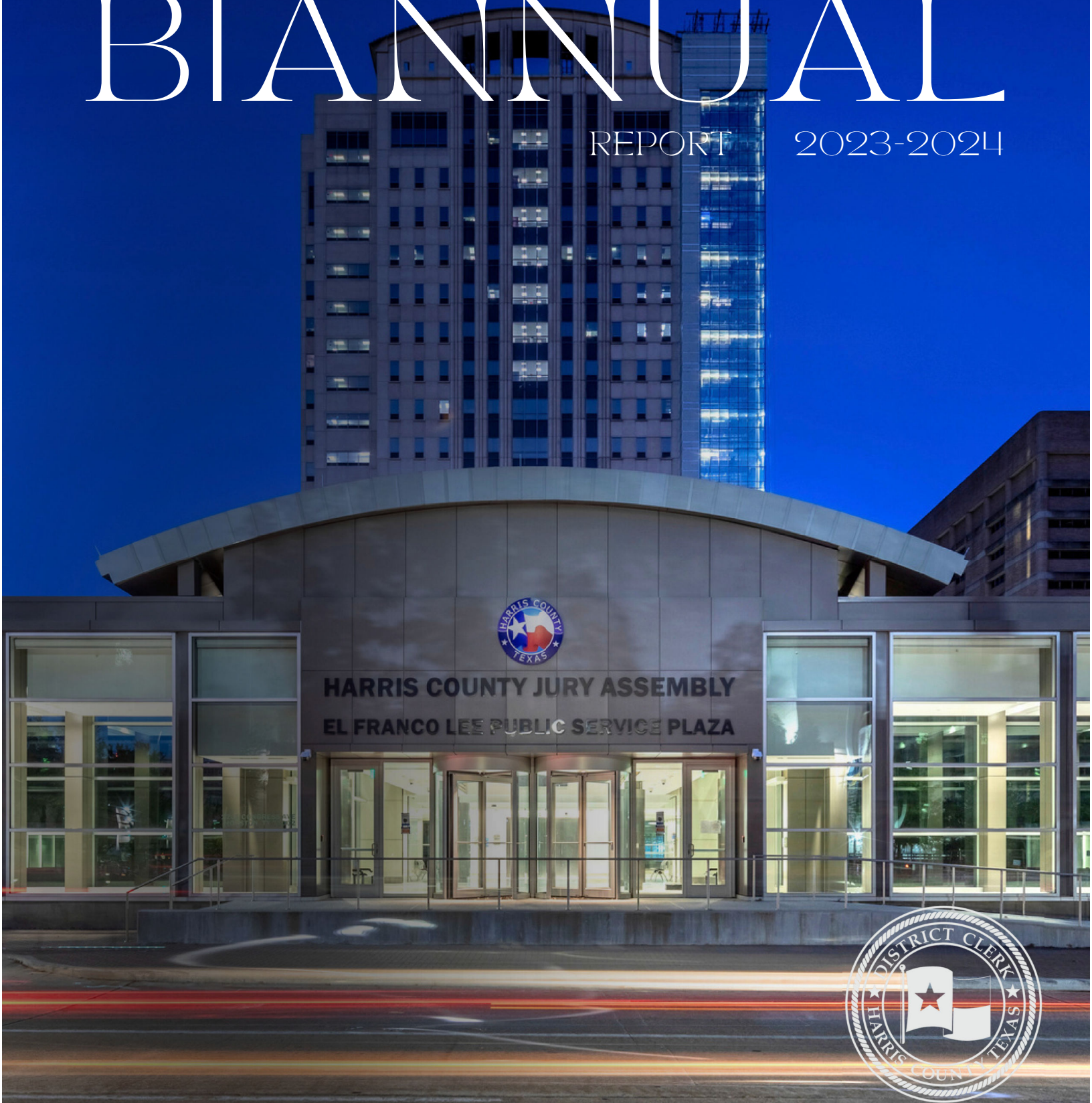


HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE

BIANNUAL

REPORT 2023-2024



A SUMMARY OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, MILESTONES, AND GOALS –
MARILYN BURGESS, HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK

INDEX

ADVOCACY

- 6. Key Issues at the Texas State Capitol
- 7. HCDCO Hosts 2023 CDCAT Spring Conference
- 8. A Study of Juror Nonresponse
- 9. Passports Made Easy

JURY

- 11. Jury Appreciation Week
- 12. DC Burgess Attends Jury Service
- 13. You Complete Justice
- 15. Jury Pay Made Easy
- 15. Changes to Jury Age Threshold
- 16. Tackling Jury Service Scams
- 17. Jury Wheel Reconstitution
- 18. Interviews in 2023
- 19. Interviews in 2024

TECH ADVANCEMENT

- 21. Technology Advances
- 22. MyHarrisCountyCase.com
- 23. Bills Impacting the HCDCO
- 24. Tech Solutions 2023
- 25. Tech Solutions 2024



INDEX

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 27. Celebrating Diversity & Community Year-Round
- 28. Black History Month
- 29. Women's History Month
- 30. National Night Out
- 31. Hispanic Heritage Month
- 32. 2024 Fall Festival
- 33. A Behind the Scenes Look at the DCO's Trial Exhibit Room
- 34. Tours
- 36. Summer Interns 2023
- 37. Summer Interns 2024

ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS

- 39. 2023 Public Official of the Year
- 40. I.T. Administrator Makes History
- 41. Holiday Party 2023
- 42. 2023 End of Year Awards
- 44. Holiday Party 2024
- 45. 2024 End of Year Awards

APPENDIX

- 48. Social Media Stats
- 50. Filing, Records, & Imaging Stats
- 51. Jury Service Stats for 2023 & 2024



A MESSAGE FROM MARILYN BURGESS

As we reflect on the remarkable achievements of 2023 and 2024, I am filled with pride and excitement to share the progress we have made at the Harris County District Clerk's Office. The last several years have been one of transformative growth, strategic innovation, and an unwavering dedication to excellence—qualities that define our mission to serve the public with integrity and professionalism.

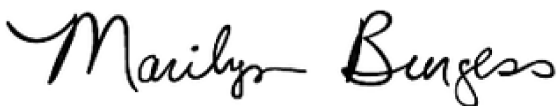
Looking back, it is clear the accomplishments we have achieved are a direct result of the hard work and commitment of our exceptional team. Together, we have taken bold steps to invest in our workforce, streamline our internal processes, and enhance the services we provide to the community. These strides reflect not only our commitment to high standards, but also our commitment to meet the evolving needs of those we serve. Every initiative, every decision, and every action taken during the last two years has been driven by a singular focus: delivering superior service to the residents of Harris County.

Through an array of community outreach efforts, groundbreaking technological advancements, and a continued investment in internal growth and professional development, we have created a workplace that fosters innovation, inclusivity, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. By embracing these opportunities for growth, we have become even more equipped to address the challenges of today and prepare for the needs of tomorrow. These efforts have not only enhanced our capabilities but also strengthened our ability to respond to the changing landscape with agility, compassion, and foresight.

As we look toward the future, I am confident that the best is yet to come. We remain focused on driving continuous innovation, advancing operational efficiency, and upholding the highest standards of public service. Our journey ahead is one of continuous progress—one that is shaped by our collective ambition to push boundaries, set new standards, and make a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for your ongoing support and trust.

Together, we will continue to reach new heights, to serve with purpose, and to make a lasting and positive impact on the future of Harris County.



Marilyn Burgess
Harris County District Clerk





ADVOCACY

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE

BIANNUAL

REPORT | 2023-2024

Harris County
Criminal Justice Center

ADVOCATING FOR KEY ISSUES AT THE TEXAS STATE CAPITOL

The Harris County District Clerk's Office (HCDCO) is committed to fostering effective collaboration and communication with key stakeholders to support its mission and goals. In February 2023, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, accompanied by DCO Governmental Relations Administrator Aman Ahluwalia, participated in the Counties at the Capitol Legislative Day in Austin, organized by the Texas Association of Counties. During the event, they engaged in discussions with key Texas lawmakers, including Senators Carol Alvarado, Borris Miles, and John Whitmire, as well as Representatives Alma Allen, Ann Johnson, Jon Rosenthal, Senfronia Thompson, and Gene Wu.

The meetings focused on advocating for the District Clerk's Office's priorities and objectives for the 2023 legislative session, aiming to strengthen collaboration and support for the office's initiatives.

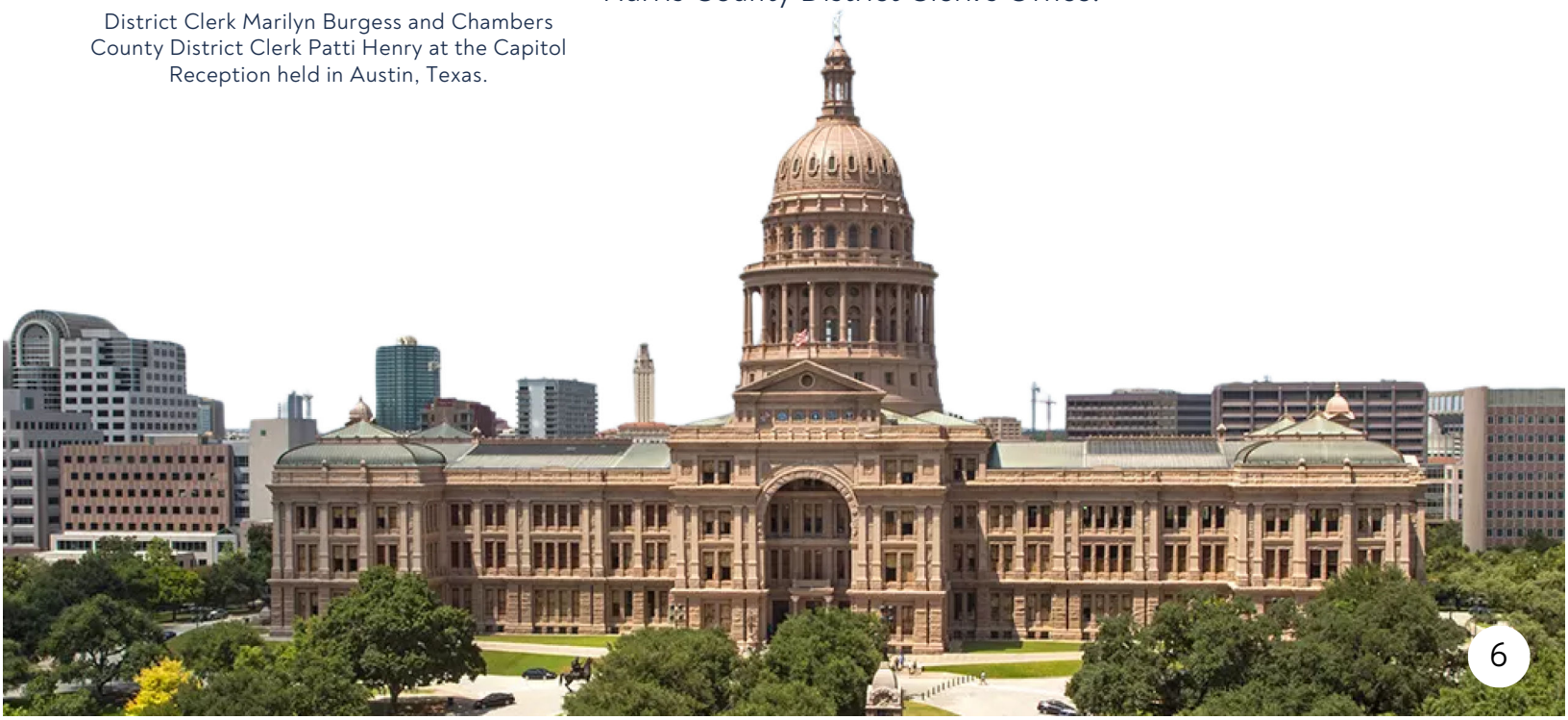


From L to R: District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, Texas State Senator John Whitmire, and Governmental Relations Administrator Aman Ahluwalia.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess and Chambers County District Clerk Patti Henry at the Capitol Reception held in Austin, Texas.

In March of 2023, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess and DCO Governmental Relations Administrator Aman Ahluwalia participated in the "Capitol Reception" hosted in Austin by the County and District Clerks' Association of Texas (CDCAT) and the Texas Association of Elections Administrators. District Clerk Burgess and Mr. Ahluwalia met with several Texas legislators and their staff, as well as with members of CDCAT and the Texas Association of Elections Administrators. It was a great opportunity to discuss bills that were being worked on during the 88th session of the Texas Legislature and that could impact the Harris County District Clerk's Office.



HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE HOSTS 2023 CDCAT SPRING CONFERENCE IN HOUSTON

In April 2023, the Harris County District Clerk's Office (HCDCO) hosted the Spring Conference of the County and District Clerks' Association of Texas (CDCAT) in Houston. The is a professional organization that represents the county and district clerks across the state of Texas. The association provides a platform for clerks to collaborate, share best practices, and stay informed about changes in laws, regulations, and technology that impact their work. CDCAT offers education, training, and resources to help clerks improve their operations and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their offices.

CDCAT plays a crucial role in promoting professional standards and advocating for the needs of clerks at the state level, and the HCDCO is proud to be an active member of Region VII.

In early 2023, CDCAT held its Region VII Spring Meeting in April at the historic Sam Houston Hotel in downtown Houston. After District Clerk Burgess welcomed all attending, the meeting included inspiring and informative words from CDCAT President Patti Henry; Michael Winn, Chief Deputy of Administration at the Harris County Clerk's Office; Ruben Perez, Special Crimes Bureau Chief at the Harris County District Attorney's Office; and Harris County Constable's Office Precinct 1 Chief Carl Shaw. Speakers from the Harris County District Clerk's Office included our Records Manager Rick Urdiales; Francisco Heredia, Supervisor of Historical Records; and our Senior Criminal Exhibit Clerk Rhonda Spinks. Additionally, in January of 2024, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, Chief Deputy of Courts Judith Snively, and I.T. Administrator Tracy Hopper represented the HCDCO at the CDCAT Conference in Denton, TX.

By bringing together clerks from across Texas, the association fosters a sense of community, encourages the exchange of ideas, and helps clerks navigate the complexities of their roles. Their collective efforts ensure that county and district clerk offices across Texas run smoothly and continue to serve the public with transparency and accountability.



From L to R: Chief Deputy of Courts Judith Snively, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, and I.T. Administrator Tracy Hopper.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess observes the National Anthem, performed by DCO team member Kerrylyne Asberry at the 2023 CDCAT Spring Conference.

WHY WON'T THEY COME? A STUDY OF JUROR NONRESPONSE AND FAILURE-TO-APPEAR IN HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS



Scan the QR code to read the full report and to watch the webinar on the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers website.



In 2023, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and RTI International (RTI) partnered with the Harris County District Clerk's Office, which oversees jury operations in Harris County, to investigate the incidence of failure to respond to a jury summons or failure to appear (FTA) for a reporting date in the greater Houston area.

-National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers website



As part of this study, our office randomly selected 5,000 records of jurors who had failed to respond or failed to appear for jury service since July 1, 2022. These jurors were sent one of two surveys designed to gather information about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences with jury service. Half of the selected individuals received a letter from the Harris County District Clerk's Office directing them to complete an online survey asking specifically why they had not responded or appeared for jury service (Version 1). The other half received a letter asking them to participate in an online survey to help the District Clerk's Office understand why some individuals failed to respond or appear for jury service (Version 2).

The survey found that many people who fail to respond or appear for jury service may not have received their jury summons due to issues with mail delivery. Over a third of respondents reported never receiving their summons, even though they had lived at the same address for years. Additionally, some respondents mentioned receiving the summons too late to make arrangements, which contributed to the nonresponse and failure-to-appear rates. The District Clerk's Office is constantly working to address these issues, including ensuring accurate address information and improving the clarity of instructions about jury service. We also continue to explore ways to make jury service more convenient for Harris County residents.

In March of 2024, District Clerk Burgess participated in a webinar hosted by the Center for Jury Studies, which is part of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). The webinar, which was attended by more than 300 people from across the United States, analyzed the results of this extensive survey. District Clerk Burgess reiterated the need to improve jury attendance among minority communities and younger residents, outlined measures such as increased jury pay and a debit card payment system, and introduced a new social media outreach campaign with the slogan "You Complete Justice."

The District Clerk's Office is committed to raising awareness about the importance of answering your call to serve as a juror. Responding to jury summons is crucial to ensuring a functional justice system.

PASSPORTS MADE EASY!

The District Clerk's Office is always proactive when it comes to serving our community. In 2023 and 2024, we continued hosting our bi-monthly Saturday Passport Fairs, which are conveniently scheduled for those unable to visit our offices during our normal business hours. English and Spanish speaking staff members were onsite to assist with the application process. Then, the applications were sent to the U.S. Department of State for processing. The District Clerk's Office has processed over 55,000 passports since August 1, 2013.



A friendly DCO team member checks in Saturday Passport Fair applicants.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess speaks with Passport Fair applicants.



A DCO team member helps applicants at one of our Saturday Passport Fairs.



A DCO team member assists a customer with filling out a passport application in our downtown office.

Additionally, in 2024, our downtown Passport section began accepting walk-in customers to submit passport applications Monday through Friday. This new service is another way to conveniently get a passport. Applicants must provide proof of U.S. citizenship, a valid photo ID, and passport photos.

Are you interested in getting your passport and going on your next adventure? Scan the QR code to learn more about the passport application process and stay tuned to our social media pages for announcements of our next Saturday Passport Fairs!




Scan Me!

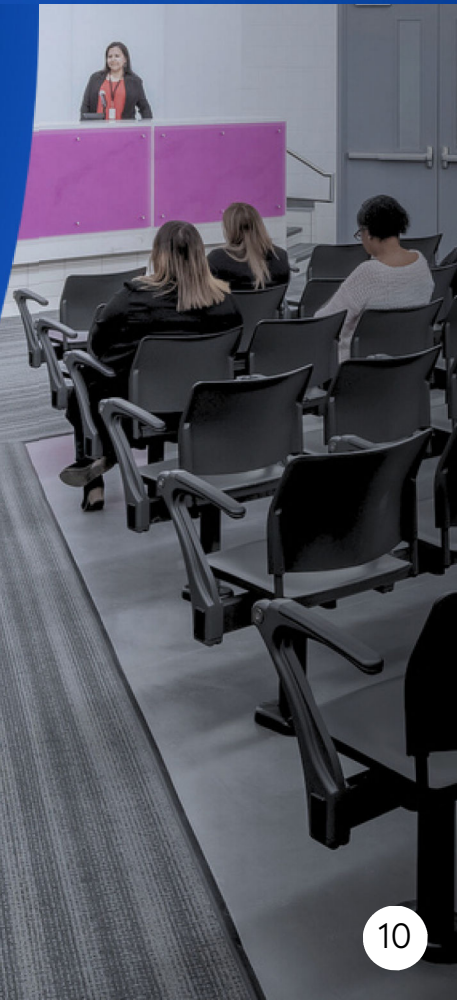


JURY

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE

BIANNUAL

REPORT | 2023-2024



JURY APPRECIATION WEEK

The Harris County District Clerk's Office is dedicated to recognizing and thanking the residents who answer the call to serve on juries. Each year, the office celebrates Jury Appreciation Week during the first week of May, an event that highlights the vital role jurors play in ensuring a fair and just legal system. This special week serves as an opportunity to show appreciation for the individuals who contribute their time and effort to the American jury system.

During this week, the District Clerk's Office goes above and beyond to make the experience more enjoyable for jurors. Prospective jurors are treated to free breakfast, enhancing their experience while they wait for jury selection. The office also offers door prizes and hosts a variety of musical performances to entertain and uplift those serving. These efforts aim to make the often long process of jury service more pleasant and engaging.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess speaks during 2023 Jury Appreciation Week.

To further express gratitude, the District Clerk's Office provides jurors with additional perks, such as gift cards and tickets to local entertainment venues, making the week even more memorable. In addition, the Harris County Commissioners Court issues a Resolution proclaiming the week as Jury Appreciation Week, recognizing and honoring the citizens of Harris County who have been summoned to serve, as well as the hard work and dedication of the District Clerk's Office and its staff, led by District Clerk Marilyn Burgess.

The District Clerk's Office is also proud to offer complimentary parking and free coffee to all jurors who respond to their summons, further showing our commitment to making the jury service experience as smooth and convenient as possible. Through these small but meaningful gestures, our office hopes to encourage residents to fulfill their civic duty and help maintain a diverse justice system. Jury service is an essential part of upholding the rights of all citizens, and the District Clerk's Office is grateful to those who step forward to participate.



Jury Supervisor Crystal Jarmon and District Clerk Marilyn Burgess with juror that won an H-E-B gift card during Jury Appreciation Week 2024.



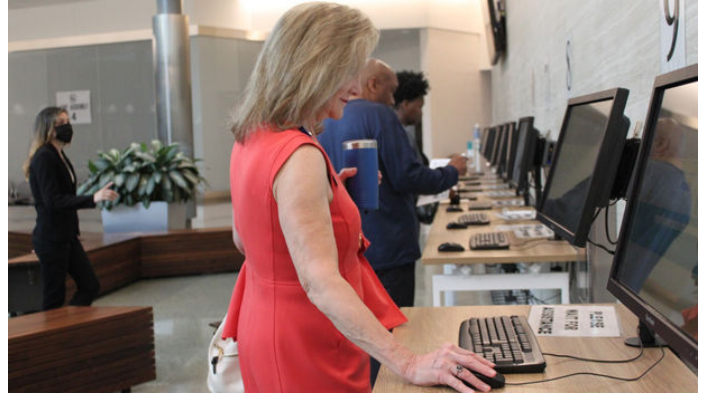
From L to R: Harris County Commissioners Tom Ramsey, Adrian Garcia, Lesley Briones, DCO Chief Deputy of Courts Judith Snively, Jury Manager Aman Ahluwalia, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, County Judge Lina Hidalgo, and Commissioner Rodney Ellis with the Court's Resolution of Jury Appreciation Week 2024.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess (center) recites the Pledge of Allegiance at Commissioners Court.

DISTRICT CLERK BURGESS ATTENDS JURY SERVICE

Harris County District Clerk Marilyn Burgess proved that she leads by example, as she participated in jury service in May 2023 at our Jury Assembly Plaza, located in downtown Houston. District Clerk Burgess briefly addressed the jurors who were serving with her and underlined the importance of jury service, as it is one of the principles of our American system of justice.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess checking in for her jury service in the Jury Assembly Plaza.

“Jury duty is a civic duty, and it is part of the glue that holds society together. I’m grateful to have the opportunity to serve.”

– FORMER JUROR



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess speaking to potential jurors about the importance of answering your call to serve.

ONCE YOU RECEIVE A JURY SUMMONS

Review the Summons: Carefully read the jury summons for the date, time, location, and any required forms or instructions.

Pre-Register Online: Visit the [Harris County District Clerk website](#) to pre-register by entering your HC Number or Texas Driver’s License number. You can also claim exemptions or reschedule your service in this process.

Prepare for Jury Service: On your scheduled day, arrive at the Jury Assembly Building (1201 Congress St.) on time with your summons, ID, and any required documents.

Jury Selection: You may be selected to participate in voir dire, where attorneys will ask you questions to determine if you will serve on the jury. You may be selected or excused.

Serve on the Jury: If selected, listen to the case and deliberate with fellow jurors to reach a verdict.

Complete Your Service: Once your service is complete, follow instructions to report you have completed your jury service.

Receive Payment: After your service is completed, the payment for your time you have served will be issued through a Rapid Funds pay card. This card is given to you the same day and can be used like a debit card for easy access to your funds.

YOU COMPLETE JUSTICE

In March 2024, in an effort to ensure that Harris County juries reflect the full diversity of its population, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess launched a targeted outreach campaign aimed at increasing participation in jury service. The initiative, which focused particularly on African Americans, Hispanics, and young people, was designed to encourage a more inclusive group of jurors, especially from the 18-29 age group.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess speaks to media during the You Complete Justice press conference on March 26, 2024.

District Clerk Burgess introduced the campaign at a press conference, which was attended by several key figures from the judiciary and grassroots organizations. The Honorable Judge Rabeeah Collier, who presides over the 113th Civil District Court, represented the Jury Committee of the Harris County Board of District Judges. Bishop James Dixon II, speaking for the Houston chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Alfonso Maldonado from the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and Dayana Iza, who represented the Latino grassroots organization Mi Familia Vota, all voiced their support for the campaign.

Under the slogan “You Complete Justice,” the District Clerk’s Office designed this outreach effort to specifically target underrepresented groups and highlight the critical role they can play in the justice system. The campaign relied on social media platforms to raise awareness about the importance of jury service.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess with some of the DCO jury team members.

“DIVERSITY IN OUR JURIES IS CRUCIAL BECAUSE IT ENSURES THAT THE PERSPECTIVES OF OUR COMMUNITY ARE FULLY REPRESENTED.”

– MARILYN BURGESS,
HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK



Claudia Ortega Hogue, President of the League of Women Voters of Houston.



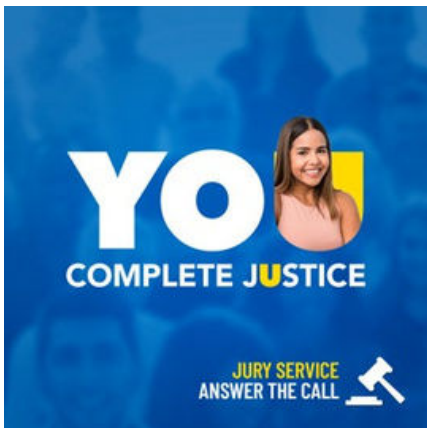
YOU COMPLETE JUSTICE



Research has shown the value of diverse juries in facilitating the deliberation process. Studies indicate that diverse juries deliberate longer and are generally perceived as fairer and more impartial. This is why the District Clerk's Office advocates for increasing participation from communities that have historically been underrepresented in Harris County juries.

The goal of the You Complete Justice campaign was to inspire a new generation of jurors who could better reflect the county's cultural and demographic makeup, ensuring that the justice system benefits from a variety of perspectives. The outreach campaign ultimately sought to not only educate the public about the importance of jury service but also to foster a sense of civic responsibility and engagement across Harris County.

Through this campaign, District Clerk Burgess and our team worked diligently to make jury service more inclusive.



Judge Rabeea Collier speaks during the kickoff event of the DCO's You Complete Justice campaign.



DCO's Public Information Officer Alvaro Ortiz speaks to local media in Spanish about the You Complete Justice campaign.

JURY PAY MADE EASY!

On September 1, 2023, a historic jury pay increase went in effect in Harris County and the State of Texas. The payment for the first day of jury service went from \$6 to \$20, and from \$40 to \$58 for subsequent days. The Texas Legislature approved the raise during its 88th session per the passage of HB 3474, an omnibus bill authored by State Representative Jeff Leach.

Furthermore, following a vote taken by the Harris County Commissioners Court on September 19, 2023, the pay for the first day of jury service went from \$20 to \$30 beginning October 1, 2023.

"I am confident this jury pay increase is a necessary first step towards improving participation and having juries that reflect the diverse racial and socioeconomic demographics of Harris County. We can only achieve that if we pay our jurors fairly," District Clerk Marilyn Burgess said.

The good news regarding jury pay expanded as on August 29, 2023, in collaboration with Harris County Treasurer Dr. Carla Wyatt, the DCO announced the rollout of an innovative payment method for our jurors using pay cards.

Juror payments are now made via the CourtFunds Pay Card, which is scanned upon juror check-in and is automatically activated approximately two business days after the conclusion of jury service. Jurors can use their prepaid card anywhere that MasterCard is accepted. Since the implementation of the CourtFunds Pay Card, many jurors have found the process of getting paid to be easy and convenient.

"This new method makes payments to jurors easier and faster," said District Clerk Burgess. "Some jurors may not have a bank account and being paid with a check at the end of their service may not be the most convenient option for them. These pay cards make jury service payments more efficient and convenient," she added.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess shows the new CourtFunds Pay Card for Harris County jurors.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess speaking at a meeting of the Harris County Commissioners Court.

JURY AGE THRESHOLD IN TEXAS CHANGES TO 75

Making a difference has no age limit. The age threshold to request an exemption from jury service in Texas increased from 70 to 75 years in September 2023. The Texas Legislature approved the increase during its 88th session per the passage of Texas House Bill 3474. While you are entitled to claim the exemption if over 75, we welcome your service if you choose to serve.

Want to learn more about what to expect when you come to jury service? **Scan the QR code below to download our Jury Resources Guide - your one-stop-shop to help you make the most of your jury service experience.**



TACKLING JURY SERVICE SCAMS THROUGH EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

SCAMMERS POSING AS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MIGHT REACH OUT, FALSELY ACCUSING YOU OF MISSING JURY SERVICE AND THREATENING ARREST.

Participating in jury service is a civic duty that ensures a fair judicial process. However, scammers have found ways to exploit the process, preying on unsuspecting individuals who are unfamiliar with the system. These fraudsters often impersonate court officials or government representatives, tricking victims into paying fake fines or providing them with sensitive personal information.

While jury service may seem daunting to some, it should never be a cause for concern due to fraud. Scammers prey on the confusion and lack of familiarity people may have with the jury service process. By staying informed, being cautious with your personal information, and knowing the warning signs, you can protect yourself from falling victim to these types of scams. Always remember, legitimate court communications will never demand immediate payment or sensitive data over the phone or email.

If you believe you have been a victim of a jury scam, please report it to the Harris County Sheriff's Office by calling: (713) 274-9118. In addition, you can contact the Harris County Precinct One Constable's Office at (713) 755-5200 and the Harris County District Clerk's Office at (713) 755-6392.

For those who have served, we thank you.



In October 2024 Harris County District Clerk Marilyn Burgess and Harris County Precinct 1 Constable Alan Rosen participated in a PSA video about protection from jury scams.



Harris County District Clerk Marilyn Burgess speaking at a May 2024 press conference about jury scams.



Watch the
PSA Video by
scanning the
QR Code!



JURY WHEEL RECONSTITUTION

HARRIS COUNTY HAS
2,752,109
POTENTIAL JURORS

On November 13, 2024, the District Clerk's Office held a Jury Wheel Reconstitution ceremony. As of that day, Harris County loaded 2,752,109 potential jurors into the county's jury wheel.

Traditionally referred to as the jury wheel, this is the database from which Harris County residents are randomly selected to be summoned as potential jurors for Harris County District Courts, County Courts, and Justice of the Peace courts, as well as for grand juries. Harris County Administrative Judge Latosha Lewis Payne, Judge Rabeea Collier, who chaired the Jury Committee at the time, and Sheriff Ed Gonzalez also participated in the ceremony, which entailed the electronic reset of the database and the signing of the pertinent documents.



From L to R: Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, Judge Latosha Lewis Payne, and Judge Rabeea Collier signing the administrative documents that authorized the reconstitution of the Harris County jury wheel.

INTERVIEWS IN 2023

In 2023, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess granted several insightful interviews, addressing pivotal issues related to jury service and the significant reforms taking place in Harris County.

One of the most notable topics District Clerk Burgess discussed was the historic increase in jury pay in Texas, marking the first increase since 2005. This breakthrough was a direct result of legislation passed in 2023 by the 88th Texas Legislature and actions by the Harris County Commissioners Court.

In September 2023, District Clerk Burgess appeared on Urban One's KG Smooth radio show. The interview provided her an opportunity to talk about the jury pay increase and to elaborate on the newly introduced payment method for jurors using pay cards. The interview was broadcast across multiple stations, including KBXX, Praise 92.1, and Majic 102.1, ensuring that a broad audience was informed about these important developments.

District Clerk Burgess was also featured on Houston Newsmakers with KPRC's legendary news anchor and host Khambrel Marshall on September 5, 2023. In this interview, she shared vital updates on jury service in Harris County. She highlighted the long-awaited pay increase for jurors and discussed an innovative new method for juror compensation. The juror pay card is a significant step forward in modernizing how the county compensates its jurors.

That same week, District Clerk Burgess sat down with KHOU's news reporter Ugochi Iloka to discuss the historic pay increase for jurors. During this conversation, she detailed her ongoing efforts to make jury service more equitable, focusing on increasing jury diversity and better representing minority communities. District Clerk Burgess emphasized her commitment to modernizing jury service, aiming to make it a more convenient and rewarding experience for all Harris County residents.

The interviews done in 2023 were an essential part of District Clerk Burgess's efforts to bring attention to the progress being made in jury service, and to encourage more Harris County residents to participate in this important civic duty.



KPRC 2's Khambrel Marshall and District Clerk Marilyn Burgess.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess being interviewed on Urban One's KG Smooth radio show.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess and Gabriel Esparza, Publisher of Que Onda Magazine.

INTERVIEWS IN 2024



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess being interviewed on HUM 103.5 FM.



FOX 26's Anthony Antoine and Damali Keith interview District Clerk Marilyn Burgess about the novelties of jury service.



KPRC2 investigative reporter Joel Eisenbaum interviews District Clerk Marilyn Burgess in her office located in the Civil Courthouse.

In April 2024, District Clerk Burgess was interviewed on the Que Onda Magazine podcast, where she discussed the "You Complete Justice" campaign aimed at increasing jury service participation among the Hispanic and Latino communities. She emphasized the importance of engaging young LatinX individuals and reminded listeners of the recent jury pay increase and added benefits like free parking and coffee for jurors.

In June 2024, District Clerk Burgess appeared on the "Open Forum" radio show on HUM 103.5 FM, a show that focuses on Houston's Indian community. She discussed the various responsibilities of the District Clerk's Office, including the preservation of historical documents and the modernization of processes. Burgess also spoke about improvements to jury service, such as free parking and the new jury pay system, while stressing the need for increased participation, particularly from underrepresented communities.

In October 2024, District Clerk Burgess spoke with KPRC's news anchor Zachery Lashway about the growing issue of jury scams targeting Harris County residents. She provided helpful tips on how to recognize potential jury scams and avoid falling victim to such fraud.

In November 2024, District Clerk Burgess was interviewed by KPRC2 investigative reporter Joel Eisenbaum. They discussed the new debit cards for jury pay and the historic jury pay increase that took effect in 2023. Burgess highlighted the need for diverse juries and the importance of fulfilling jury service as part of the American justice system. This interview also touched on the improvements made to the jury experience under Burgess' leadership.

Later in November, Burgess sat down with FOX 26's news anchors Anthony Antoine and Damali Keith to talk about the reconstitution of Harris County's jury wheel which resulted in over 2.7 million Harris County residents being added to the prospective juror database.

Throughout 2024, District Clerk Burgess used her interviews to inform and engage the public, advocating for an efficient justice system in Harris County.



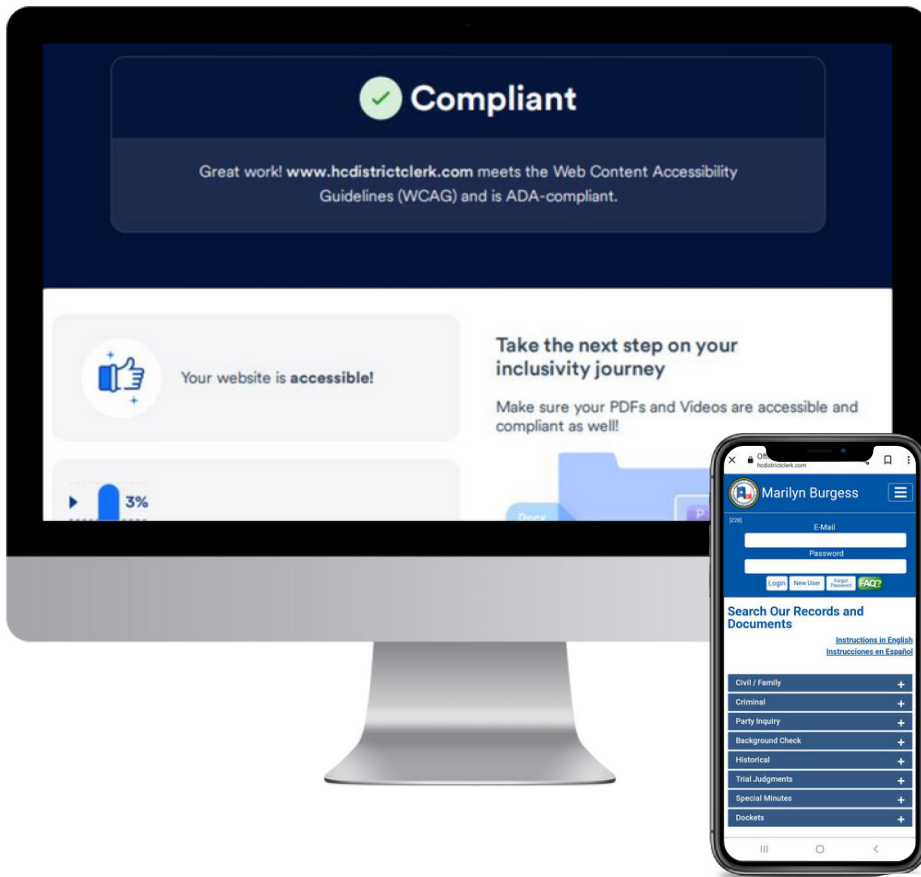
TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE

BIANNUAL

REPORT | 2023-2024

TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES



WCAG COMPLIANCE

In early 2024, the Harris County District Clerk's website became part of the 3 percent of websites globally that comply with Level AA Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), as established under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998. This law requires that individuals with disabilities have access to electronic information. Our website is fully operational for users with disabilities who need to access the information we provide online.



Scan the QR code to check out our website, hcdistrictclerk.com!

PUBLIC
INFORMATION
ACT REQUESTS



SEARCH
OUR
RECORDS



DOWNLOAD
FORMS



EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES



HCDCO
WEBSITE



JURY
REGISTRATION



PASSPORT
ASSISTANCE

AND SO MUCH MORE!

MYHARRISCOUNTYCASE.COM

On June 4, 2024, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess spoke before the Harris County Commissioners Court about [MyHarrisCountyCase.com](https://myharriscountycase.com), a new website that provides residents up to date information on active cases in which they are a party. The Harris County Attorney's Office (CAO) led this project and the District Clerk's Office played a vital role as our office is tasked with the custody of the records of all the District Courts and the County Criminal Courts at Law.

The website effectively combines accessibility with all the necessary safeguards to only show cases that are public record. In addition, MyHarrisCountyCase.com is compatible with all mobile devices and its content can be translated to multiple languages. With easy navigation, users can look up court hearing dates assigned to their case and also find out whether or not they are required to be present at a given hearing, as well as information about their attorney. What's more, the website doesn't require a log in and users can access it just by typing their last name and date of birth.

In her remarks to Commissioners Court, District Clerk Burgess commended the DCO's I.T. Department, led by I.T. Administrator Tracy Hopper, for being dedicated, efficient, and expeditious, and for demonstrating institutional knowledge with every project they tackle.

Jonathan Fombonne, Deputy County Attorney and CAO First Assistant, and Seth Hopkins, Special Assistant County Attorney, represented the CAO and also delivered remarks to the Court.



Find your case today!
Scan the QR code to
check out
myharriscountycase.com



TEXAS 88TH LEGISLATURE ENACTED BILLS IMPACTING THE DISTRICT CLERK

Texas House Bill 2384 (HB 2384) focuses on enhancing the performance and transparency of Texas courts.

The Office of Court Administration (OCA) is charged with annually collecting and publishing performance reports of information regarding the efficiency of Texas' courts. As the District Clerk's Office, we are to provide the data which OCA collects and publishes.

The report includes the following performance measures for the District and County Courts:

- The court's clearance rate
- The average time a case is before the court from filing to disposition
- The age of the courts active pending caseload



Scan the QR code below to check out the monthly court statistics on our website, hcdistrictclerk.com.

Texas House Bill 1182 (HB 1182) requires certain judicial statistics be gathered in populous counties including Harris County. The District Clerk is to report monthly statistical data to the Office of Court Administration (OCA). Both OCA and the District Clerk are to publish the following data on their websites:

- The number of cases assigned to the court
- The case clearance rate for the court
- The number of cases disposed by the court
- The number of jury panels empaneled for the court
- The number of orders of continuance for an attorney before the court or by the court
- The number of pleas accepted by the court
- The number of cases tried by the judge of the court or before a jury
- The number of cases tried before a visiting or associate judge of the court

TECH SOLUTIONS 2023

Increasing Efficiency

In 2023, the Harris County District Clerk's Office introduced several key technological advancements to enhance court services and improve efficiency for both legal professionals and the public.

Attorney Kiosk Upgrades

The criminal attorney kiosk now includes a jail location feature, linking directly to the Sheriff's website for easier access to detention information. The revamped Search Our Records online portal allows searching by offense type and up to 150 codes at a time, speeding up case research. For civil and family attorneys, new dropdown options track upcoming hearings, new cases, and pending active cases, streamlining case management.

Improved Jury Management System

Juror payments were automated via debit cards, ensuring faster and more secure transactions. Excess jurors are now automatically canceled, improving jury management efficiency.

Addressing the Criminal Backlog

The DCO secured funding for four new programmers to introduce new technology to tackle the criminal case backlog, helping reduce delays and speed up case processing.

Data Control and Case Management

In 2023, 4,093 criminal expunctions, 389 name changes, and 585 recalls were processed. The team also published 35,609 judgments, maintaining accurate and up-to-date court records.

These innovations reflect Harris County's ongoing commitment to improving court services through technology, making the system more efficient and accessible for everyone.



TECH SOLUTIONS 2024

A Year of Innovation

In 2024, the District Clerk's Office has made significant strides in improving its technological infrastructure and enhancing the efficiency of the justice system. Our various I.T. experts – analysts, programmers, network engineers, and Help Desk support—have played a crucial role in these advancements.

Legislative Compliance and Accessibility Improvements

The Analyst and Programming teams implemented legislative mandates from House Bills 1182 and 2384, introducing court-level reporting. They also enhanced website accessibility for people with health conditions and launched MyHarrisCountyCase.com, enabling defendants to easily access court information.

Database Innovations and Data Management

The Database Administration (DBA) team loaded over 2.7 million Harris County citizens into the jury database, ensuring a seamless juror summoning process starting January 1, 2025. Additionally, the team developed a Health Portal for Judges to review juror medical exemption requests.

Network Security and Infrastructure

The Network team improved data protection with a new database backup system and saved over \$200,000 by implementing a long-term storage strategy. They also enhanced security with a new web proxy to protect against cyber threats.

Technological Upgrades in Courtrooms

The Helpdesk team installed 43 new computers in criminal courtrooms with Windows 11, while also setting up technical equipment in four new felony courtrooms in the Criminal Justice Center. They also relocated the DCO's Probable Cause and Criminal Intake sections to the 3rd floor of the CJC with minimal downtime.

Data Control and Case Management

The Data Control team processed 4,266 criminal expunctions, 631 name changes, and published 41,080 criminal judgments, ensuring up-to-date court records.

2025 Goals:

- Upgrading Datacenter core equipment
- Rollout of 250 new computers
- Integration with re:SearchTX as required by Texas Supreme Court orders
- Optimizing the Pending Documents Page
- Convert initiation of To-Be Cases from paper to electronic

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair smiling and holding a small rainbow flag on a stick. In the background, there are tall city buildings and other people at what appears to be a parade.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE

BIANNUAL

REPORT | 2023-2024

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY & COMMUNITY YEAR-ROUND

In 2023 and 2024, the Harris County District Clerk's Office (DCO) actively participated in various parades and events, celebrating cultural heritage, history, and inclusivity in Houston.

Cinco De Mayo Parade

In May, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess and DCO staff marched in the Cinco De Mayo Parade in Downtown Houston. The event honors the Battle of Puebla, a pivotal moment in the Mexican-French War that also influenced the U.S. Civil War. The DCO is proud to connect with the community and engage with local cultural groups in this festive celebration of Mexican heritage.

Juneteenth Parade

In June, DCO team members participated in the Juneteenth Parade, commemorating the 1865 announcement made in Galveston that enslaved African Americans were free, following the Emancipation Proclamation. Despite the summer heat, the DCO is always thrilled to take part in this historic event that celebrates freedom and unity, strengthening ties within the Houston community.

Pride Parade

Also in June, the DCO proudly joined the Annual Pride Parade in Downtown Houston. This vibrant event celebrates the LGBTQ+ community and promotes inclusivity and equal rights. The DCO team works together to decorate the float and participate alongside other city and county offices, marking it as one of the year's most joyful occasions.

By participating in these important events, the Harris County District Clerk's Office continues to foster community connections and promote diversity, making Houston a more inclusive and united place for all.



Cinco de Mayo Parade



Juneteenth Parade



Pride Parade

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In February 2023 and 2024, the Harris County District Clerk's Office (HCDCO) proudly held its annual Black History Month Celebration event, a tradition that has flourished under the leadership of District Clerk Marilyn Burgess. These events serve to honor and highlight the important contributions of African Americans throughout the history of Harris County, further cementing the HCDCO's role in preserving and sharing this rich heritage.

The celebrations are centered around insightful presentations focused on case files pulled from HCDCO historical records that document the history of African Americans who lived in Harris County. Francisco Heredia, the HCDCO's Historical Records Curator, selects these case files, working closely with the HCDCO team members who present them to the attendees. The case files provide a fascinating glimpse into the legal and social history of the African American community of Harris County, sparking thoughtful conversations and reflection.

Prominent speakers enriched the event's programming in both 2023 and 2024. In 2023, the celebration featured presentations by Marcus Esther, President of the Houston Lawyers Association (HLA), and Eric Goodwine, Senior Advisor to Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, and in 2024, Traci Gibson, President of the HLA. Their speeches highlighted the significant achievements of African Americans in the legal and political spheres, offering inspiration to all who attended the event.

Adding to the cultural atmosphere, the 2023 event also included an engaging performance by Houston's 5th Poet Laureate, Outspoken Bean. His poetic renditions, brimming with emotion and history, captivated the audience. The HCDCO Choir also contributed to the celebrations, performing powerful musical pieces that resonated deeply with those present. Additionally, a live jazz band, featuring talented members from both the County Clerk's Office and the Juvenile Probation Department, created a lively and festive ambiance.

The 2023 and 2024 Black History Month Celebrations hosted by the HCDCO were marked by a spirit of community and education, reminding all in attendance of the enduring impact of African Americans in our region's history. Under the continued guidance of District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, the event has become an integral part of honoring this significant chapter of Harris County's past, offering both reflection and celebration for years to come.



DCO team member Naliyah Price delivers a captivating presentation during the Black History Month event held in 2023.



Members of the DCO Choir pose for a group photo after one of our BHM events held at the Jury Assembly Building.



Brandon Walton, from the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department and Mistah Jones from the Harris County Clerk's Office play the keyboard and the trumpet at one of our BHM events.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

In March 2023 and 2024, the Harris County District Clerk's Office (HCDCO) hosted its 1st and 2nd Annual Women's History Month Celebration events, honoring the valuable contributions of women throughout American history. These events were a time to reflect on the often-overlooked achievements of women and to celebrate their lasting impact on society.

The celebrations focused on recounting the stories of remarkable women, ensuring their legacies remain alive and fostering a renewed appreciation for their causes. By highlighting these influential figures, the HCDCO seeks to remind everyone of the immense role women have played in shaping our nation's history.

At both events, the HCDCO spotlighted four trailblazing women from our historical archive who made indelible marks on Texas history. Their stories were shared with attendees, creating a deep sense of admiration and respect for their contributions.



DCO team member Gisselle Ramirez offered an insightful presentation at one of our Women's History Month events.

“

EACH TIME A WOMAN STANDS UP FOR HERSELF, SHE STANDS UP FOR ALL WOMEN.

”

– MAYA ANGELOU

The celebrations were not just about reflection, but also about joy and unity. Guests were treated to lively performances by the HCDCO Choir, led by the talented Marcella Harris, HR-Sr. Specialist/Training and Development & Tour-Visitors Coordinator. The choir brought energy and enthusiasm with renditions of classic songs like “I’m Every Woman,” “Girl on Fire,” and “Respect,” creating an uplifting atmosphere throughout the event.

In addition to the performances, attendees enjoyed a fun trivia contest, where door prizes were awarded to those who showcased their knowledge of women's history. The celebrations were a great success, with a strong sense of community and appreciation for the incredible women who have shaped the world.

The HCDCO is proud to continue honoring Women's History Month, ensuring that the stories of these powerful women are celebrated and remembered for years to come.



DCO team members enjoying the Women's History Month event 2023.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

The Harris County District Clerk's Office is a proud participant in the annual National Night Out event hosted by Harris County Precinct 6 Constable Silvia Trevino.

National Night Out is aimed to foster community spirit and strengthen relationships between neighbors and local law enforcement. It promotes safety and crime prevention through block parties, cookouts, and fun activities, while also providing an opportunity for residents to meet police officers, firefighters, and first responders in a family friendly setting.

Each year, this event is a great success, drawing thousands of attendees who enjoy free food, beverages, entertainment, and door prizes. The District Clerk's Office distributed outreach items showcasing the great work of our office, making the event both fun and impactful.

Notable attendees from the 2023 and 2024 National Night Out events include U.S. Representative Sylvia Garcia, Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, and Stella Mireles, founder of "Safe Walk Home." It's always a joy to engage with the community in such a positive, meaningful way and to celebrate the partnerships that make our neighborhoods stronger and safer.



OVER **2,000**
ATTENDEES IN 2024



DCO Management members and District Clerk Marilyn Burgess giving away prizes at National Night Out 2023.



DCO team members volunteering at the DCO's National Night Out booth in 2024.



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



Each year in September, the Harris County District Clerk's Office (HCDCO) celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month, honoring the contributions and rich cultural history of the American Latino community. Our office marks this occasion with vibrant events that brought together historical case presentations from our historical archive, live performances, and delicious treats, creating a memorable celebration of Latino culture in Houston.

During the event, the HCDCO highlights the significant impact of Hispanic Americans in our city and the United States. The celebrations include historical case presentations curated by Francisco Heredia, Supervisor of Historical Records. These presentations focus on notable Hispanic figures from Harris County's history, such as Tejano legend Selena Quintanilla-Pérez, baseball legend Jose Cruz, and activist Jose Campos Torres. HCDCO team members also deliver presentations about historical cases, each offering a unique insight into the history of Harris County's Hispanic community.

In addition to the case presentations, the celebrations feature lively performances, adding a dynamic cultural element to the festivities. Attendees enjoy treats such as paletas and fresh limonada, which offered a taste of Hispanic culture and further enhanced the spirit of the event.

The HCDCO takes this time to recognize its own Hispanic team members and celebrate their contributions to the office and the community. Hispanic Heritage Month serves as a reminder of the beautiful cultural impact that Latino Americans have had on the city of Houston and the nation as a whole. Through events like these, the HCDCO continues to honor and celebrate the diversity that makes Harris County such a vibrant and dynamic place to live and work.



Ballet Folklórico Azteca de Houston deliver a remarkable performance at the 2024 Hispanic Heritage Month event.



DCO team members enjoying the Hispanic Heritage Month festivities.



District Clerk Marilyn Burgess and DCO Communications Specialist Michelle Wojcik give out door prizes at the 2023 Hispanic Heritage Month event.

2024 FALL FESTIVAL

On October 26, the DCO held its very first Fall Festival at our Records Center, located in the heart of Houston's East End. This event was a fantastic opportunity for DCO team members and their families to come together, strengthen connections, and create lasting memories. With fun-filled games, delicious food, and our spine-tingling haunted house, everyone had a chance to unwind and enjoy some quality time together. It was an amazing event, with over 400 employees and family members in attendance.

A huge thanks to all the DCO team members that worked so hard putting together the event and manning booths. We look forward to hosting this event for years to come!



DCO team members hosting a fun game during the Fall Festival.



Chief Deputy of Courts Judith Snively, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, and Chief Deputy of Administration Wes McCoy show off their costumes.

A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT THE DCO'S TRIAL EXHIBIT ROOM

The Harris County Records Center at 5900 Canal Street houses a large collection of exhibits from both civil and criminal trials in Harris County. Rhonda Spinks, our Senior Criminal Exhibit Clerk, plays a vital role in managing requests for these records from documentary filmmakers, journalists, and the public. With nearly 27 years of experience, Rhonda is a cornerstone of our Records team.

"The Evidence Room" is a true crime documentary series produced by KPRC Ch. 2 that explores the role of evidence in solving criminal cases. It provides an inside look at real investigations, showing how evidence is collected, preserved, and analyzed.

Rhonda has assisted the producers by pulling exhibits for the show and even appears in an episode, sharing insights of her work. The show emphasizes how every piece of evidence can be pivotal in building a case and how even small details can lead to breakthroughs in solving complex crimes.

In addition to overseeing the retrieval of evidence, Rhonda is responsible for ensuring that the materials are provided accurately and in compliance with legal protocols. She navigates the complexities of managing sensitive records with precision, helping documentary producers and other visitors obtain the necessary copies or recordings in a timely manner.

Rhonda also takes on an educational role by leading tours for a variety of groups, such as students, journalists, and legal professionals. During these tours, she provides a behind-the-scenes look at the operations of our Criminal Exhibits Room and explains the crucial role the facility plays in preserving evidence for the criminal justice system.

Rhonda often highlights notable cases, such as the 2013 Stiletto Killer case, to help her audience understand the lasting impact of the work done at the Records Center.



Rhonda Spinks holding up the infamous stiletto from the 2013 Stiletto Killer case during a tour of the DCO's Records Center.

Watch *"The Evidence Room"* featuring Rhonda Spinks:



DCO HOSTS COURTHOUSE COMPLEX TOURS IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON

In 2023 and 2024, the Harris County District Clerk's Office (HCDCO) hosted a variety of educational tours, offering unique experiences for different groups to learn about our justice system, courthouse operations, and the history of the HCDCO.

Some of these tours included: in April 2023, the HCDCO welcomed a group of 4th-grade students from St. Ambrose Catholic School. The students attended a hearing in the 269th Civil District Court and participated in a mock trial. They also received presentations from Judge Lauren Reeder, Justice Richard Hightower, and County Commissioner Lesley Briones, concluding the day with a tour of the Jury Assembly Plaza and a Q&A session with HCDCO staff.

In October 2023, the HCDCO hosted students from the University of Houston's Hobby School of Public Affairs. The students learned about the District Clerk's role in supporting over 100 Harris County courts and had the opportunity to ask insightful questions. District Clerk Marilyn Burgess, along with Judge Raúl Rodríguez, of County Criminal Court at Law No. 13, and Judge Andrea Beall, of the 185th Criminal District Court, provided valuable perspectives and encouragement.

In November 2023, the HCDCO hosted several notable tours. On November 8, criminal justice students from Lone Star College attended a tour where they sat in on public trials and met with Judge Belinda Hill to gain deeper insight into the criminal justice system. The following day, the DCO welcomed a group of Girl Scouts, who toured the courthouse complex and visited the Charles Bacarisse Historical Documents Room, guided by our curator, Francisco Heredia, who shared the history of Texas through a variety of historical records.



Chief Deputy of Courts Judith Snively speaks to 4th Grade students from St. Ambrose Catholic School.



Students from the University of Houston's Hobby School of Public Affairs pose for a picture with Judge Raúl Rodríguez of the County Criminal Court at Law #13.



Criminal Justice students from Lone Star College - University Park post for a photo with District Clerk Marilyn Burgess.

DCO HOSTS COURTHOUSE COMPLEX TOURS IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON



Polk County officials pose for a photo with District Clerk Marilyn Burgess in the Charles Bacarisse Historical Document Room.

On November 13, 2023 Francisco Heredia also led a tour for Polk County officials, including District Clerk Bobbye Christopher, County Judge Sydney Murphy, and Clerk Schelana Hock. The Polk County District Clerk's Office was exploring the idea of creating a historical documents room of their own and visited us for inspiration, guidance, and helpful tips.

The group explored the Charles Bacarisse Historical Document Room and the Judge Mark Davidson Archives, where they learned about significant historical cases and records, including the 1839 case of Sam Houston vs. Mirabeau B. Lamar and the 1995 case of State of Texas vs. Yolanda Saldivar.



Girl Scout Troop 132372 in the Charles Bacarisse Historical Document Room with curator Francisco Heredia.

In June 2024, interns from the Harris County Attorney's Office toured the courthouse complex and learned about the case intake process and observed courtroom proceedings.

That same month, Summer Legal Interns from the Communities in Schools (CIS) Program and the Houston Bar Association learned about the work of our I.T. department during their tour.

In August 2024, Girl Scout Troop 132372 toured the Civil Courthouse. They met with Judge Gloria Lopez of the 308th Family Court, and learned about the courthouse's I.T. systems.



Houston AARP Members in a jury box in the Civil Courthouse.

In September 2024, local AARP members from Houston participated in a tour of various courtrooms and learned about the courthouse's history, concluding their visit with a tour of the 1910 Courthouse, one of the architectural jewels of Houston.

These tours allowed participants to engage with the legal system, gain a deeper understanding of courthouse operations, and appreciate the work the District Clerk's Office does serving Harris County residents.



**Scan the QR code
to learn more
about tours with
the DCO!**

SUMMER INTERNS 2023

Since 2009, the Harris County District Clerk's Office (HCDCO) has been dedicated to providing valuable internship opportunities to law students aspiring to make their mark in the legal field. As a cornerstone of the local justice system, the office understands the importance of hands-on experience and aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice.

In 2023, the HCDCO proudly hosted two interns who learned about the dynamic and challenging world of legal administration.

Internships at the HCDCO offer students a unique opportunity to engage with the inner workings of Texas' largest county.

Interns are given a comprehensive view of the operations and responsibilities that come with managing public records, filing legal documents, and supporting the county's judicial processes. The experience is invaluable for anyone looking to pursue a career in law.

By offering these internships, the HCDCO not only helps students develop essential professional skills but also plays a crucial role in helping the next generation of legal professionals. The interns gain insight into the intricacies of the judicial system, all while learning our office's mission of ensuring efficient and accurate processing of legal documents in Harris County.



2023 summer interns meet District Clerk Marilyn Burgess to recap their experiences from their internships.

"We are excited to offer these opportunities to young people eager to learn about the legal system," said the Harris County District Clerk. "Internships are a key way we can contribute to the development of future legal professionals, and we are committed to providing enriching experiences that give interns a strong foundation for their careers."

The internship program, a staple of the Harris County District Clerk's Office, continues to impress with its ability to provide valuable real-world exposure to law students while nurturing their interest in various legal fields. "Our interns are always focused and are the very best!", said Anthony Leatherman, Human Resources Team Lead, who has coordinated the HCDCO's internship program since the summer of 2011. His dedication to fostering the next generation of legal professionals remains evident, and with each passing year, the program's success only grows stronger.

As the interns look ahead to their legal careers, many will carry with them the lessons learned during their summer experience in Harris County's courts, guided by the mentorship and opportunities provided by the District Clerk's Office.



2023 Summer Interns pose for a picture with DCO management team members.

SUMMER INTERNS 2024

In May 2024, Harris County District Clerk's Office hosted a highly successful Summer Law School Intern Program, bringing together six bright law students from two renowned law schools: South Texas College of Law and the University of Houston Law Center. The program, led by Anthony Leatherman, Team Leader of Human Resources, proved to be an insightful experience for the interns as they immersed themselves in the inner workings of the court system.

The interns, who were split into two groups based on their academic standing, were eager and enthusiastic from start to finish. Half of the group was about to begin their first year of law school in the Fall of 2024, while the other half had just completed their first year in May of 2024. Throughout the program, all six students were deeply engaged in various court sections, keen to learn the practical processes that form the foundation of the legal profession.

Upon the completion of the internship program, the students reflected on their experiences and shared their aspirations. The interns were split in their interests, with some gravitating toward Criminal Law, while others leaned toward Family Law. Those who showed an interest in Family Law found the experience especially enlightening.



Chief Deputy of Courts Judith Snively speaks to 2024 interns during their farewell reception.



2024 Summer Interns pose for a photo with DCO management team members.

One student commented on the emotional impact of witnessing trials saying, "The issues presented at the trial I watched were emotional and helped me understand the complex needs of a Family Lawyer." Another intern noted how the emotional investment of lawyers during cases demonstrated their commitment, stating, "Getting to see lawyers show emotion to the case displays how much they care."

The students drawn to Criminal Law expressed their excitement about the dynamic and fast-paced environment of criminal trials. They agreed that the intensity and speed of these cases were what appealed to them most, as they enjoyed the challenge and adrenaline of the courtroom.

Anthony Leatherman, Team Leader of Human Resources, who has led the internship program since its inception in the Summer of 2011, expressed his satisfaction with how the program has evolved over the years. "The rotation schedule allows our interns to decide which field of law they would like to practice," he explained. "Since the start of this program, I have continued to tweak the program and make improvements based on the feedback that we receive from each intern class. I also create some new ideas of my own. I have to say that I am pleased with how much stronger the program becomes year after year."



ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE

BIANNUAL

REPORT | 2023-2024

2023 PUBLIC OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR

In March of 2023, District Clerk Marilyn Burgess received the Public Official of the Year Award bestowed by the Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program of the University of Houston (UH). Ms. Burgess received this recognition for the achievements she and the DCO team have accomplished, such as making jury service more convenient, developing multiple electronic solutions that help modernize the justice system in Harris County, as well as being focused on customer service, efficiency, transparency, and community outreach.

Each year, the UH MPA Program recognizes public officials who exemplify strength in ethical decision making; a commitment to the welfare of the citizenry; and an ability to maintain fluid working relationships across jurisdictional boundaries.



“These officials exhibit qualities consistent with those of the MPA Program—trust, accountability, performance, ethical decision-making and crossing jurisdictional boundaries to solve problems. We are honored to have them recognized as distinguished public officials.”

-James Thurmond, former director of the UH MPA program and current professor of practice at the Hobby School.



District Clerk Burgess with her fellow winners of the award from L to R: Steve Floyd, former City Manager of Dayton; Laura Richard, Fort Bend County Clerk; Dr. Robert Bostic, Superintendent of the Stafford Municipal School District; and Dedrick Johnson, Mayor of Texas City.



UH MPA Program Director Peter Koelling and District Clerk Marilyn Burgess.

DCO I.T. ADMINISTRATOR TRACY HOPPER MAKES HISTORY

On September 1, 2023 our very own I.T. Administrator Tracy Hopper made history by being appointed as a voting board member of the Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT), by the U.S. Supreme Court! Since 2014 Tracy has served as a JCIT non-voting liaison member and is now a board member with full voting privileges.

The JCIT is composed of 15 members appointed, under statute, by the Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court. A member of the JCIT serves a staggered two-year term subject to reappointment.

Tracy has worked at the District Clerk's Office for over 29 years. She has filled previous roles with the office as a software developer, project coordinator, application manager, Assistant Director of Application Development, and Director of Technical Services. Tracy helped architect, design, program, and deploy I.T. systems for the District Clerk's Office from document management to financial accounting, as well as jury, human resources, budget, external website and various other office systems.

Tracy has helped transition all the Harris Civil, Family, Criminal District Courts and County Criminal Courts from a completely paper-based circulation to an electronic system.

The Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT) was created to develop standards and guidelines for the implementation of technology in the courts of Texas. Recently, the JCIT has worked on three key issues: the expansion and governance of electronic filing; the evolution and proliferation of court case management systems; and the evolution and governance of data and technology standards affecting civil, family, juvenile or criminal justice.



I.T. Administrator Tracy Hopper speaking at 2023 CDCAT Spring Conference, hosted by the DCO.



As the DCO's IT Administrator, Tracy also attends the Integrated Justice Technology Committee (IJTC) meetings along with District Clerk Marilyn Burgess. Pictured here are District Clerk Burgess and other board members at one of their meetings in October 2023. The IJTC brings together leaders from all Harris County justice agencies, providing a platform for directors to share updates on key projects and priorities within their agencies. These meetings foster stronger collaboration, improving communication, relationships, and procedures across all involved agencies. By working together, they ensure the seamless functioning of the justice system.

HOLIDAY PARTY 2023

IT'S THE SEASON TO PARTY!

The 2023 Harris County District Clerk's Office Holiday Party was held at the beautiful and historic Sam Houston Hotel in downtown Houston. It was made possible by our fabulous Special Events Committee (SEC) and all those who supported SEC events throughout the year.

The HCDCO family enjoyed great music, food, and door prizes. This event is always a great time for staff to mingle and spend some quality time together outside of work.



DCO team members pose with Santa.



IT Administrator Tracy Hopper with her daughter-in-law Ashley Torres and son Kyle Herrington.



Team members from the DCO's Jury section.



Team Members from the DCO's Civil Intake section.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE FOR THROWING SUCH A FUN & FESTIVE PARTY!

Special Thanks to Civil Imaging Supervisor and SEC Chair Valerie Dominguez, the entire SEC team, Angie Dozier (Special Services Administrator), Aman Ahluwalia (Community & Governmental Relations Administrator), DJ Jimmy Rodriguez, and all others who helped organize our amazing Holiday Party.



Team members from the DCO's Customer Service section.

2023 END OF YEAR AWARDS

Our Employee of the Year finalists were Alan Acosta, Data Control Team Lead; Celina Chacon, Juvenile Assistant Court Clerk; Francisco Heredia, Historical Records Curator; and Kelly Newton, Probable Cause Lead Court Clerk. Congratulations to all the finalists!

Our Management Member of the Year finalists were Araceli Carrizales, Financial Services Administrator; Angie Dozier, Manager of Civil, Family, and Juvenile Courts; Adan Figueroa, Data Control Supervisor; and LaWanda Smith, Probable Cause Supervisor.

Our Team of the Year finalists were the Civil Intake team, the Data Control team, the Human Resources team, and our Probable Cause team. To us, you are all champions, and we hold your service and dedication in the highest regard.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS!



Family Intake Clerk Melissa Fortner won the 2023 Employee of the Year award.



HR Manager Irene Escobedo won the 2023 Management Member of the Year award.



The Civil Intake Section won the 2023 Team of the Year award.



2023 END OF YEAR AWARDS

MANAGEMENT MEMBER OF THE YEAR



IRENE ESCOBEDO

Irene Escobedo has been with the District Clerk's Office since 1998 and has served as an Administrative Assistant, Inventory Control Specialist, HR Coordinator, and now as Manager of HR. One of Irene's coworkers said "Irene is very purpose driven in meeting personal goals and objectives of the organization. She strives to listen to everyone's concerns to find a solution to a problem or challenge. She has built a strong HR Team."

Human Resources Manager



MELISSA FORTNER

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Melissa Fortner has been with the District Clerk's Office since June of 2018. Melissa is described by her colleagues as highly approachable, adaptable, and dependable. Family Intake Supervisor Nidia Alberto says "Melissa does their best to assist the customers while maintaining a professional demeanor. Strives to build confidence and enthusiasm with the group and has fully embraced her new role as a Senior Clerk."

Family Intake Senior Clerk



CIVIL INTAKE

TEAM OF THE YEAR

In 2023, the Civil Intake team went through a lot of change and came out much stronger. Each employee is cross-trained and assigned tasks on a rotating basis. They are on the front line dealing with the public daily and stay every day until every new case filing is processed. They process over one million filings every year.



HOLIDAY PARTY 2024



There's no better way to end off the year than with a Holiday Party! The 2024 District Clerk's Office Holiday Party was held at the Jacinto City Community Center and was organized by the amazing Special Events Committee (SEC) and all those who supported SEC events throughout the year. This event is a great time for our staff members to relax and mingle with others in the DCO family. We're grateful for the amazing team that makes our work so special every day.

Attendees were treated to amazing door prizes, a great meal, and music and dancing all night long. Special thank you to our outgoing SEC Chair Valerie Dominguez, the entire SEC Committee, and all of the DCO employees that assisted in putting this wonderful event together.



Happy
holidays



2024 END OF YEAR AWARDS



Management Member of the Year Finalists for 2024.

Congratulations to all the finalists! Our Employee of the Year finalists were Melissa Soria, FMLA and Wellness Coordinator; Shannon North, Lead Civil Court Clerk; Carmelicia Garcia, Master Lead Clerk in the Criminal District Courts; and Jessica Suarez, Lead Court Clerk in the County Criminal Courts.

Our Management Member of the Year finalists were Ricardo 'Rick' Urdiales, Records Manager; Michelle Gaines, Civil Services Manager; Diana Silva, Human Resources Supervisor; and Adan Figueroa, Data Control Supervisor.

Our Team of the Year finalists were the Criminal Collections team, the Human Resources team, and the Office Services team. You are all winners in our hearts, and your service and dedication are greatly appreciated.



Employee of the Year Finalists for 2024.



Team of the Year Finalists for 2024.

2024 END OF YEAR AWARDS

MANAGEMENT MEMBER OF THE YEAR



ARACELI CARRIZALES

Araceli Carrizales joined the DCO in 2002 as Employee Relations Clerk in HR and then she was promoted to Payroll/Benefits Specialist before moving into the Financial Services section as the Disbursement Officer. In 2017, Araceli was promoted to her current position as Financial Services Administrator. Araceli's unwavering integrity and strong work ethic make her a pillar of our office and her dedication is evident in her career progression. Araceli's commitment to excellence makes her a true role model for all of us.

Financial Services Administrator



KATRINA SOLOMON

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Katrina Solomon joined the office in 2019 and has risen from Junior Clerk to Senior to her current role as Team Lead. Civil/Family Post Trial has gone through a lot of hardship and trauma, and Katrina has been a consistent force in keeping up everyone's spirits and filling in where she was needed. Katrina is known for her attentiveness to both customers and coworkers, always offering support with a positive attitude. Katrina's willingness to go above and beyond makes her a highly valued DCO team member.

Civil/Family Post Trial Team Lead



CRIMINAL COLLECTIONS

TEAM OF THE YEAR

The Criminal Collections team collects fines and fees from County and District Criminal Courts, managing payment plans and ensuring accurate billing. Recently, they took on the responsibility of collecting and disbursing parolee restitution, worked with IT to develop a new software solution, and successfully managed nearly half a million dollars in funds to be distributed.



APPENDIX

HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE

BIANNUAL

REPORT | 2023-2024

SOCIAL MEDIA

DATA FROM JANUARY 2023
THROUGH DECEMBER 2024

Over the last two years, the Harris County District Clerk's Office has greatly increased overall social media presence and reach. Thank you to everyone who has shared valuable information and taken time to be a part of our social media content creation. Engagements can include but are not limited to clicks, views, likes, shares, reactions, retweets, etc.



657,636 Post Impressions
5,162 Followers
17.12% Engagement Rate
480 Total Posts



45,503 Post Impressions
2,901 Followers
270 Posts
1,653 Total Likes



44,415 Post Impressions
718 Followers
4.43% Engagement Rate
291 Likes
104 Post Shares



8,203 Post Impressions
1,200 Connections
505 Followers



102,000 Total Views
92,100 Watch Time Hours
915 Subscribers

SOCIAL MEDIA

DATA FROM HOOTSUITE
JAN 2023 - DEC 2024



TOP
FACEBOOK
POST

FACEBOOK PASSPORT WALK-INS POST

262K+ IMPRESSIONS
286 CLICKS
2,185 SHARES



Harris County District Clerk

Published by Hootsuite

June 28, 2024

✨ Exciting Update, Harris County ✨

The Harris County District Clerk's Office is always proactive when it comes to serving our community. That's why this week our Passport section has started accepting walk-in customers that have to submit a passport application Monday through Friday and haven't been able to schedule an appointment. This new service makes getting a passport even more convenient for Harris County residents, in addition to our Saturday passport fairs. Applicants must provide proof of U.S. citizenship, a valid photo ID, and passport photos. Detailed information about required documents and fees is available at: <https://www.hcdistrictclerk.com/.../Passport/Passport.aspx>.

Location 📍

Civil Courthouse: 201 Caroline St. (Suite 170) Houston, TX 77002

Operating Hours 🕒

Monday to Friday: 8:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

What you need to bring ✨

Proof of U.S. citizenship

A valid photo ID

Passport photos

👍❤️ 215

272 comments 2.1K shares



Like



Comment



Share

TOP
X
POST

TOP TWEET JUSTICE STARTS WITH YOU VIDEO

1,2K VIEWS
121 COMMENTS

TOP
INSTAGRAM
REEL

INSTAGRAM HISTORIC RECORDS REEL

1,523 VIEWS
104 INTERACTIONS

COURT FILING STATISTICS 2023 & 2024

YEAR	TOTAL FILINGS	REJECTED FILINGS	PERCENT REJECTED
2023	1,175,093	64,687	5.5%
2024	1,172,136	64,798	5.52%

CIVIL DIVISION

YEAR	TOTAL FILINGS	REJECTED FILINGS	PERCENT REJECTED
2023	339,882	8,681	2.6%
2024	444,084	8,912	2.0%

CRIMINAL DIVISION

We strive to keep rejected filings as low as possible.

The HCDCO hosts focus group meetings with attorneys and paralegals to provide information on e-filing tips and legislative updates. We also conduct Q&A sessions and much more.

RECORDS & IMAGING FILING STATISTICS 2023 & 2024

YEAR 2023

The HCDCO's Document Control team first prepares each document to be fed through a scanner. The scanned documents are then submitted for quality control and for coding to be digitized. Upon completion of this process, the documents are viewable on our website.

CIVIL	
NUMBER OF CIVIL PAPER DOCUMENTS PREPPED, SCANNED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	346,514
NUMBER OF CIVIL ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS RECEIVED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	2,401,401
TOTAL NUMBER OF CIVIL DOCUMENTS RECEIVED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	2,747,915
CRIMINAL	
NUMBER OF CRIMINAL PAPER DOCUMENTS PREPPED, SCANNED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	700,835
NUMBER OF CRIMINAL ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS RECEIVED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	2,343,610
TOTAL NUMBER OF CRIMINAL DOCUMENTS RECEIVED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	3,044,445

YEAR 2024

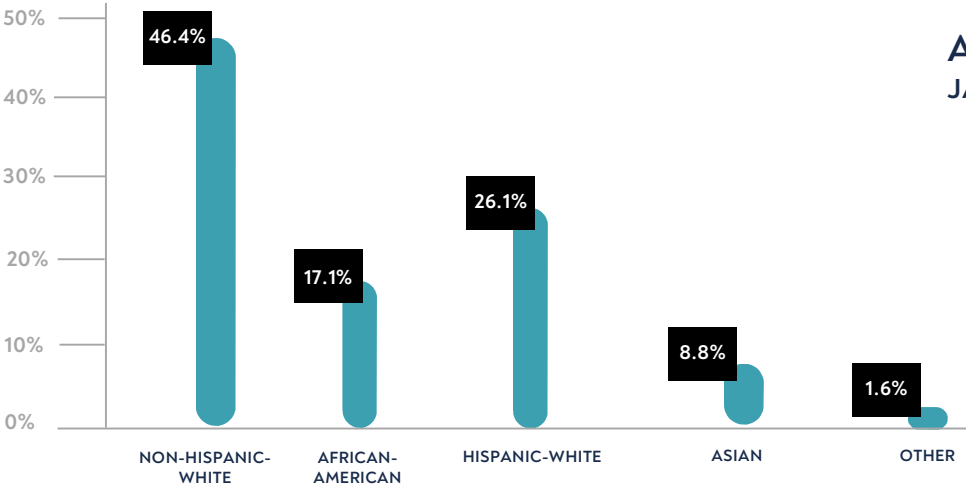
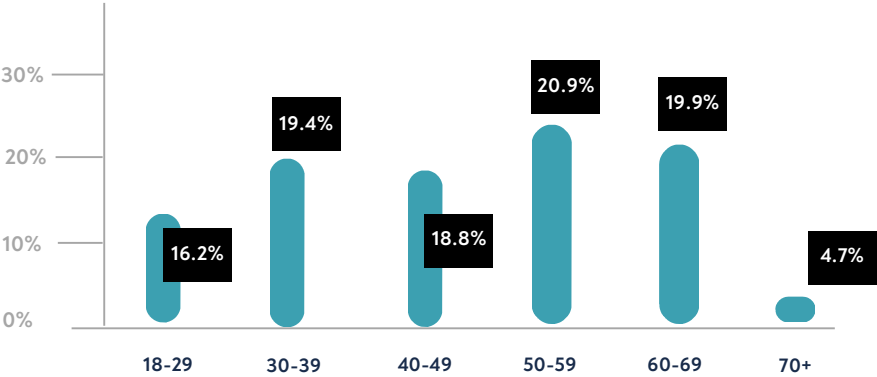
CIVIL	
NUMBER OF CIVIL PAPER DOCUMENTS PREPPED, SCANNED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	326,871
NUMBER OF CIVIL ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS RECEIVED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	2,427,004
TOTAL NUMBER OF CIVIL DOCUMENTS RECEIVED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	2,753,875
CRIMINAL	
NUMBER OF CRIMINAL PAPER DOCUMENTS PREPPED, SCANNED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	625,178
NUMBER OF CRIMINAL ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS RECEIVED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	2,361,660
TOTAL NUMBER OF CRIMINAL DOCUMENTS RECEIVED, INDEXED, & FINALIZED	2,986,838

We continuously work to reduce paper and introduce more electronic solutions.

JURY SERVICE STATISTICS 2023 & 2024

APPEARANCE RATE BY AGE JANUARY 1, 2023 - DECEMBER 31, 2024

Harris County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation. Our juries should reflect that diversity. The 18-29 years-old demographic is the one in which the HCDCO sees much room for improvement.



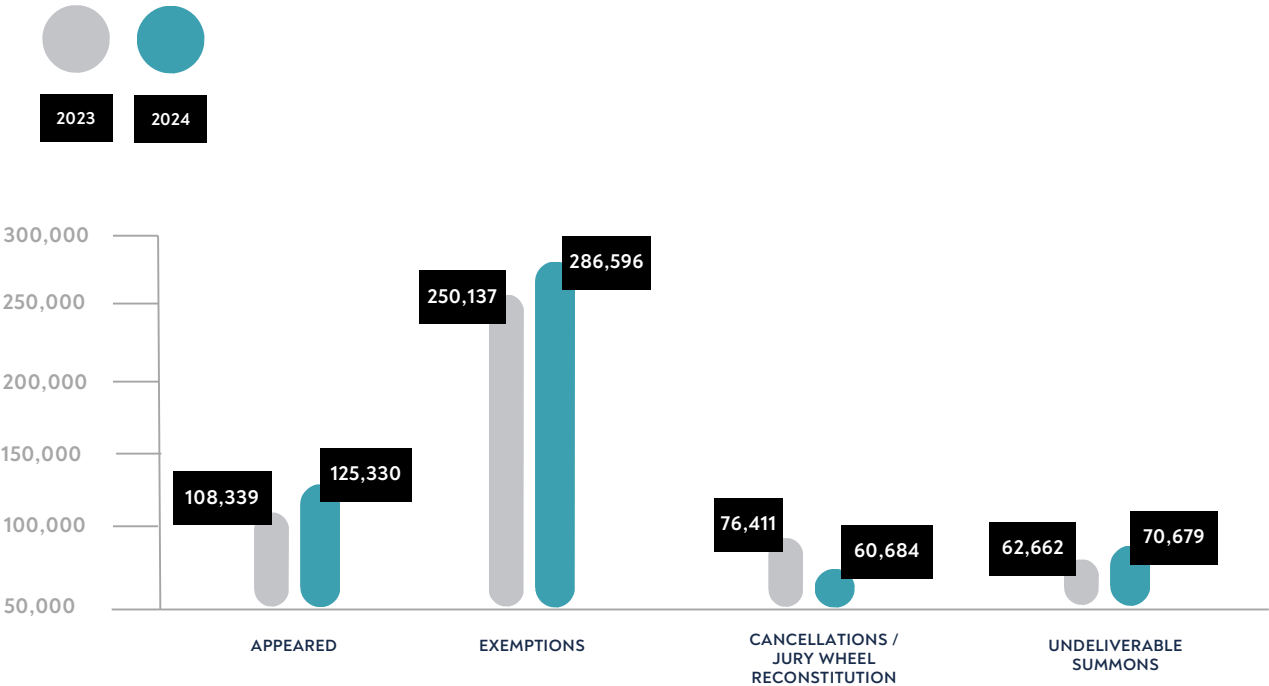
APPEARANCE RATE BY RACE JANUARY 1, 2023 - DECEMBER 31, 2024

DID YOU KNOW?
Diverse juries are more likely to be perceived to be more impartial in deliberations, leading to greater confidence in our justice system.

JURY APPEARANCE, EXEMPTIONS, CANCELLATIONS, AND UNDELIVERABLE SUMMONS

2023 SUMMONED: 933,867
2024 SUMMONED: 1,000,974

2023 NO RESPONSE: 436,318
2024 NO RESPONSE: 457,685





NOTES:

GOALS 2025-2026

1

To serve the legal community and the public at large with a commitment to accountability, innovation, and efficiency. Our work is essential, our service is exceptional.

2

Continue educating the public about the wide range of services provided by the District Clerk's Office through community outreach and social media.

3

Support the creation of new courts to increase access to justice in a timely and efficient manner.

4

Strengthen public engagement by increasing awareness of the vital role of jury service.

5

Open a satellite office for passport applications to increase accessibility and convenience to the public.

6

Create reminder notices to jurors when debit cards are about to expire.

7

Implement electronic notifications to pro se filers who opt in.

8

Complete the programing to enable compliance with legislation requiring the District Clerk to issue criminal restitution payments to victims.

9

Complete the conversion of microfilm records to digital making them accessible to the public.

10

Continue the preservation of historical documents.



hcdistrictclerk.com



[@hcdistrictclerk](https://www.facebook.com/hcdistrictclerk)



[@hcdcburgess](https://twitter.com/hcdcburgess)



[@hcdistrictclerk](https://www.instagram.com/hcdistrictclerk)