

TUCSON CITY COURT ANNUAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



FISCAL YEAR 2014

JULY 1, 2013 – JUNE 30, 2014

KEY SERVICES

The Tucson City Court is a limited jurisdiction court responsible for processing misdemeanors, criminal traffic, civil traffic, parking and Tucson City Code violations, issuance of Orders of Protection/Injunctions against Harassment and issuing search warrants within the City's jurisdiction. Tucson City Court is the second largest municipal court in Arizona for both the number of charges filed and the amount of revenue collected.

FY14 QUICK FACTS

Charges Filed	241,983
Petitions Filed (Order of Protection and Injunctions against Harassment)	2,173
Visitors to the Court Building	419,514
Customer Service Center Calls Answered	71,133
Total Revenue	\$26,985,110

In FY14 the Court conducted a total of 131,347 trials and hearings which is a 41% increase in the number of hearings held. As seen in the chart below the greatest increases were in arraignment, civil traffic and change of plea hearings.

TRIALS AND HEARINGS HELD

Type of Trial/Hearing	FY14	FY13
Bench Trial	434	465
Jury Trials	166	147
Civil Traffic Hearings	2,798	2,013
Pretrial Hearings	2,119	2,163
Change of Plea Hearings	18,919	16,552
Arraignment Hearings	106,026	70,660
Mental Health	15,541	12,551
Non Mental Health	90,485	58,109
Sentencing Hearings	220	134
Misc. Civil Hearings	665	572
TOTAL Trials/Hearings Held	131,347	92,706

TUCSON CITY COURT MISSION STATEMENT

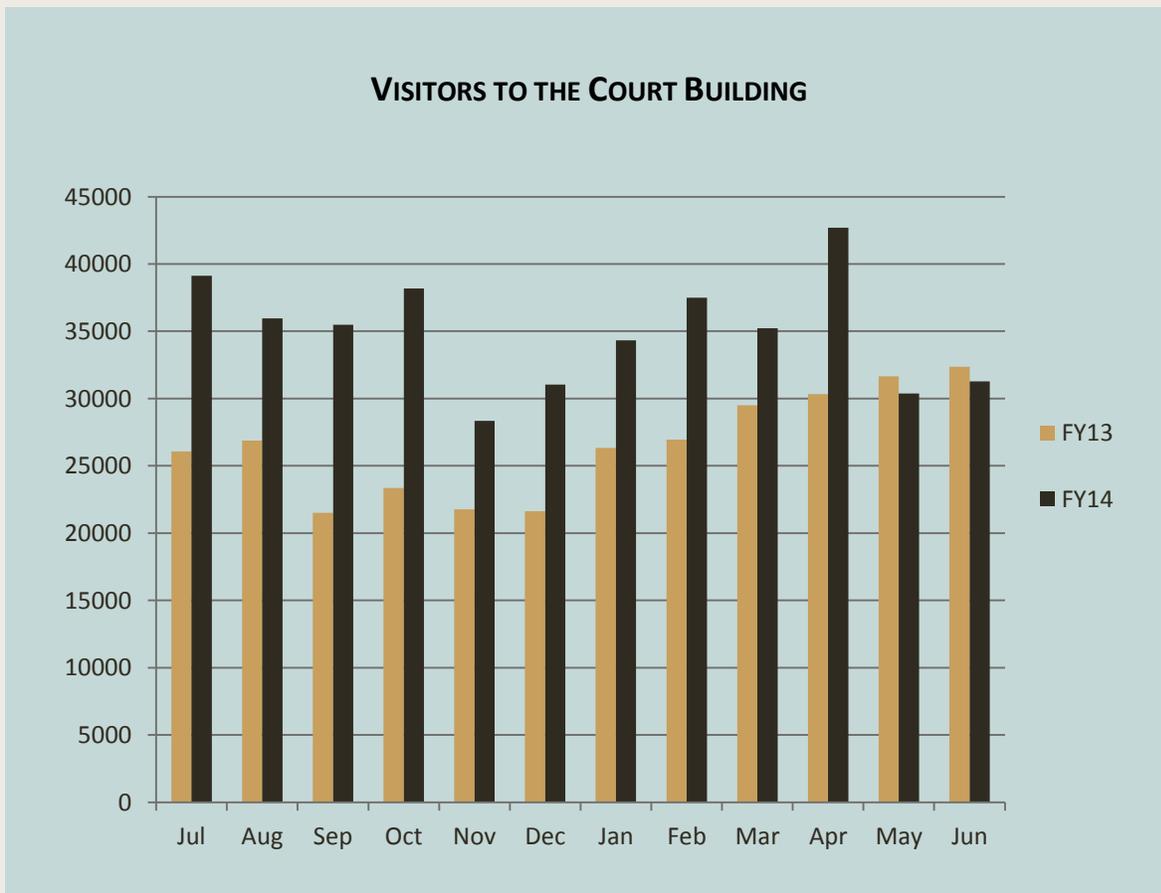
**TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND
PROTECT INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS BY
PROVIDING PROMPT AND FAIR
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**

VISITORS TO THE COURT IN FISCAL YEAR 2014

In FY14 the Court had 419,514 visitors come through its doors, a 32% increase in the number of visitors from FY13. Roughly 41% or 172,000 of the visitors to the court sought services in the customer service lobby.

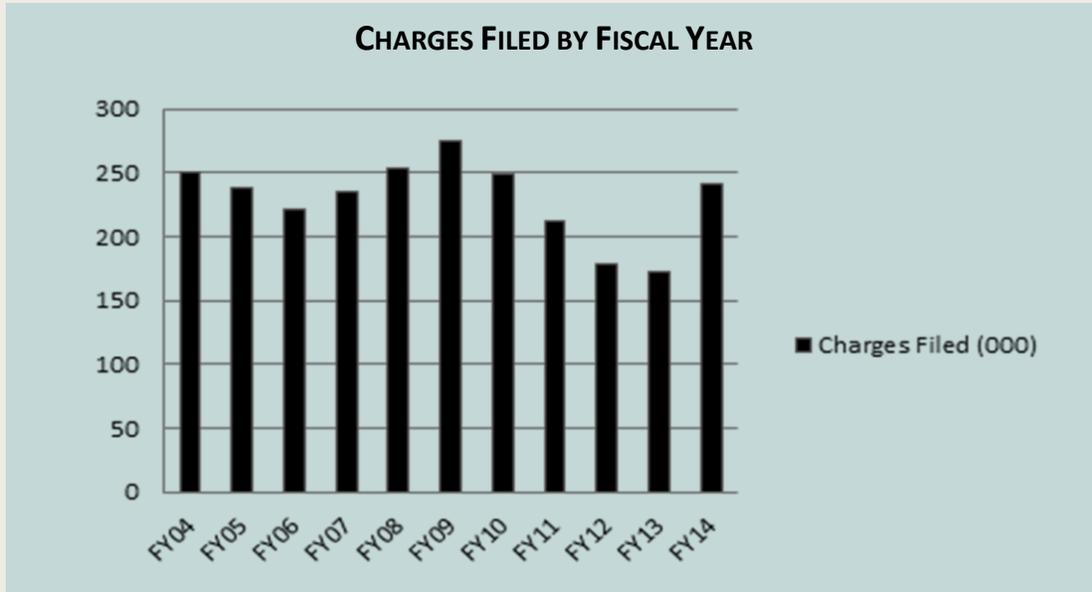
In FY14 the total number of visitors to the court building increased by 31% from FY13. The Court's staff remained constant at 136 employees: 12 Judicial Officers, 2 grant funded employees and 122 administrative staff serving in a wide variety of functions. Approximately 8,431 additional people were accessing court services each month in FY14 than in FY13. In Fiscal Year 2014 the court averaged 35,000 visitors per month or about 420,000 visitors in the fiscal year as compared to 26,500 per month and a total of 318,332 visitors in FY13.

The Court has been working to improve access to court services through our website, see page 13. Our goal is to create a website that will allow individuals to access nearly all court services so that they need only come to the court building when a personal appearance is absolutely required.



FISCAL YEAR 2014 WORKLOAD

After several years of declining workload, the Court experienced a significant increase in the number of charges filed starting in the second half of FY13 and the trend continued throughout FY14. The increase was so substantial that we processed only 3,879 charges less than the largest volume court in the state; Phoenix Municipal Court which had 245,862 charges filed while Tucson City Court had 241,983 charges filed. The most significant increase in charges filed was in the number of civil traffic charges which increased 49% from FY13. This impacted the customer service lobby, phone room and mail processing along with every other aspect of court operations.

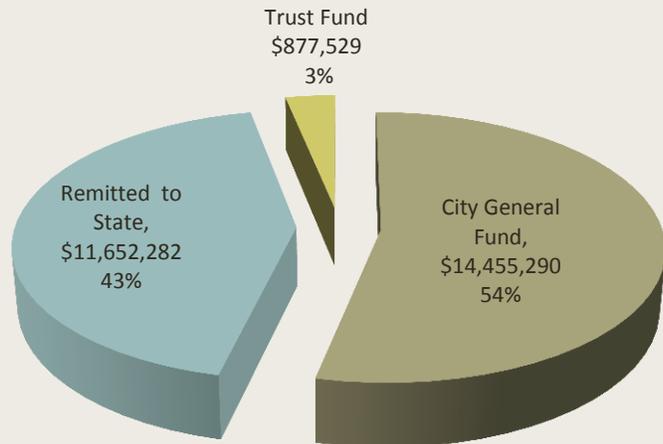


FY14 CHARGES FILED

Type of Charge	Filed in FY14	Percentage
Civil Traffic	146,266	60%
Photo Enforcement Violations	34,792	14%
Non-Photo Enforcement Violations	111,474	46%
Criminal Traffic	9,860	4%
DUI	5,694	2%
Misdemeanors	51,365	21%
Parking	25,790	11%
Civil Ordinance Violations	3,008	1%
Petitions for Orders of Protection	1,263	1%
Petitions for Injunctions Against Harassment	910	
Total	244,156	100%

ENFORCEMENT OF COURT ORDERED SANCTIONS REVENUE DISTRIBUTION

One of the main functions of the Court is to enforce court orders. As a result of enforcing these orders, revenue is generated from collecting fines and fees. In FY14 the Court collected a total of \$26,985,113 with \$14,455,290 remitted to the City of Tucson, \$11,652,282 remitted to the State of Arizona/other governments and \$877,529 in various trust accounts (bonds and restitution).



TYPICAL FINE DISTRIBUTION

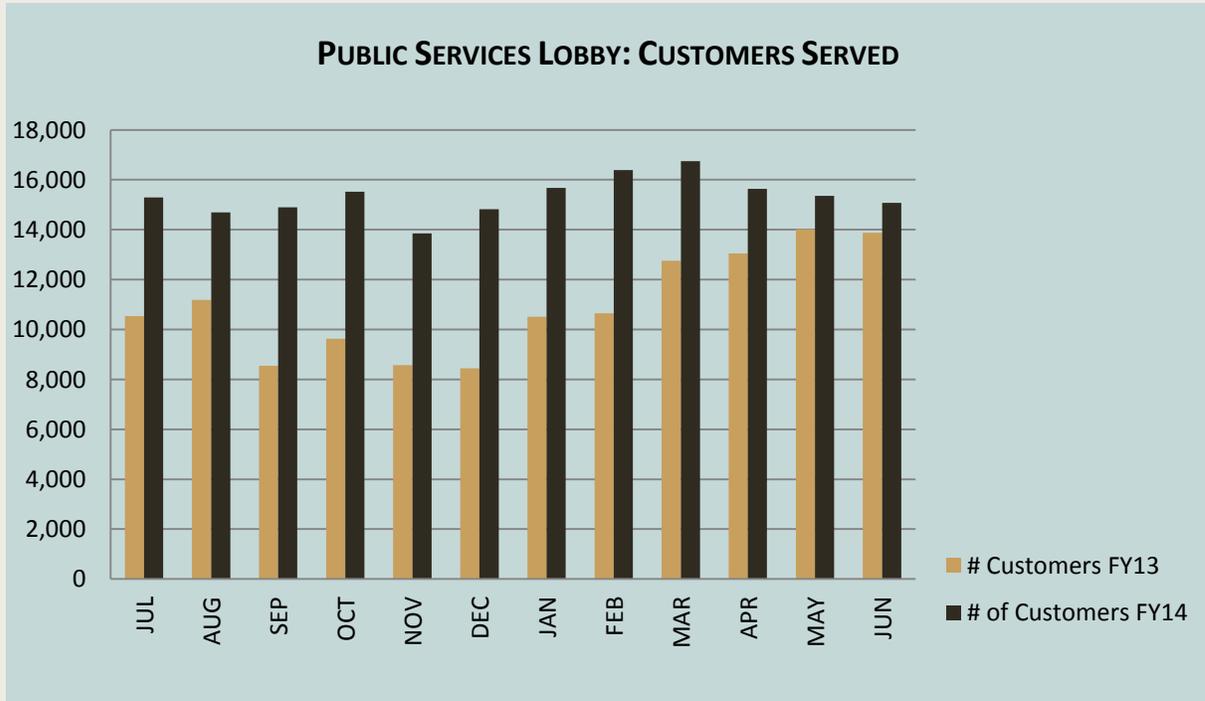
When a fine is paid, various amounts are distributed to state and local governments or agencies as required by law. Although many consider the total fine amount to be excessively high, the City of Tucson may not receive the majority of the total fine paid. The State of Arizona imposes an 83% surcharge, \$20 probation fee and a \$13 special assessment for law enforcement officer safety equipment on every fine, penalty, and forfeiture imposed and collected by the courts for: criminal offenses, civil penalties for violations of motor vehicle statutes, violation of local ordinances and violation of game and fish statutes in Title 17. Note: The \$20 probation assessment is NOT assessed on violations of local parking.

FY14 FINE DISTRIBUTION FOR FAILURE TO STOP AT A RED LIGHT (ARS 28-645A3A)

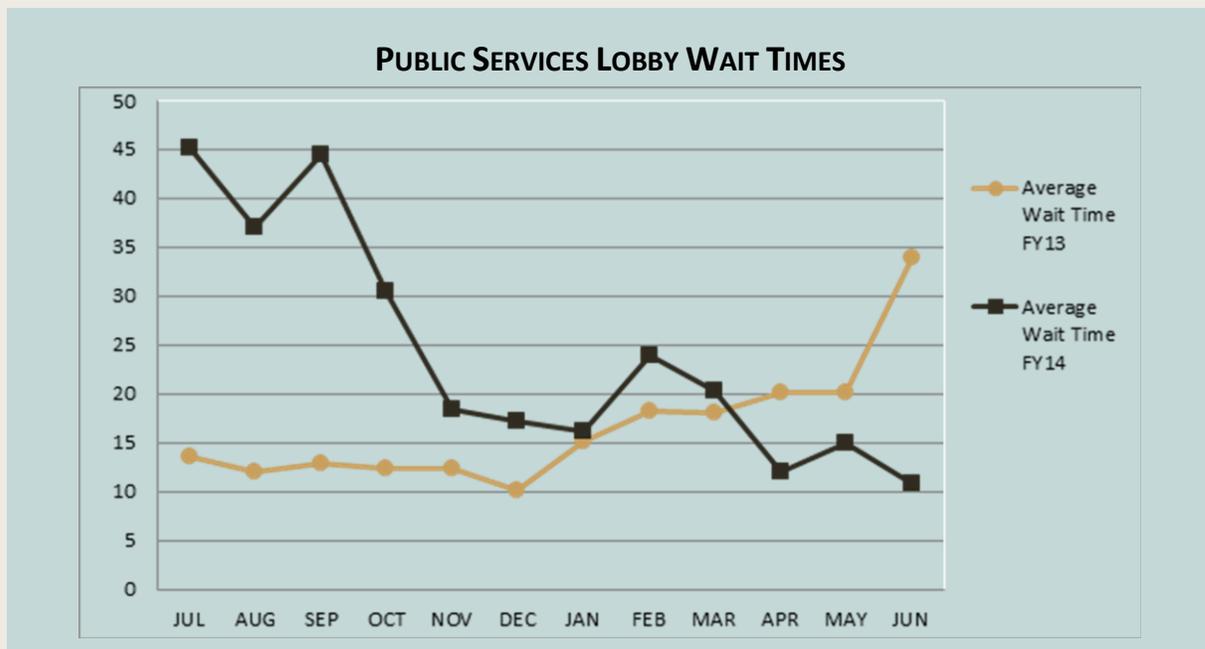
	\$ Amount	% of Fine
Base Fine (City)	\$145.03	43.29%
Case Processing Fee (City)	20.00	5.97%
83% State Surcharge on Base Fine	120.37	35.93%
83% State Surcharge on Case Processing Fee	16.60	4.96%
State Probation Fee	20.00	5.97%
\$13 Special Assessment – Law Enforcement Safety Equipment		
State	8.00	2.39%
City	4.00	1.19%
County	1.00	0.30%
TOTAL	\$335.00	100.00%

CUSTOMER SERVICE LOBBY: CUSTOMERS SERVED

Public Services staff strive to assist the public in a timely and efficient manner. In FY14, the 37 employees of the Customer Services Division served 183,955 customers with an average wait time of 24:32 minutes and customer service transaction time of approximately 5.7 minutes.

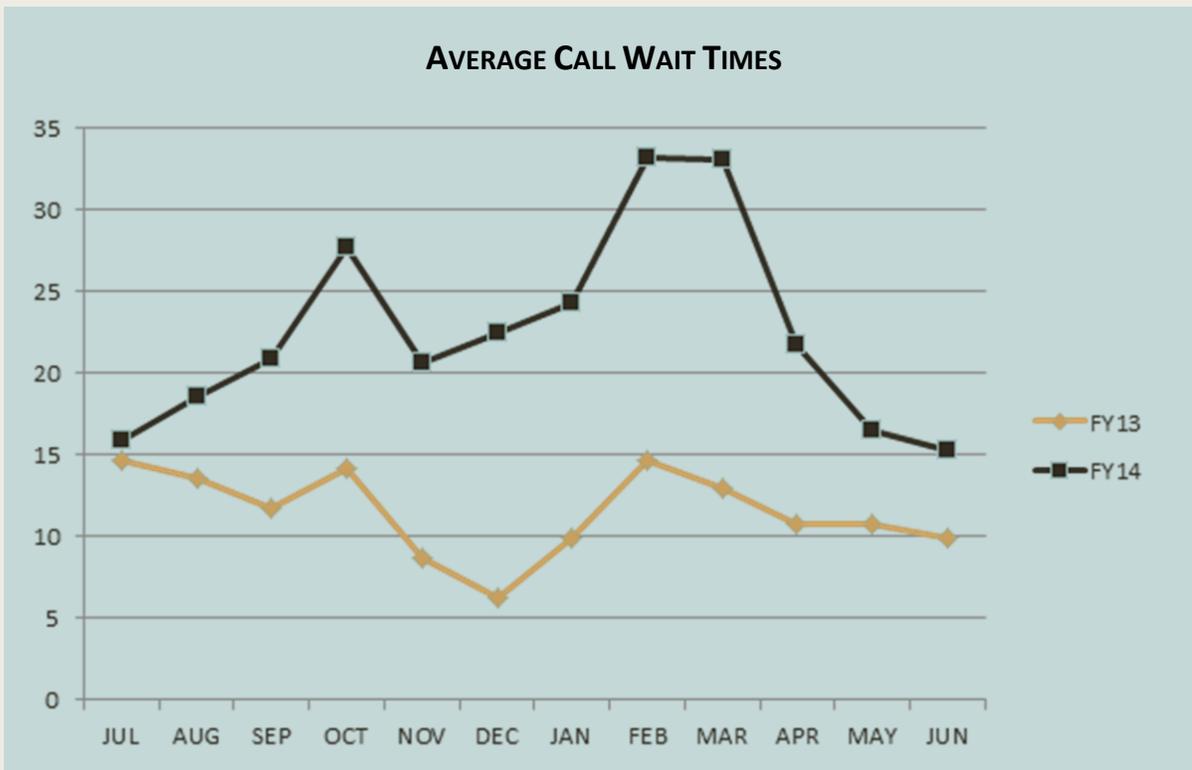
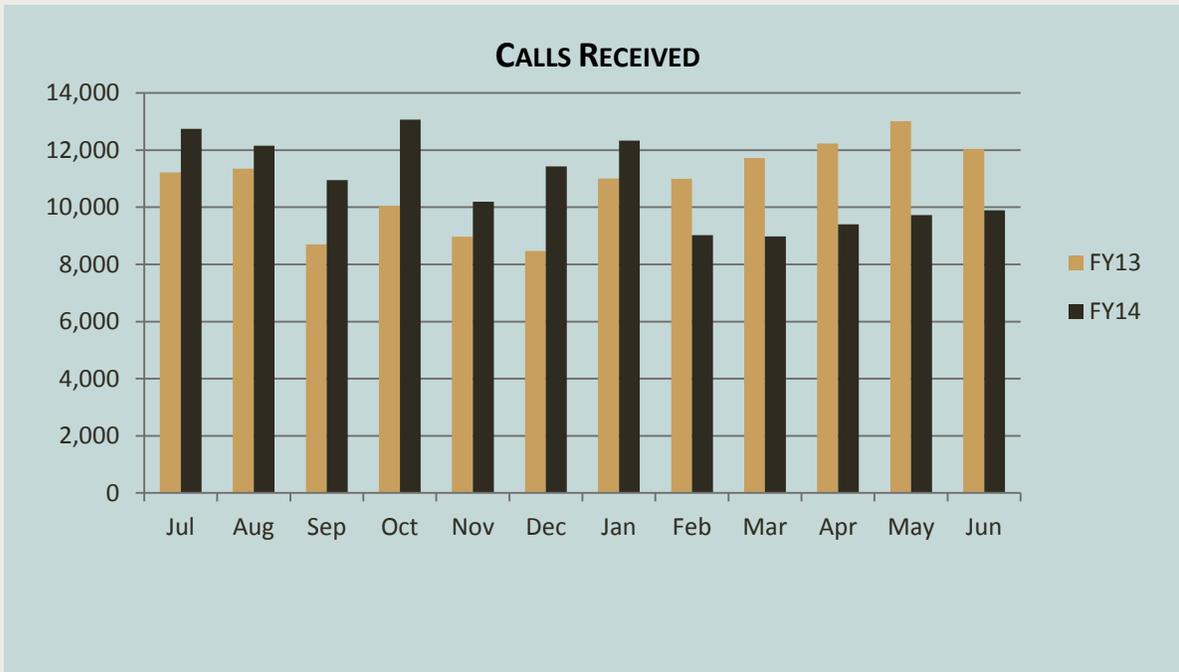


The decrease in wait times was a result of the Public Services Division being fully staffed from September through June. The Court experiences high turnover in employees who leave for higher paying positions in either the public or private sectors.



CUSTOMER CALL CENTER (PHONE ROOM)

The Court is working to improve the ability to process telephone calls in the customer call center. Many of the services available through the call center can be accessed on the website at <http://courts.tucsonaz.gov/courts>.

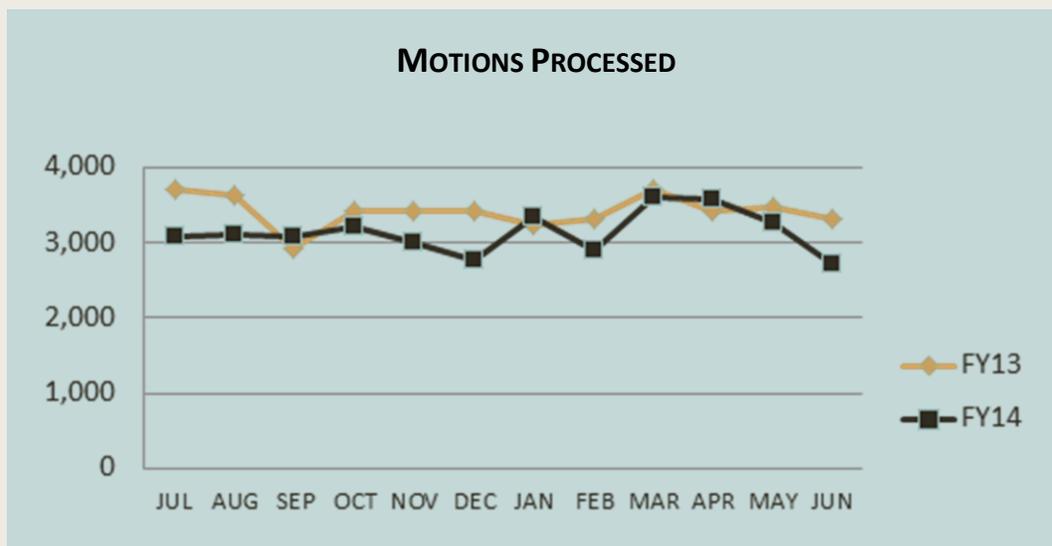
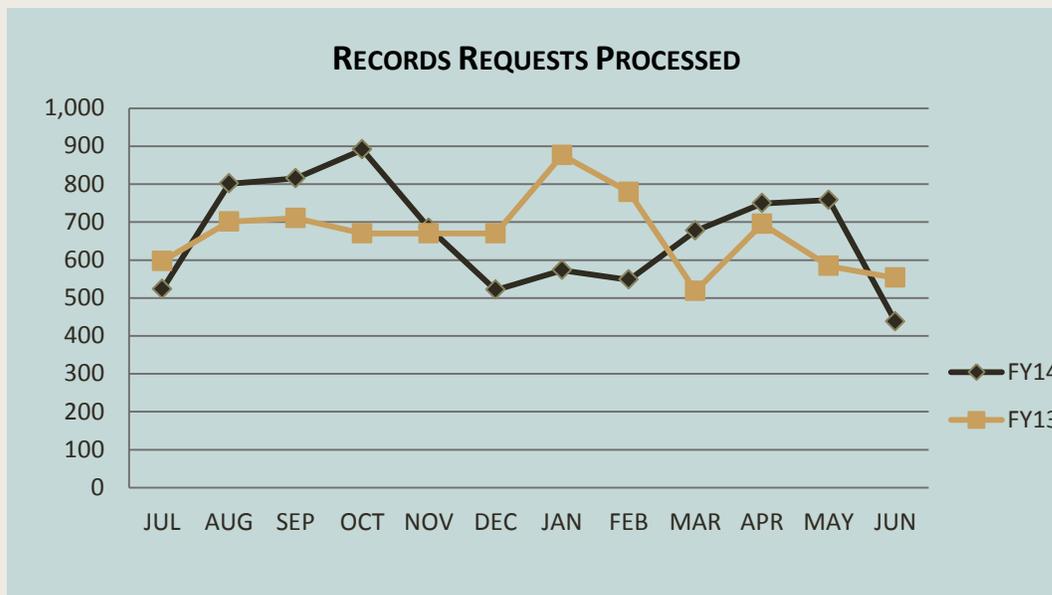


COURT SERVICES (BEHIND THE SCENES)

Court Services is a smaller division of the Court and consists of 21 full time employees. This division is responsible for several “behind the scenes” job duties such as: processing record requests, motions, set asides, transfers, preparing hard copy case files, processing appeals, monitoring electronic citation programs (including photo enforcement), delivering case files to all divisions of the court, scanning court documents into the Electronic Document Management System, and lastly, but not least, managing approximately 500,000 pending hard copy case files.

Examples of the high volume of work performed by this division are:

- Processes approximately 3,143 motions per month
- Processes 665 Record Requests per month
- Files approximately 17,000 case files per month.



JAIL BOARD REDUCTION EFFORTS

A major expense of the City of Tucson is jail board, the cost of keeping people in jail as a result of being arrested or being sentenced to confinement as a result of being convicted on a criminal charge. There are mandatory sentences involving incarceration required by Arizona Revised Statutes and City of Tucson's code that must be met. However, the Tucson City Court provides several programs to reduce and control jail board costs which seem to be increasing each year. The programs we have are:

ALTERNATIVE TO JAIL PROGRAM

The ATJ program bypasses the Pima County Jail by bringing defendants arrested for specific violations, with or without warrants, directly to Tucson City Court, or by video link from police substations, for their initial appearance. Conducting the initial appearance at Tucson City Court eliminates the expense associated with booking the defendant into the Pima County Jail where they would normally have their initial appearance while in custody. Defendants meeting the following criteria are eligible for the ATJ Program:

- An active warrant issued by Tucson City Court.
- Initial charge on non-victim criminal cases such as Drinking in Public (DIP), Urinating in Public (UIP), City park charges, shop lifting charges under \$250, soliciting in median, and other non-victim cases.

The ATJ is composed of two programs, Daytime ATJ (DATJ) sessions and Evening ATJ (EATJ) sessions. The DATJ operates Monday through Friday during normal court hours and the EATJ operates in the evening seven days per week from 5:00 – 9:00 PM.

REIMBURSEMENT OF JAIL BOARD COSTS

The City Prosecutor seeks to recover the first day jail board costs (and in some cases subsequent day jail costs) in plea offers to defendants. Acceptance of the plea offer requires the defendant to pay the court any cost recovery of jail board stated in the plea. Additionally, the judges are to assess jail board costs and may then waive them due to indigence or undue economic hardship. Similarly, defendants who enroll in diversion programs are required to pay the first day jail board as a condition of successful completion of diversion. These practices have significantly increased the recovery of jail board costs by approximately \$12,500 per month.

VIDEO REVIEWS

The Court has a courtroom with a video link to the Pima County Jail which allows us to conduct a review hearing with defendants regarding their in-custody status at approximately 4 – 5 days instead of at 10 days which had been the previous practice. Since the review hearing is conducted by video there are no costs for transporting prisoners to the court.

Video review enables the Court to set conditions of release or process other offers resulting in the release of defendants from custody. Defendants are seen by video review at 4.5 days instead of a review hearing conducted at 10 days. Most defendants are seen and released at their video review hearing at 4.5 days, generating a savings of 5.5 jail days (roughly \$440 per inmate).

COMMUNITY RESTITUTION (COMMUNITY SERVICE)

As an alternative to fines the Court may assess community restitution in cases where paying the fine would cause an undue economic hardship on a defendant or where the defendant is determined to be indigent. In FY14 defendants completed a total of 39,706 hours of community restitution valued at \$397,060. Community restitution or Community Service is valued at \$10 per hour.

CLEARANCE RATES

Clearance rates measure whether a court's caseload is expanding (increasing) or contracting (decreasing). It is obtained by dividing the number of charges or cases terminated (closed) by the number of charges or cases filed. The goal is a clearance rate of 100%. In FY14 the court's criminal charge clearance rate was 159% and the civil charge clearance rate was 106%. A court is able to have a clearance rate higher than 100% when there is a backlog of charges from previous years and those charges are disposed within the current year.

PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES VETERANS TREATMENT COURT (RMVTC)

The goal of the RMVTC is to prevent veterans from falling into a life of crime by engaging them in rehabilitation. Veterans who elect to participate in the rehabilitative program will be evaluated for eligibility by the Southern Arizona Veterans Administration Health Care System (SAVAHCS). Working with various SAVAHCS health care and social work professionals, a treatment plan is developed for the veteran. All information regarding medical, alcohol or drug use or treatment is sealed and kept confidential. The progress of the veteran's treatment plan is reviewed and monitored at least monthly in the Veterans Court session at Tucson City Court. The treatment coordinator from the Veterans Administration attends the Veterans Court sessions.

At the completion of their treatment plan, if the veteran has not reoffended, the charges will be dismissed. If a veteran reoffends while in the program, all charges will be reinstated and the veteran is assigned to a regular court. Some of the benefits of the program are:

- No incarceration at the time of arrest if accepted into Veterans Court. Old pending "cases" are resolved based on participation in the program.

- Veterans are no longer engaged in the lifestyle that created these types of charges.
- Veterans with mental health and/or substance abuse problems become actively involved and compliant with their VA treatment and case manager. Most importantly, treatment is provided at no cost to either the veteran or the City of Tucson.
- The program benefits the jail by providing reduced costs for housing inmates, creating space for serious offenders and reduced expenditures for medical and psychological treatment.

MENTAL HEALTH COURT

Mental Health Court (MHC) significantly reduces the number of jail days for each defendant through careful management and supervision of Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) defendants. The MHC conducts video reviews twice a week and produces cost savings by releasing defendants if appropriate at approximately four to five days rather than 10 days. Average savings per defendant should be approximately \$260. The number of MHC defendants seen at video reviews is approximately 13 per week; the estimated annual savings is \$175,750.

The MHC has a significant impact on the community by the careful management of MHC defendants and requiring them to take appropriate medications and keeping them in contact with various social agencies that provide support and assistance. In theory, these actions result in reduced calls for Tucson Police and Fire Department assistance, reduce recidivism and additional arrests which result in additional jail board costs to the City.

DEDICATED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT

The Dedicated Domestic Violence Court has changed the way serious cases of domestic violence are treated in Tucson City Court. Cases begin with an arraignment where an advocate is available to every victim, and review hearings ascertain compliance with the Court's sentencing orders. These changes have resulted in a coordinated community response involving prosecutors, public defenders, probation officers, treatment providers, victim advocates, and interpreters. These relationships have provided a stronger, more cohesive community response to the issue of domestic violence and have established Tucson City Court as a place where families and children can have a voice in their own future and safety.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY14

CUSTOMER SERVICES LOBBY

The Customer Services Lobby furniture was replaced as were the fabric panels on the systems furniture. The objective was to create a safe, comfortable environment that was easier to clean and maintain.

BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER



DATA CLEAN-UP PROJECT

In FY15 the Tucson City Court will be preparing for the deployment of a new case management system known as (LJ AJACS). This will be the single most important project the Court has undertaken in the last 15 years and appropriate resources must be dedicated to ensure the successful planning, preparation and execution of this project. The first phase of this plan is the Data Clean-up and Preparation of the current case management system, AZTEC, data for migration to LJ AJACS. This phase has been underway for approximately two years. In FY14 the focus was on cases in which the defendant had not shown proof of counseling, proof of alcohol screenings, proof of Victim Impact Panel class, etc. The team reviewed 3,308 files and took the following action: 1) Updated those cases in which the proof had been shown and was in the file but not updated appropriately, 2) scheduled Order to Show Cause (OSC) hearings for those cases in which the proof was outstanding. 2,432 cases were scheduled for an OSC hearing and 2,246 cases were updated (including warrants issued for those defendants that failed to appear).

UPGRADE OF DIGITAL AUDIO RECORDING SYSTEM

The Court upgraded the digital audio recording system utilizing court restricted funds.

COMPUTER REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The Court has replaced nearly 240 computers as they were approaching five years in service and many had Windows XP operating systems. Replacement of these computers helps to mitigate the security risks from hackers, protect the Court and City's networks and reduce maintenance calls. Replacement of these computers was accomplished using court restricted funds.

BUILDING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

For financial reasons the court will not be moving to the Consolidated Justice Court building. The court will remain in its current building for the next 10 to 15 years. The City is providing \$3.8 million to address immediate needs as detailed in a comprehensive building assessment study. The assessment and pre-design planning were accomplished in FY14 with design and construction beginning in FY15 and with completion in FY17. The goal of this project is to extend the life of the court building and improve functionality.

ELEVATOR UPGRADES

In FY14, a renovation (rebuild) of the Court's three elevators was completed at a cost of \$750,000. This brought the elevators into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act and improved overall safety and functioning of the elevators.

WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS

Many people come to the court to access court services or obtain information when they could get the same information or access those services on the Court's website. On the website you can:

MAKE PAYMENTS:

- Pay fines in full.
- Make payments on a payment plan, partial payments were added in 2009. **Initial payment plan needs to be set at Court so signature can be obtained as it is needed for collections and enforcement if payment plan is not followed.*
- Make payments if assigned to the Fines Fees and Restitution Enforcement Program (FARE). **Payments to FARE on this website do not remove it from collections unless/until paid in full.*

PRINT OUT FORMS FOR:

- Order of Protection and Injunction against Harassment.
- Pro Se Motion/Civil Motions for a variety of issues including continuances.
- Request a Civil Traffic hearing.
- Request a Civil Traffic Hearing in Absentia.
- Request a Parking Hearing.
- Civil Traffic Bond Card, link to bond card is:
http://courts.tucsonaz.gov/files/courts/BondCardEng_03_2014.pdf
Spanish bond card is posted as well.

THROUGH THE WEBSITE YOU CAN:

- Research case and defendant information from the Court's database, to include amount owed.
- Link to the Arizona Supreme Court's public access database for cases/defendant information from courts that send data to their data warehouse (not all courts do).
- Retrieve information regarding court dates for defendants.
- Submit a records request/review request by email – will soon be automated with workflow on the website.
- Register for Defensive Driving School – through the link to the Arizona Supreme Court's website.
- Review Frequently asked Questions (FAQ) section.
- Retrieve information for a wide variety of services including but not limited to:
 - Home Detention
 - Jury service
 - Problem Solving Courts (DV, Mental Health, Veterans and Homeless Court)
 - Orders of Protection
 - Traffic Ticket Enforcement Program (TTEAP)
 - FARE Program