

AdCo CJCC Court Appearance Subcommittee

February 12, 2013
2 - 4 p.m.

Thornton Municipal Court
9551 Civic Center Dr, Thornton
Court Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Attendees

Members Present

Sharon Dunlap (Chair), Ben Stough, Carol Barnhardt, Roger Kelley

Others Present

Beth Daniel, CJCC Planner/Analyst

Agenda Items

Call meeting to order:

✓ Sharon Dunlap called the meeting to order.

Discuss local FTA data:

Beth Daniel presented updated data and analysis regarding local FTAs. The updated information presented in the FTA and Court Date Reminder Program Analyses study (updated 02-12-13) included municipal court data from Commerce City, Federal Heights, Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster, as well as county and district court data from the 17th Judicial District. The importance of defining FTA data (i.e. cases vs. hearings) was again emphasized by the subcommittee members as evidence of the variability in FTA rates depending on the denominator as seen in the study findings. For example, Thornton's FTA rate, when calculated using the number of cases from June through October 2012, was 11.34%; however, when calculated using the number of hearings (a more accurate method), it was 7.78%. This distinction is important and should be recognized and articulated in the tracking and analysis of future data.

Discuss feasibility of data collection and tracking per jurisdiction:

Although the FTA rate calculation method utilizing the number of hearings is the preferred method for its direct correlation and accurate, descriptive nature, the number of hearings is also the most difficult to track for court administrators. It is still unknown if all jurisdictions will be able to track and provide this data.

Discuss additional findings for a Court Date Notification Program:

The City of Westminster and the 17th Judicial District are continuing to pursue implementation of a court date reminder program for their jurisdictions in the near future. The 17th Judicial District is planning a pilot program that will hopefully begin this spring and will focus initially on traffic cases, as those have the highest failure to appear rate for county cases - 12.44% compared with 8.58% for misdemeanor cases and 3.70% for felony cases when calculated using the number of hearings. The pilot program will be evaluated after six months to determine any impact it may have on the 17th Judicial District traffic case FTA rate.

Westminster is also in the planning phase for implementation of a court date reminder program sometime later this year. Updates will continue for both jurisdictions, as well as the City of Thornton, which currently has a court date reminder program in place.

The subcommittee recommends that each jurisdiction within Adams County review their FTA data and the various reminder program types and analyses to determine the feasibility of such a program in their jurisdiction. The program most suited for a jurisdiction will vary depending on each jurisdiction's goals. For example, if cost is the most important factor, then a jurisdiction should conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine if the potential number and cost savings of a reduction in FTAs would exceed the implementation and operational

CJCC Purpose

To provide an ongoing forum for leaders from the criminal justice agencies, general governments, and communities in Adams County to discuss and prioritize public safety and criminal justice issues and coordinate resources to address issues in the most evidence-based, cost-effective, and equitable ways possible.

costs of a reminder program. Written reminder notices seem to be the least expensive to implement and operate and may be a viable option for courts focused on costs. For those jurisdictions whose goal is a reduction in the FTA rate and a tool to increase customer service, program costs may be less important and, therefore, a live caller program may be the preferred reminder method.

The cost of reminder programs also depends on each jurisdiction's current capabilities and programs. For jurisdictions with calling systems already in place for other purposes, such as utility billing, etc., the cost of an automated reminder program may be less than for a jurisdiction without such a system in place. The same is true for live caller programs and the downtime of a jurisdiction's existing employees.

Determine next meeting date, time, and location:

The subcommittee will hold off on scheduling the next meeting until after the recommendation has been made to the CJCC and further instructions are provided to the Court Appearance Subcommittee.

Adjourn

- ✓ Sharon Dunlap adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting

TBD