

In Travis County, the Downtown Austin Community Court offers an alternative approach to handling certain low level offenses by pairing judicial resolution with immediate access to housing, behavioral health care, and basic needs support. Rather than processing eligible Class C misdemeanors through a traditional punitive model, the court connects participants to intensive case management and community services that address homelessness, mental health conditions, and substance use. The court also deploys outreach teams that work alongside public safety and health partners to engage individuals in downtown Austin, parts of east Austin, and the University of Texas west campus area, helping stabilize people before situations escalate.

What makes this practice innovative in Texas is its integration of court operations with on site service navigation and mobile engagement. By embedding case managers and social service coordination into the court process itself, the model reduces barriers that often prevent justice involved individuals from accessing care. Its emphasis on housing stability, coordinated service delivery, and collaborative problem solving demonstrates how municipal courts can function as entry points to support rather than solely as venues for fines and punishment.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/downtown-austin-community-court-with-yvonne-mboss/id1677615965?i=1000679509691>

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/community-court/about>

<https://csgjusticecenter.org/projects/criminal-justice-mental-health-learning-sites/austin>

[https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/05-2023/community\\_court.html](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/05-2023/community_court.html)