

Goodyear Municipal Court Executive Summary FY23

Committed to the fair and impartial administration of justice, we deliver efficient and accessible customer service by timely processing all legal matters within our jurisdiction.

City of Goodyear Municipal Court

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The Goodyear Municipal Court is part of the integrated judicial system and serves as the Judicial branch of the Goodyear Municipal government. The Court is subject to the administrative authority of the Arizona Superior Court and the Arizona Supreme Court.

To Our Stakeholders

This summary provides highlights of the Court's performance of Fiscal Year 2023, as well as goals for the current and coming fiscal years. The Court continues to model itself after the current strategic agenda initiatives as set by Chief Justice Brutinel, while continuing to align with the City of Goodyear's own strategic plan initiatives.

Strategic Highlights

The Goodyear Municipal Court recognizes the importance of identifying opportunities to grow as an organization, and therefore we work to design goals that support the foundational components of a Court's purpose and responsibilities. It is best stated by Chief Justice Brutinel "...Courts need to improve, to set goals for improvement, and to chart the course for accomplishing those goals... Our courts have established a nationally recognized reputation for excellence in innovation, judicial administration, and education, which we intend to continue into the future."

Training, Development & Opportunities

- *Employee Engagement: collaboration with Human Resources Department to complete Strength Finder assessments*
 - *Team mini-retreat and Strengths exercise with HR business partner*
 - *Q12 Action Planning*
 - *Mini-retreat held with HR business partner to discuss Court Q12 results and division action plans*
- AGTS Supervisor's Academy – 1 graduate – Court Supervisor
- Arizona Court's Association – attendance by 4 team members – 2023 Annual conference attendance in April of 2023 by court personnel from each division of the Court team. Completion of accredited COJET training and networking with other statewide Court professionals.
- *Arizona Court Supervisor program: 1 graduate – Court Supervisor*
- *Arizona Court Manager program: 2 attendees, both Court Supervisors*

Community Outreach & Partnerships

- Continued participation in the Glendale Municipal Court Annual Stand Up for Veterans event and Tempe Municipal Court Arizona StandDown for Veterans event.
- Problem Solving Community Court consultant Arizona Court Consulting, LLC on board. Administrative Order 2022-03 effective 10/24/2022 and steering committee established.
 - As of December 2022, the Goodyear Municipal Court paused this pilot program initiative, while the City of Goodyear City Council completed the new Presiding Judge recruitment.
 - Since the new Presiding Judge terms began in October of 2023, the Goodyear Municipal Court is currently evaluating the existing caseload for homeless, mental health, veterans and substance abuse-related matters. As per the employment agreement of the Presiding Judge, the Judge will make future recommendation to the City Council regarding the Goodyear Municipal Court's need for an in-house specialty court program.
 - The Court is seeking to conduct a structured survey to determine the need for the target population. The Court has entered a supplemental request for FY25, to continue the use of previously granted one-time funding, to conduct this survey in by December 2024. Based on the results of the survey, the Presiding Judge will report to Council in January 2025, recommendations on specialized court programs.
- Partnership with Maricopa County Regional Homeless Court – granting approval for eligible defendants to complete community service in lieu of payment of fines, if they participate and successfully graduate in the Homeless Court program
- Municipal Court 101 presentation incorporated in the LEAD program elective to educate Goodyear citizens about the Judicial Branch in the City of Goodyear (presented by the Court Administrator & City Prosecutor)
- *Arizona Supreme Court, Committee on Leadership & Workforce Excellence (COLAWE) & National Center for State Court programs.* The COLAWE is led by experienced Arizona court faculty, scholars, and subject matter experts well-versed in the analysis and evaluation of Courts in a broad social and historical

content. Programs are designed to strengthen the knowledge and skills of Court employees as they grow professionally within the Arizona Court system.

- *COLAWE appointment: Court Administrator re-appointed by Chief Justice Brutinel as committee member*
- Court Administrator current facilitator for Arizona Court Supervisor with the Arizona Supreme Court
- Presiding Judge current member of the Judicial College of Arizona
- Presiding Judge current mentor with Arizona State University and the Los Diablos Scholarship recipients
- Court Administrator current mentor with Desert Star Elementary School
- Presiding Judge is a current instructor for the Civil Traffic Hearing Officer program with the Arizona Supreme Court
- Execution of Intergovernmental agreement with City of Glendale – April 2023 – agreement authorizes the partnership between the Goodyear Municipal Court and the Glendale City Court for the West Valley Regional Veterans Court program.
 - From August 2023 to December 2023 – 12 defendants have been referred to this program. The first graduations are scheduled to occur in February 2024
 - Goodyear will renew this agreement for another term in April of 2024
 - Costs associated with this IGA are still being evaluated, to include impacts on the Court Appointed Attorney fee (Legal Fees budgetary allocations)

Access & Fairness

- Language Services & Access (continually provided as mandated). Language Access 'Court Interpreter Summit' attended at the Arizona Supreme Court by the Court Administrator and Case Processing Division Supervisor, October 2023.
- In addition to Language Services, the Goodyear Municipal Court will be adding focus areas to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to our future operational planning and processes.
- Remote/Virtual court appearances via Zoom/Microsoft Teams/facetime and or telephone in accordance with Goodyear Administrative Order 2022-02 for PRESUMPTIVE AND IN PERSON PROCEEDINGS

- The Court is evaluating future technology solutions for remote/video appearances, to expand remote appearance practices for in-custody defendants with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office
- Self Help Center
 - The room includes a large directory map for local Justice, Superior and Juvenile Courthouses, as well as a guide as to services which can be obtained at each respective Court. The room also contains a display board for services in both English and Spanish, a resource wall, and a Public Access computer. Court customers can now obtain certain documents required from MVD by using the computer and printing to the customer service station, saving time and reducing the amount of return visits to the Court.

Financial Highlights

Courts collect monies in the form of restitution, fines, and fees, the purpose is to administer justice. Courts are not revenue-generating centers. The following financial data is due to the Courts ability to carry out impartial administration of justice, seeing to it that each case is sentenced fairly and impartially, and that sentences are applied to each individual case accordingly. Payment compliance is achieved in a number of ways, including: payment plans, proactive enforcement, and enhanced collection efforts.

On-going budgeted Programs and Services

- Court Appointed Counsel – expansion of contracts to include Advisory Council services in FY23
 - Plans to request increased funding for these services for FY25 (supplemental submitted)
 - Court is experiencing a significant increase in the CAA caseload, as it correlates to the increases in the Court misdemeanor caseload and legislative changes from Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 6.1, effective 01/01/2023.
- Language Services –services include remote interpreter services in addition to in-person
- Self Help Center
- Jury Management

- Security
- COJET training and other professional development of staff
- Implementation of electronic check-in system for all courtroom appearances
 - 'Receptionist' software being utilized
 - Defendant checks in for court using ipad in lobby or QR code from their personal device
 - Program tracks Court customer time spent in the facility for their case. Data is evaluated to monitor service levels and average wait time for a court service when appearing in a courtroom proceeding
 - Customer wait times for the courtroom was an area of improvement identified on the Court's last Operational Review conducted by the Arizona Supreme Court

Goodyear/Guadalupe Intergovernmental Agreement

Pursuant to the Intergovernmental Agreement entered by the Town of Guadalupe and the City of Goodyear, the Goodyear Municipal Court retains all financials receipted for delinquent cases outstanding from the Guadalupe Municipal Court. Total fines and fees receipted from Guadalupe Municipal Court in FY23: \$11,352.65. As anticipated when entering into this agreement, the processing of financial transactions creates minimal impact on Goodyear Court personnel and resources as the transactions are primarily automated and receipted directly into the Court database without Court staff needing to touch the case or case management system unless the balance is satisfied in full. The agreement was renewed in FY24, with a one-time payment from the Town of Guadalupe received in the amount of \$20,240.00 for the judicial services being performed by the Goodyear Municipal Court.

Court Enhancement Fund

Pursuant to Goodyear City Code Article 6-3-5(E) the City Court shall annually report the amount of money collected and expended during the reporting period and the progress made in Court enhancement.

- FY23 budgeted \$47,100 to supplement the cost of the Court Security Guard position
- FY23 revenue \$77,902.17 (111% of estimated revenue)

One-time Funding – Problem Solving Pilot Court

- The Court kicked-off the Problem-Solving Pilot Court meetings in late 2022. With the transition of the Presiding Judge incumbent, the pilot court project has been temporarily suspended. A request to continue use of the funding in FY25 has been input in the supplemental database by the Court.

Operating Highlights

The Goodyear Municipal Court holds jurisdiction over a limited variety of cases. The Municipal Judge presides over misdemeanor crimes and petty offenses committed within the City of Goodyear, including: civil traffic, criminal traffic, criminal misdemeanors, juvenile traffic, liquor violations, City code, protective orders and search warrants.

Charge Filing Stats

- FY23: 12,056
 - Misdemeanor Non-Traffic: 1,905
 - Domestic Violence: 681
 - DUI: 1,459
 - Criminal Traffic: 2,288
 - Civil Traffic: 4,801
 - Local Non-Criminal Ordinance: 608
 - Protective Orders: 314

Additional relevant filing data:

The Court has run comparative number for filings with other local courts and determined that the following statistics are of importance to address:

1. The Goodyear Municipal court has more DUI case filings than every other local west-valley Court. Even with the implementation of an expedited continuance practice for DUI matters, additional resources will be required to successfully gain compliance with Time Standards processing for DUI matters. These case types are the most time and resource-intensive for the Court. An increase in DUI Jury Trials has also been experienced in the Court, further resulting in additional court resource strain.

2. The Goodyear Municipal Court falls below the average court personnel per charge filing average, per data published on the statewide statistical website provided by the Arizona Supreme Court
3. The Goodyear Municipal Court has continued to exceed average filing rates, based upon the last 3-year charge filing averages (data ranges from 110% - 125% increase from month to month average).

Clearance Rate:

Measured by the number of cases terminated/completed compared to number of cases filed. This data is useful for Courts to analyze trends such as workload on existing staff and potential backlog. The Goodyear Court holds a high-performance standard for case processing and compliance policies, and Court staff are trained to operate at highly efficient levels.

- FY23: 102% (12,352 terminated cases)

Courtroom Activity:

180 Trials/Hearings held

Maximum capacity per docket established: 25 cases per criminal Arraignment with immediate Pre-Trial Conference proceeding

Contractual Goals Pursuant to Council Mandate:

(Goal 2: 'within one year, evaluate Court processes and efficiencies and automation and include findings and recommendations in first annual report)

The following represents the Presiding Judge's evaluations, recommendations, and implementation of changes since October 2023 to court processes, procedures, and efficiencies. Some changes have been implemented while others are in process or under consideration.

- Implementation of Administrative Order 2024-01 – through collaboration with the Goodyear City Prosecutor, the Presiding Judge has authorized the amendment of specific misdemeanor violations to a civil traffic classification. Qualifying cases will receive an expedited courtroom appearance, thus reducing the volume of court cases scheduled for criminal arraignment. This change addresses the feedback received from court personnel and Pro Tem Judges, that criminal arraignment dockets have

been burdensome and take excessive staffing resources to address. In addition, to further expedite the arraignment process and address a finding in the most recent Operational Review related to providing advisory to defendants appearing for Arraignment, Judge Delgado has implemented a general advisory, followed by an individual arraignment of any defendant who does not enter a plea at the arraignment stage.

- Through collaboration with the Goodyear City Prosecutor, the state will revise Plea Agreement language to address defaulted civil traffic offenses for cases that have previously non-complied with court appearances. This plea revision allows the Court to resolve all charges on a non-compliant case, without the need to address misdemeanor and civil charges separately in the courtroom.
- The States' (Prosecutor) plea agreement templates are being reviewed by Judge Delgado, in collaboration with the Prosecutor, with recommendation to revise the following plea agreement language:
 - o DV plea agreements – revision to appropriate DV fees/assessments
 - o DUI – 'sub I' language for ignition interlock requirements
- Discussions with the Prosecutor to potentially create a 'Spanish-language' docket with scheduling of an in-person interpreter. Use of telephonic interpreters is not always the most viable option, and scheduling of various in-person interpreters is also very impactful on the Court budget. Discussion is ongoing.
- Collaboration with the City Prosecutor to request their submission of a standing motion to allow Court personnel to vacate/dismiss a PTR for financial obligations if the defendant establishes a valid payment contract or satisfies the balance in full. This reduces cases proceeding to Probation Hearing which requires the appearance of the Prosecutor and Judicial Review.
- Revision to court appearances requiring mandatory fingerprinting referrals to the Police Department. If a defendant requires printing, the Court will no longer reset the case immediately, but rather will allow the defendant to proceed with speaking with a Prosecutor. If a plea is reached, the Court will take the defendant's plea and defer sentencing. A mandatory print order will then be issued for same-day printing. If the Defendant can complete printing prior to conclusion of the docket the court will sentence the defendant.
- Jury Trial Management Conferences: scheduling of multiple cases for Jury Trial Management prior to determining a jury trial date. Under the previous process individual cases were set in conjunction with a predetermined jury date, thus

minimizing the adjudication of potential jury trials. The new scheduling process is more efficient and saves judicial resources. The City Prosecutor has indicated that they will be withdrawing plea offers at the time defendants set a case to jury trial. This will promote an earlier settlement but may also have the initial effect of conducting additional jury trials. The Prosecutor has indicated their desire to adopt a similar approach of setting multiple non-jury trials to one calendar. This approach is a more efficient use of courtroom and judicial resources.

- Revision of Judicial Sentencing & Order forms for courtroom proceedings to create a clear and concise sentencing document. The previous Judicial Sentencing Order did not mirror the conditions/ requirements in the plea agreement. Additionally, the court is currently testing the use of automated forms to replace handwritten documents in the courtroom.
- Revision of Post-Conviction advisories in courtroom proceedings to be compliant with legislative requirements. Some of the previous advisories did not reflect the current legislative requirements. Changes are ongoing.
- Creation and implementation of Teacher Conviction Reporting form (mandated by statute, not previously in use).
- Revision to Diversion case processing practices, elimination of imposition of Time Payment fee when Diversion fee is not paid at the time of plea. The previous process was improper.
- Address jail reimbursement fees and standardize the imposition of fees as required by best practice. Process is ongoing.
- Revision to parking violation compliance – issuance of notice of summons when failure to appear results on citations ‘posted’ by law enforcement/code compliance. Allows the defendant and additional opportunity to address the complaint prior to entry of default by the Court. This process ensures defendants had notice prior to a default judgement entered.
- Modification of Fine Schedule – encourage defendant compliance with violations with no imposition of a fine or fee with appropriate proof submitted to the Court. This will apply to a limited number of violations.
- Impose Court Appointed Attorney fees towards reimbursement of attorney fees expended by the Court. Contribution by the defendant is determined based on the defendant’s financial ability.
- Revision to Protective Order cover sheet to clarify Judicial Order – creates a cleaner set of instructions for courtroom team to prepare a final Protective Order. Modify

revision practices to not require a plaintiff to return to AZPoint when a petition is being submitted.

- Revision to Failure to Appear practices to include immediate Judicial review of a file by the assigned judge, at the conclusion of the docket. Previous practice involved routing the file to a Judicial inbox for processing by the next business day.
- Discussion with the City Prosecutor about future implementation of a virtual court. The idea is being built-upon and will likely begin with cases that are out of Maricopa County, Out of State, or a defendant with a qualifying circumstance that would not allow for an in-person appearance. Future changes in practice will be reflected by Administrative Order, for any changes that may impact the current AO in place for remote appearances. Discussions are ongoing.
- Walk-ins allowed from 08:30 am – 4:30 pm, 5 days per week
 - o Addition of a scheduled Pro Tem judge every Friday from 9 am – 1 pm, to ensure courtroom operations are maintained while the Presiding Judge attends mandatory meetings.
- Proposed revision to Administrative Order for adjudication of civil offenses by non-judicial staff. Ongoing.
- Acceptance of Defense Driving School completions, outside of the deadline to complete. Late completions are now to be routed for Judicial Review. Implementation awaiting change in procedures.
- Change in court phone recording for telephone customer service to reflect legislative changes. Ongoing.

Automation

- Proposal to seek funding for a 'bar scanning system' for filing and locating of files. This would involve hardware and cost and may be sought in the supplemental submitted for FY25 related to the Presiding Judge goals.
- As detailed above regarding courtroom form revisions – pursuing use of computer-generated courtroom forms to replace handwritten form processes. This automation change would require additional technology such as fingerprint and signature pads.

Further Recommendations

- Continue to evaluate the excessive number of DUI filings. Including the potential need of additional resources to manage case load.
- Reevaluate current calendar to maximize adjudication of cases.

Operational & Financial Reviews

The Goodyear Municipal Court underwent an Operational Review, as recommended by the Administrative Office of the Courts, in December of 2021. Courts regularly undergo these reviews every 7 years. The Court received a final report and recommendations in early 2022 and have established an action plan to address the recommended modifications to Court operations. Judge Delgado has evaluated the Operational Review and action plan and taken further steps to implement courtroom operational improvements to ensure the highest level of compliance with all Court Rules, mandates and best practices. Those steps have been outlined in the previous section.

Innovation, Efficiencies & Projects

The following innovations are to be recognized during FY23:

- DocuSign for misdemeanor 'plea by mail' practices
 - Successful defendant participation and compliance, replacing the previous 'plea by mail' process
 - Increase in activity and demand will require additional staffing resources in order to maintain these valuable remote Court processes
- Misdemeanor Records Destruction
 - Purging project for staff, purging misdemeanor cases which have met retention and recycling case file supplies. This project is also eliminating case file records in order to clear out the court Records library in anticipation of the temporary facility improvements scheduled for March 2024
- Receptionist software
 - Innovative courtroom check-in procedure which allows for data tracking for customer service times
 - Access shared to allow City Prosecutor and Court Appointed Counsel the ability to monitor defendant appearances. Eliminates the manual process of relaying appearance information and creates an operational efficiency for the case processing division

Looking Ahead

The Goodyear Municipal Court intends to accomplish a number of future goals, which support Judicial Branch priorities in the State of Arizona as well as priorities specific to this Court. The following future goals and projects have been identified as a priority to the Court, to aid in achieving a high level of service to our customers.

- Strategic, Operational, Security, Technology & Emergency plans
 - Continue efforts to identify and develop meaningful performance measures and opportunities to utilize technology to streamline processes by collaborating with other Courts
 - Renovate and replace Courtroom #1 audio-visual system, including a 'Teams' compatible software system for a dedicated virtual courtroom platform
 - Time Standards compliance
 - Specific changes have been implemented to address the deficient Time Standards for DUI cases
 - Court will continue to address the challenges and explore the potential need for additional resources to manage the Time Standards
 - Continue to evaluate Court processes and procedures to ensure they are relevant, compliant and trained to all existing Court personnel (Goal #2)
- Increased opportunity to expand judicial services and information within the community (continued participation in mentoring, committees, and boards)
- Collaboration & Culture (Goal #3)
 - Q12 action planning
 - Two annual team retreats
 - Monthly meetings for all divisions
 - Team-lead projects
 - Strengths-based culture and approach to problem-solving
- Power DMS – convert policies and procedures into online database for staff access and consistent application
- Court Programs (Goal #4)
 - Problem Solving Community Court/Specialty case processing
 - Expanded use of DocuSign for civil traffic documents and processes

- Fair Justice Task Force Initiatives
- Delay Reduction & Best Practices
 - Telephone customer service – improve customer wait times and service levels (related Supplemental position FY25)
 - DPS auditing and reporting (related Supplemental position FY25)
- Innovation & technology (Goal #1 & #2)
 - Expanded use of scanners in documenting court records
 - Expansion of video appearance to include in-custody/misdemeanor case types
 - Refresh Court website content and encourage expanded usage by court customers
 - Automation of courtroom forms
 - Fingerprint & signature pads

Presiding Judge Goals

Goal 1:

Evaluate and make recommendations as to virtual court enhancements and processes

Goal 2:

Within one year, evaluate court processes and efficiencies and automation and include findings and recommendations in first annual report.

Goal 3:

Within one year, initiate planning and participation by the Municipal Court in the City's Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement initiative.

Goal 4:

Prior to the second Annual Report to City Council, evaluate and make recommendations to the City Council regarding the creation of specialized courts.