

Harris County, Texas

Summary Report: Felony and Misdemeanor Cases Criminal Courts at Law



Project Overview

The goal of the ECCM project is to discover, document, and disseminate effective criminal case management practices in state trial courts to help reduce delay and cost and improve the quality of justice. More than 90 courts are participating. Case-level information from the most recent 12-month period available was collected from each court for disposed felony and/or misdemeanor cases.

Case Types

Cases were classified into a set of case types determined by the most serious charge at filing. In order of severity, the case types are:

- Homicide (e.g., murder, manslaughter)
- Person offense (e.g., assault, robbery)
- Property offense (e.g., burglary, larceny)
- Drugs (e.g., manufacture, sale, use)
- Weapons (e.g., illegal possession)
- Driving While Intoxicated (e.g., DUI)
- Other motor vehicle (e.g., reckless driving)
- Legal process (e.g., bail, probation violation)
- Public order (e.g., disorderly conduct, vagrancy)
- Other felony/other misdemeanor

Case Counting Rules

A case is defined as a single defendant and all charges arising from a single incident. The data set includes a single record for each case. For cases involving multiple charges against a single defendant, the data was condensed to produce a single record based on the most serious charge at filing and disposition.

Active Time to Disposition

The recommended measure of case processing time excludes those time periods over the life of a case where the case is out of court control and no progress can be made (inactive time). For criminal cases this typically arises when a defendant fails to appear in court. When possible, we show active time to disposition, calculated by subtracting the inactive time from the total case processing time.

Harris Court Description

Population of County (2015): 4,538,028

Population Rank: 3rd largest by population of the 3,142 U.S. counties

Type of Court & Data Available: Two-tier/LJ: misdemeanor data only

Judge Selection: Partisan election

Measuring Case Processing Time using the National Model Time Standards

Felonies

- 90% within 180 days
- 98% within 365 days

Misdemeanors

- 90% within 90 days
- 98% within 180 days

Time standards set expectations for timely case processing and provide a benchmark for assessing court performance. The **National Model Time Standards** (NCSC, 2011) for felony and misdemeanor cases are used here to provide time goals for resolving 90% and 98% of cases. In addition, the *mean* (average) and *median* (midpoint) days to disposition give insight into the more typical time taken to resolve cases. The *overall mean* for all ECCM sites is also included for comparison. When the % of cases within 90/180/365 days are the same, only one value is shown.

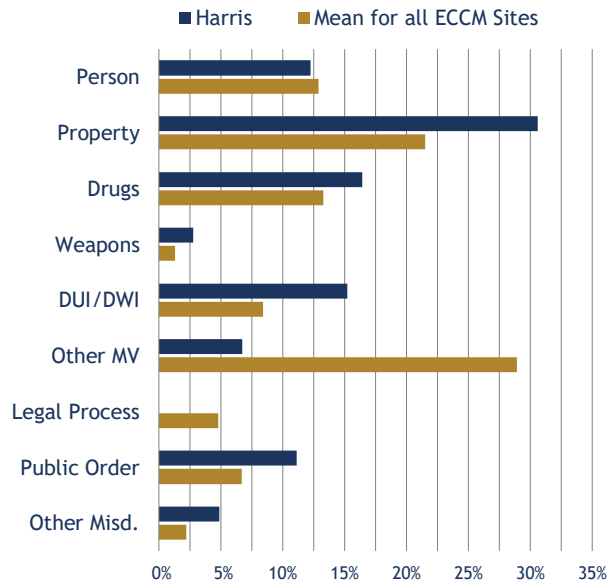
Harris County, Texas

Criminal Courts at Law - Misdemeanor Cases

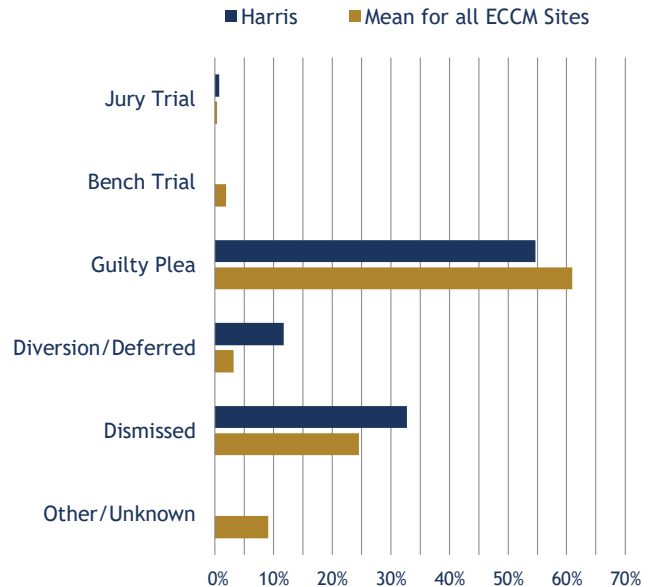
Total Misdemeanor Cases: 63,887



Caseload Composition



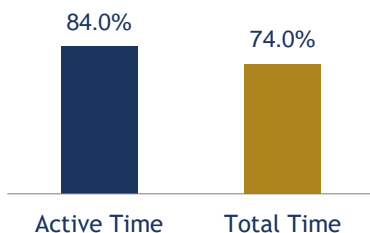
Manner of Disposition



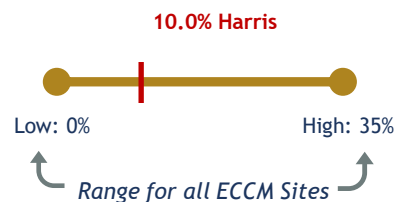
Active Time from Filing to Disposition All ECCM Sites in Texas

County/Site	Total Cases	% within 90 days	% within 180 days	Mean # of days	Median # of days
Harris	63,887	60%	84%	96	57
Travis	24,515	27%	41%	297	232
Mean for all ECCM Sites	12,186	52%	75%	158	91

% Disposed within 180 Days Active Time vs. Total Time



% Difference between Active and Total Time



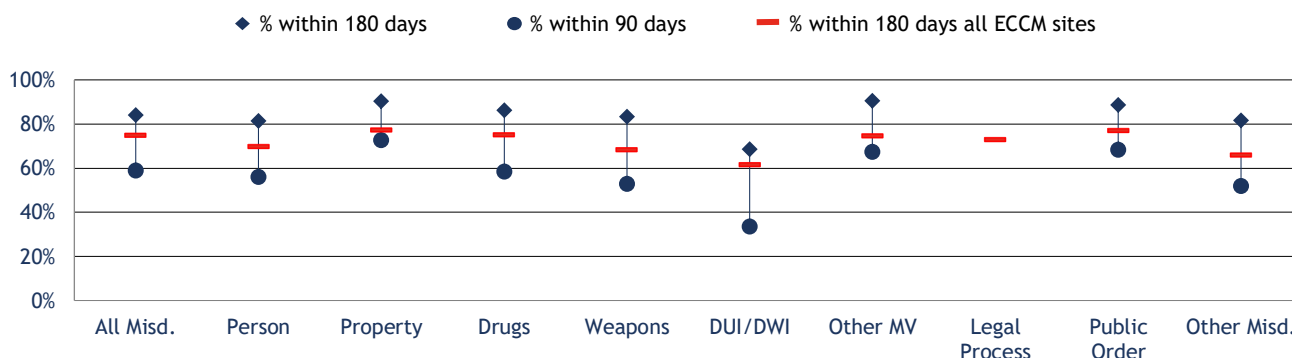
Harris County, Texas

Criminal Courts at Law - Misdemeanor Cases

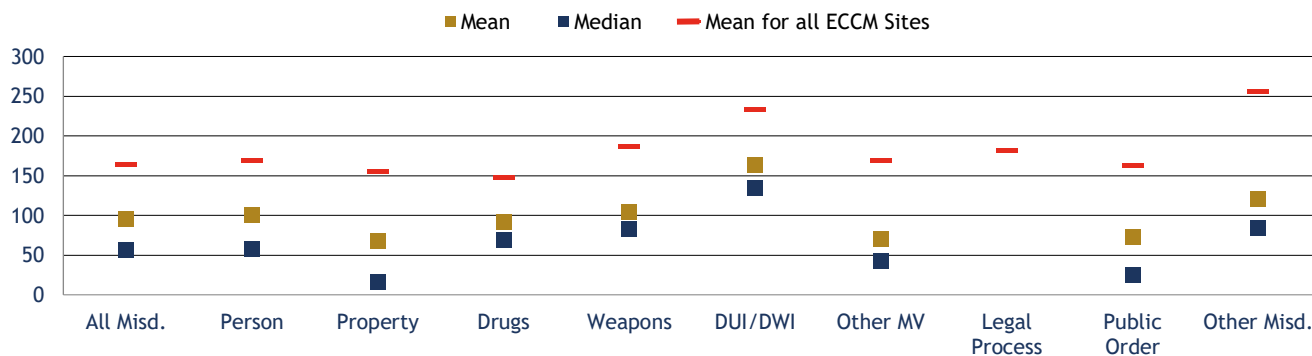


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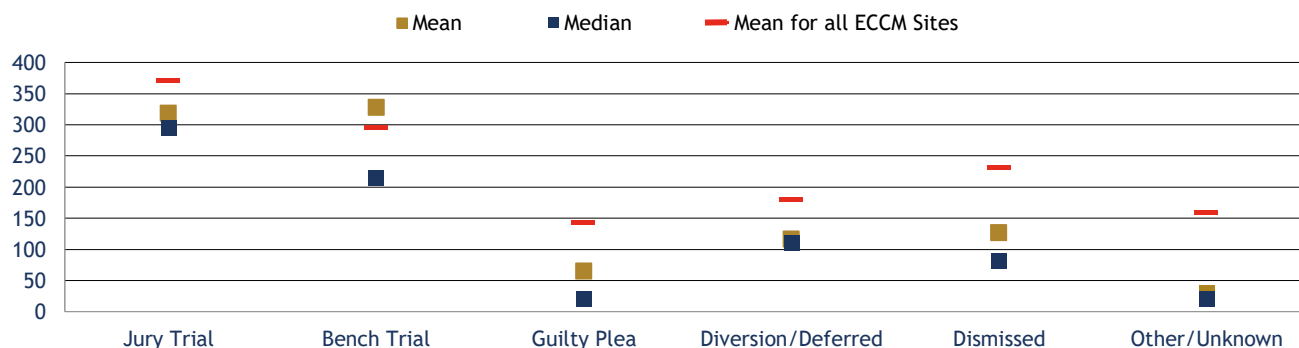
% Disposed Within 90 and 180 Days by Case Type (Active Time)



Disposed Cases: Mean and Median Days by Case Type (Active Time)



Mean and Median Days by Manner of Disposition (Active Time)

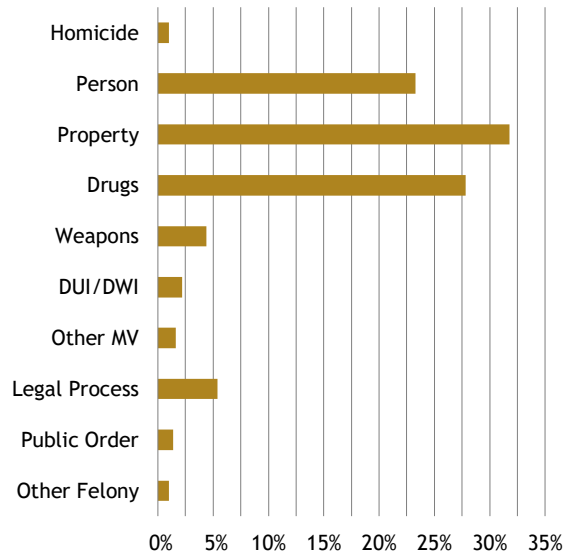


Aggregate Findings for All ECCM Sites

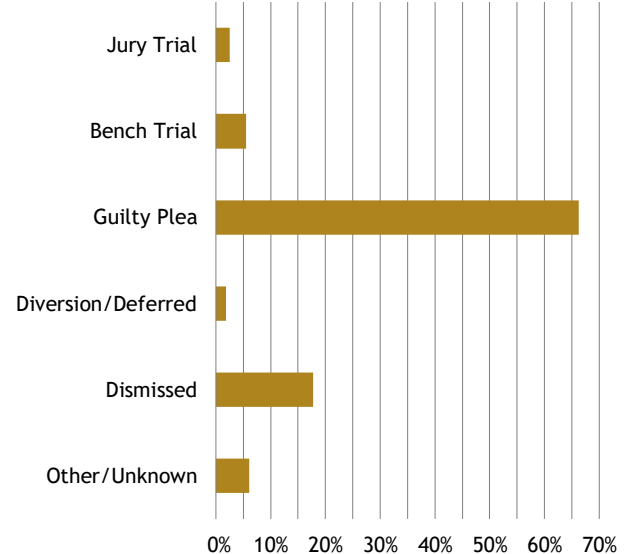
Felony Caseloads



Caseload Composition



Manner of Disposition



Active Time from Filing to Disposition

County/Site	Average # of Cases per Site	% within 180 days	% within 365 days	Mean # of days	Median # of days
All ECCM Sites	3,676	63%	86%	213	135

Percentage of Felony Cases Resolved Within:

Case Type	180 Days	365 Days
Homicide	26%	53%
Person	55%	83%
Property	65%	87%
Drugs	63%	86%
Weapons	63%	88%
DUI/DWI	62%	85%
Other MV	64%	87%
Legal Process	71%	91%
Public Order	60%	87%
Other Felony	56%	83%
All Felonies	63%	86%

Number of Active Days from Filing to Disposition

Manner of Disposition	Mean Days	Median Days
Jury Trial	452	375
Bench Trial	422	357
Guilty Plea	202	143
Diversion/Deferred Adj.	250	204
Dismissed	280	148