



**CENTERS OF
EXCELLENCE**
A Judicial Branch Initiative

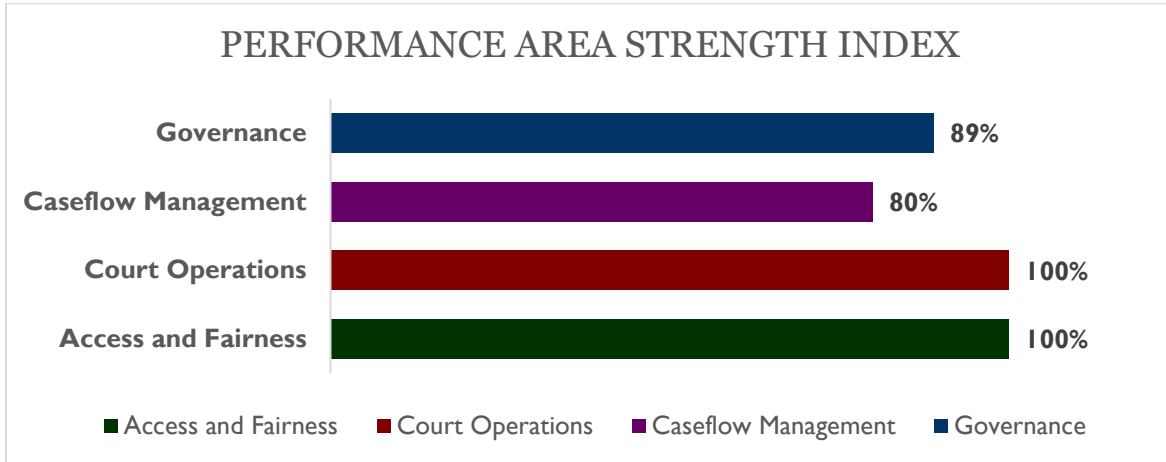
**Centers of Excellence Nomination Report on Travis County
Justice of the Peace Precinct 3, Austin, Texas**

Presiding Judge: Honorable Sylvia Holmes
April 26th, 2024

Introduction to Travis County Justice of the Peace Precinct 3

Justice of the Peace Precinct 3, Travis County, is one of four justices of the peace in the county. Serving 1.29 million residents with jurisdiction on Class C misdemeanors, traffic violations, small civil claims, and evictions. The court primarily serves an urban population and holds a heavy civil docket.

Baseline Performance Measures:



Travis County Justice of the Peace 3, scored strongly across all four performance areas, but stood exemplary in **Court Operations** and **Access and Fairness**. The court provides ample resources and information to court users and court visitors. Forms, appropriate attire standards, and information on what to expect when visiting the court are provided online in both English and translated Spanish. The court also maintains ongoing relationships with Lively Middle School and McNeil High School, for which Judge Holmes supports regular court in the classroom field trips. With regards to **Court Operations**, the Justice of the Peace 3 maintains a robust set of standard operating procedures that outline staff duties, policies, and provides in depth technical guidance relating to the use of their Odyssey Case Management System. Also included in those procedures are standards for **Caseflow Management** and case review.

Post Centers of Excellence Performance Measures:

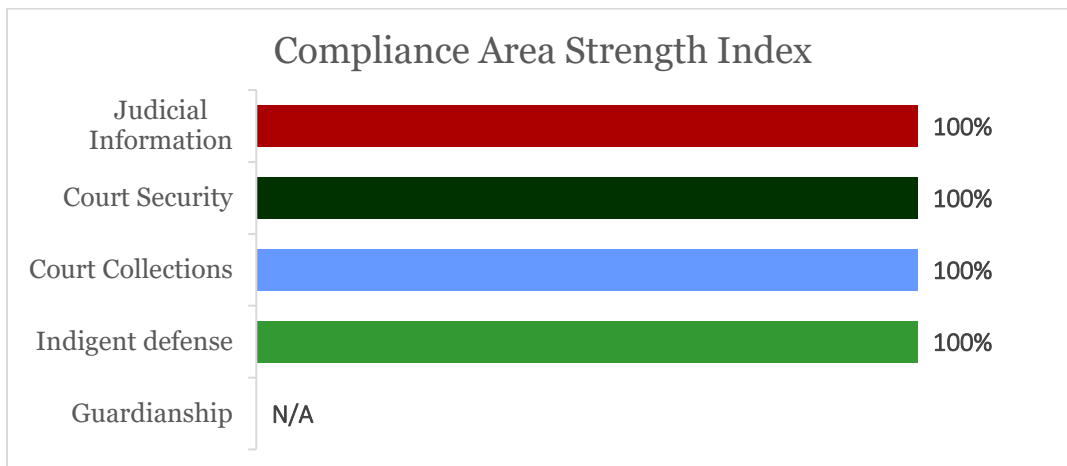


Judge Sylvia Holmes runs a unique court. Relative to other Justices of the Peace in the Centers of Excellence Program, Justice of the Peace 3 in Travis County has a higher percentage of civil cases. This requires the court to specialize its focus around a varied civil docket, and ensure that it can readily call and seat jurors for civil hearings relating to evictions and small claims, while still maintaining a criminal docket and providing service for the payment of fines, adjudicating deferred disposition, and supporting driver safety for related traffic offenses.

This requires a skilled and nuanced caseflow management process that leverages the court’s case management system effectively and allows staff to be responsive to the specific needs of a diverse set of court visitors and users—a requirement the court meets regularly. It also requires that staff be knowledgeable on the various process and statuses of cases to effectively support its users.

Compliance Areas

Justice of the Peace 3, Travis County holds dual jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters. It does not handle inquests or conduct magistrations on behalf of Travis County. The court maintains regular required reporting on all required areas in under statute. It maintains regular reporting through the associated constable’s office on security related incidents and keeps robust records of all fine payments and misdemeanors through its case management system and caseflow management principles. As a lower court it does not handle probate matters or guardianship. It does provide resources to individuals who may be indigent or have an inability pay associated court costs.



Summary of Findings

Judge Holmes places a strong emphasis on individualized justice. Along with her staff, she strives to ensure that each court user or visitor is heard fairly and promptly on their issues, whether they relate civil or criminal matters before her court. To that end, she has fostered strong relationships with other courts in Travis County, and other branches of government, including the local school district. Coupled with strong administrative acumen, an emphasis on transparency and accessibility, and a dedication to professional and timely court operations, Judge Holmes exemplifies the practice of excellence in judicial administration.

Judge Holmes is a long standing and dedicated public servant. She is dedicated to being of service to the greater Austin Community and Travis County in her role as Justice of the Peace, as well as to the state of Texas as a whole. She is currently the editor of the Justices of the Peace and Constables Associates newsletters and continues to stand as a leader amongst the Justices of the Peace in Texas.