%	100%

**FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET**

<b>Division Summary</b>							
<b>Fund Name : General Fund</b> <b>Business Area : Municipal Courts Department</b> <b>Fund No. /Bus Area No. : 1000 / 1600</b>							
<b>Division Description</b>	<b>FY2020 Actual</b>		<b>FY2021 Estimate</b>		<b>FY2022 Budget</b>		
	<b>FTEs</b>	<b>Costs \$</b>	<b>FTEs</b>	<b>Costs \$</b>	<b>FTEs</b>	<b>Costs \$</b>	
<b>MCD - Administrative Services 160001</b> Provides staffing, supplies and services related to facilities maintenance, central mailroom operations, building security, employee safety, staff wellness and training initiatives, budgeting, procurement, financial reporting to internal and external stakeholders, and contract administration. This cost center also includes funding for non-IT interfund costs, and is the source for all General Fund revenue activity/reporting.	15.0	3,149,017	10.9	2,714,277	12.7	3,205,085	
<b>MCD - Cash Management Svcs 160002</b> Provides staffing, supplies and services related to cash management services. Includes cashiers at all court locations who process payments and support the parking adjudication section, central money room operations, reconciliation of daily cash/credit card transactions, jail bonding services, act as agents accepting passport applications, processing of court actions received by mail/email, and fee-based notary and printing services.	57.1	4,126,210	55.1	4,064,101	55.4	4,132,708	
<b>MCD - Court Operations 160003</b> Provides staffing, supplies and services related to pre-court services (data entry, scanning, affiant and quality control), courtroom docket support services at all court locations, and post-court services (warrant verification, appellate and bond administration). Oversight of criminal record expungement request processing, act as agents accepting passport applications, and ensuring compliance with record retention policies.	88.1	6,744,603	82.9	6,582,237	85.7	6,779,028	
<b>MCD - System Support 160004</b> Provides a funding source for all IT-related interfund costs, Scofflaw Program related costs, and system maintenance contractual costs for the Court's case management system (CSMART). No FTEs are assigned to this Division.	0.0	3,641,625	0.0	4,415,963	0.0	4,320,268	
<b>MCD - Collections and Compliance 160005</b> Provides staffing, supplies and services related to collections and compliance. Oversight of collections including One Call Solution Center and the Collections Master Agreement contract (three external collections vendors), internal/external reporting/audit compliance, policy development/compliance, and the Deferred Payment Program that provides assistance for compliance of court orders through payment plans or alternative methods.	26.7	2,079,363	26.2	2,184,988	25.8	2,145,046	

**FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET**

Division Summary						
Fund Name : General Fund						
Business Area : Municipal Courts Department						
Fund No. /Bus Area No. : 1000 / 1600						
Division Description	FY2020 Actual		FY2021 Estimate		FY2022 Budget	
	FTEs	Costs \$	FTEs	Costs \$	FTEs	Costs \$
<b>MCD - Public Information Svcs</b> <span style="float:right">160006</span> Provides staffing, supplies and services related to public information functions including clearance letters for employment/military purposes, responding to requests for court-related information and media inquiries, coordinating press releases, updating web information, posting information on social media sites, scheduling community outreach initiatives, and serving as Council/Legislative liaison.	0.0	0	4.6	427,184	5.8	556,342
<b>MCD - Judicial Operations</b> <span style="float:right">160007</span> Provides staffing, supplies and services related to Judicial Operations. Oversight of dockets including Arraignment, Trials, Jail, Impact, Homeless, Veterans, Safe Harbor, Prostitution Diversion, the Teen Court Program and Annex court services. Oversight of Parking/Ordinance violations and jury operations. Provides expanded magistrate services to law enforcement and mandated court services. Oversight of fee-based wedding service.	65.5	8,129,263	62.7	7,671,409	64.3	8,068,910
<b>Total</b>	<u>252.4</u>	<u>27,870,081</u>	<u>242.4</u>	<u>28,060,159</u>	<u>249.7</u>	<u>29,207,387</u>

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**FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET**

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**Business Area Revenues Summary**

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**Fund Name** : General Fund  
**Business Area** : Municipal Courts Department  
**Fund No./Bus. Area No.** : 1000 / 1600

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<b>Category</b>	<b>FY2020 Actual</b>	<b>FY2021 Current Budget</b>	<b>FY2021 Estimate</b>	<b>FY2022 Budget</b>
Charges for Services	24	150	150	150
Direct Interfund Services	490,112	500,325	500,325	501,963
Municipal Courts Fines and Forfeits	16,988,562	19,744,100	13,213,030	15,089,980
Other Fines and Forfeits	2,771	3,900	2,000	2,000
Miscellaneous/Other	390,615	460,160	500,100	650,100
<b>Grand Total Revenues</b>	<b><u>17,872,084</u></b>	<b><u>20,708,635</u></b>	<b><u>14,215,605</u></b>	<b><u>16,244,193</u></b>