



# Best Practices

## Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives



# 2024 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 San Antonio from April 3-5, 2024. TMCEC presented traffic safety awards to 25 municipal courts and honorable mention to 17 municipal courts at this TxDOT-sponsored event. Baytown Municipal Court was also honored with the first ever Trailblazer Award, 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 2025 and a video showcasing the courts' safety initiatives, please visit [tmcec.com/mtsi/mtsi-awards/](https://tmcec.com/mtsi/mtsi-awards/).



The Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC) recently presented the 2024 Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives Awards to recognize those municipal courts who 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, 25 courts received awards: nine low volume (serving fewer than 30,000 people), seven medium volume (serving 30,000 to 149,999 people), four high volume (serving 150,000+ people), and four new applicant courts. And a special congratulations to the Baytown Municipal Court for receiving the inaugural "Trailblazer" award for submitting the most innovative traffic

safety initiative of the year. Seventeen courts received honorable mention.

With 4,481 fatalities, 2022 saw a slight reduction (-0.36%) in fatalities on Texas roads. While this is good news, it is still far too many. The problem is particularly pronounced for children. In 2021, 143 children aged 14 or younger died on Texas roads. Texas also leads the nation in alcohol-impaired driving fatalities: in 2021, 2,169 of the traffic fatalities in Texas involved a driver with alcohol in their system at the time of the crash. Of those, 1,906 were legally intoxicated with a blood alcohol content of .08 or above. Preliminary estimates for 2023 and 2024 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 2024 MTSI Award winners!

**Judge Brian Holman**  
President, Texas Municipal Courts Association

# *Best Practices*



## *Trailblazer Award – Baytown*



The Texas Municipal Courts Education Center is pleased to recognize the Baytown Municipal Court as the recipient of the first ever Trailblazer Award, which is given to the court with the most innovative traffic safety outreach initiative of the year. Court staff created a traffic safety escape room simulator for children that visited the court. Participants had to complete a “traffic safety course” before entering Safety Town. The course encompassed various components of traffic safety including seatbelts, bicycle safety, and traffic safety vocabulary. Participants navigated the room to achieve a lock code. Once the code was solved, the children would receive a ring pop and a key to the city.



# Best Practices

## Alvin – Low Volume



In 2023, the Alvin Municipal Court emphasized education on first aid skills that could be utilized following a traffic crash. Along with the police department, the court hosted “Self Aid Buddy Aid,” a program which provided instruction on how to use a tourniquet and handle situations where an individual is losing blood. The court also partnered with Alvin Emergency Medical Services to offer first aid and CPR training to City of Alvin employees. The court also addressed the growing fentanyl crisis by providing information and prevention pamphlets in the court lobby.

## Aransas Pass – Low Volume

With its strong emphasis on traffic safety, the Aransas Pass Municipal Court reached out to its regional TxDOT Traffic Safety Specialist to request as much physical traffic safety material as possible. The court distributed the materials at numerous local events, such as the Shrimporee Parade and National Night Out, and to area schools. In one innovative initiative, the court distributed “Be Safe, Be Seen” bicycle lights to schools to give to students with perfect attendance records.





# Best Practices



## Austin – High Volume

In November, the Austin Municipal Court invited 45 students from the AustinCorps program to the court. AustinCorps is a local program designed to engage high school students in local government and civic life. During the visit, court staff shared information about court processes, provided traffic safety materials, and educated the students on how to obtain a driver’s license. The court also reached 251 youth defendants and their families by showing the “Teen Crash Risks” video at the beginning of each juvenile appearance docket.

## Azle – Low Volume

In late October, the Azle Municipal Court participated in a Trunk or Treat event where they handed out traffic safety materials, glow sticks, and candy. Halloween impaired driving prevention adorned the traffic safety table and participants were invited to yard pong while wearing impairment simulation goggles. For the third year in a row, the court shared “Morgan’s Story” during National Night Out. Morgan Michael was killed by a drunk driver in Amarillo when she was just 23 years old.





# Best Practices

## Bay City – Low Volume



In 2023, the Bay City Municipal Court continued its annual safety seat and story hour presentations for local K-2 students. Reaching a total of 1,269 kids and four different schools, court staff read “Be Careful, Lulu” and “Bernard in the Backseat” to the students. They also gave a demonstration on child safety seat height and weight requirements and even hosted a coloring contest and pizza party!

## Bruceville-Eddy – New Applicant

The Bruceville-Eddy Municipal Court believes that literally coming face-to-face with residents is vital to the success of its traffic safety campaign. To this end, the court chooses to focus on in-person engagement. The court hosted an Easter Extravaganza as well as the second annual Springfest where they provided free popcorn to draw passersby to the traffic booth to discuss both the function of municipal court and safe driving tips.





# *Best Practices*

## *College Station – Medium Volume*



The College Station Municipal Court partnered with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to offer the Reality Education for Drivers, or “RED,” Program for defendants charged with alcohol-related and certain traffic offenses. The RED program gives participants a video tour of a trauma center where they can see the consequences of poor decision-making in vivid detail. Furthermore, the judge orders Alive at 25 for certain young defendants charged with moving violations.

## *Edinburg – Medium Volume*



In 2023, Edinburg Municipal Court staff attended an astounding 46 events where they discussed roadway safety and/or distributed traffic safety materials. When the opportunity to present arose, court staff created Powerpoint presentations on topics such as impaired and distracted driving. Presentations were often given jointly with local police officers. The officers would provide perspective on traffic stops and the court’s juvenile case managers and clerks would comment on the judicial process.



# Best Practices

## El Paso – High Volume

In collaboration with the police department, El Paso Municipal Court staff participated in a TxDOT CarFit training. CarFit is an educational program that helps drivers—especially older ones—ensure that their vehicle is comfortable and safe. Each participant was given a goodie bag and volunteers that attended the training earned certification as CarFit technicians. Given the event’s success, a subsequent CarFit event was held at the court where court staff were encouraged to have their cars checked out!



## Freer – Low Volume



The Freer Municipal Court joined forces with the Laredo District TxDOT Traffic Safety Office to host the “Buckle Up Roundup.” The City of Freer purchased signs that were posted at the doors of Freer ISD reminding students and visitors to “Buckle Up, Somebody Loves You” and “Buckle Up, Every Rider, Every Ride.” Also during this event, parents were given instructions on child safety seat installation and students were quizzed on how to properly use seatbelts.





# *Best Practices*

## *Georgetown – New Applicant*



The Georgetown Municipal Court’s exemplary teen court program formed an alliance with Jamie White, whose 2-year-old daughter, Allie, was killed by a distracted driver in Round Rock in 2019. As a way to get community service credit, teen court participants would watch the “Allie’s Way” video and write a 300-word essay describing what they learned. The essays were given to Jamie and were eventually presented to the Texas Senate as they considered a bill related to distracted driving.

## *Horseshoe Bay – Low Volume*



Because so many Horseshoe Bay residents enjoy outdoor activities such as golf and cycling, the Horseshoe Bay Municipal Court created two brochures titled “Safety Tips for ‘Kids on Wheels’” and “Horseshoe Bay Golf Cart Laws & Regulations.” Each brochure provides comprehensive, yet easy to read, bulleted lists of safety tips and laws for the modes of transportation most often used in the jurisdiction. The brochures are available at city hall and the police department and are regularly distributed by the court at special events.



# Best Practices

## Irving – High Volume



This year, the Irving Municipal Court celebrates its seventeenth MTSI Award—the most of any city and the only city to win every single year since the awards began in 2008. Judges from the court routinely magistrate DWI and traffic cases. Each defendant is asked whether he or she would like assistance with substance abuse, alcohol dependency, and/or behavioral health services. Those charged with Class C misdemeanors that answer yes are placed on the court’s “opportunity/self-improvement docket.” The docket is filled with success stories of defendants that have turned their life around because of the court’s proactive approach.

## Kennedale – New Applicant

Along with promoting traffic safety at numerous local events, such as Trunk Or Treat and Municipal Court Week, the Kennedale Municipal Court provided the city’s public library with copies of *Don’t Monkey Around with Safety on Your Bicycle*, *Safe Not Sorry*, and the *Our Town* map to distribute to the public. At National Night Out, the court handed out *Tips for Driving in Winter Weather* and *Texas Road Tips* to residents of the senior-living community.





# Best Practices

## La Porte – Medium Volume



For “Treats on the Trail: A Halloween Spooktacular at Little Cedar Bayou Park,” the La Porte Municipal Court prepared over 1,000 goodie bags filled with Halloween goodies and traffic safety materials. For Municipal Court Week, the judge and court specialist spoke to 1st and 2nd graders about road safety and read them *Be Careful, Lulu!* from TMCEC’s traffic safety book series. Each student was given a book to take home and discuss with their families.

## Lakeway – Low Volume

The Lakeway Municipal Court participated in the 12th Annual Lake Travis Public Safety Day. The court hosted and partnered with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Passenger Safety Initiatives program to display and operate a passenger rollover simulator to give visitors a stunning portrayal of what happens when a person without a seatbelt is involved in a traffic collision. Two juvenile defendants assisted with the court’s traffic safety booth at this event as a way to earn community service credit for their offense.





# Best Practices

## Lewisville – Medium Volume



In September, the Lewisville Municipal Court partnered with the fire department during Lewisville Western Days, a 2-day event with thousands of visitors. The court promoted traffic safety with an emphasis on Texas’s “Move Over and Slow Down” law, which requires drivers to either move over or slow down when passing a parked emergency vehicle. To drive the message home, the City of Lewisville displayed an old fire truck that had been run into so many times that it was no longer usable.

## Malakoff – Low Volume

Serving a population of under 3,000, the Malakoff Municipal Court has a strong commitment to its citizens and follows a community-oriented approach. In July, the court actively participated in the Malakoff Library Summer Reading Program where the judge read *Don't Monkey Around With Safety On Your Bicycle* to elementary school-aged children. The judge explained what various road signs and traffic control devices signified and reminded the students that they apply to bicycle riders as well as cars. During the reading, the mayor of Malakoff brought Marigold the monkey puppet to life to keep students engaged in the lesson.





# *Best Practices*

## *Midland – Medium Volume*



The Midland Municipal Court attended two events designed to keep children safe in cars. In August, in collaboration with Safe Kids Worldwide, the court arranged Heat Stroke Awareness Day where they displayed a car thermometer to convey the dangers of leaving children and pets in vehicles even for a short period of time. In September, court staff assisted with Safe Kids Worldwide’s Car Seat Check at a local car dealership. At this event, parents were given new car seats and on-site technicians ensured that they were properly installed.

## *Missouri City – Medium Volume*

Missouri City Municipal Court staff hosted a criminal justice class at a local middle school. For an interactive portion of the class, students were invited to wear various levels of impairment simulation goggles and attempt to “walk the line” on a fake roadway map. This activity educated the students on the dangers of impaired driving, underage drinking, and drug use. Court staff also put together a skit about school bus safety that was posted to social media.





# Best Practices

## San Antonio – High Volume



The San Antonio Municipal Court launched a *100 Deadliest Days of Summer* campaign in May to convey to the public that Memorial Day through Labor Day is statistically the most dangerous time for younger drivers. All summer long, the court displayed a 10x7 banner on the front of the courthouse to bring attention to this campaign. This initiative took on a life of its own when the mayor proclaimed June 1, 2023 as “Teen Driver Awareness Day” and a state representative shared information about the campaign in her newsletter.

## Socorro – New Applicant

In May, the Socorro Municipal Court took advantage of a career day at a local elementary school to educate children about traffic safety topics such as seatbelts, railroads, crosswalks, and bicycles. With summer approaching, the court focused on bicycle safety with an emphasis on what the Transportation Code allows—and, perhaps more importantly, does not allow—when it comes to operating a bicycle on public roads.





# Best Practices

## South Padre Island – Low Volume



The South Padre Island Municipal Court is a frequent destination for local school field trips for Pre-K through 5th grade students. The police department escorts them into the courtroom where the judge is occupying the bench. The judge imparts vital traffic safety information, explains the role of the court, and answers any questions that the students have. As a parting gift, each student receives a traffic safety book on their way out the door.

## Victoria – Medium Volume



For Alcohol Awareness Month in April, the Victoria Municipal Court hosted Miss Dewitt County, Madison Matlock. Madison conducted a 2-hour community service initiative program titled “Perfectly Preventable: Drunk Driving Awareness” where she discussed her experience losing one of her sorority sisters after being hit by a 17-year-old driver that was under the influence of alcohol and drugs. The event was open to the public and publicized by various local media outlets.



# *Best Practices*



*Andrews  
Honorable Mention*

*Arlington  
Honorable Mention*







# *Best Practices*

*Balch Springs  
Honorable Mention*



*Carrollton  
Honorable Mention*



# *Best Practices*



*Cedar Hill  
Honorable Mention*

*Dallas  
Honorable Mention*



# Best Practices



## Gun Barrel City Honorable Mention



## Denison Honorable Mention



# *Best Practices*



*Harker Heights  
Honorable Mention*

*Houston  
Honorable Mention*





# *Best Practices*

*League City  
Honorable Mention*



*Manvel  
Honorable Mention*



# Best Practices



*Marlin  
Honorable Mention*

*Mesquite  
Honorable Mention*



# Best Practices



## Watauga Honorable Mention



## Wink Honorable Mention

## Woodsboro Honorable Mention



# **TMCEC**

## **Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives**



**2210 Hancock Drive  
Austin, Texas  
78756**

**TELEPHONE:  
512.320.8274**

**FAX:  
512.435.6118**

**E-MAIL:  
[tmcec@tmcec.com](mailto:tmcec@tmcec.com)**

**[www.tmcec.com](http://www.tmcec.com)**



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