



**CENTERS OF
EXCELLENCE**
A Judicial Branch Initiative

**Centers of Excellence Nomination Report on Dallas County
Justice of the Peace Precinct 1, Place 2, Dallas, Texas**

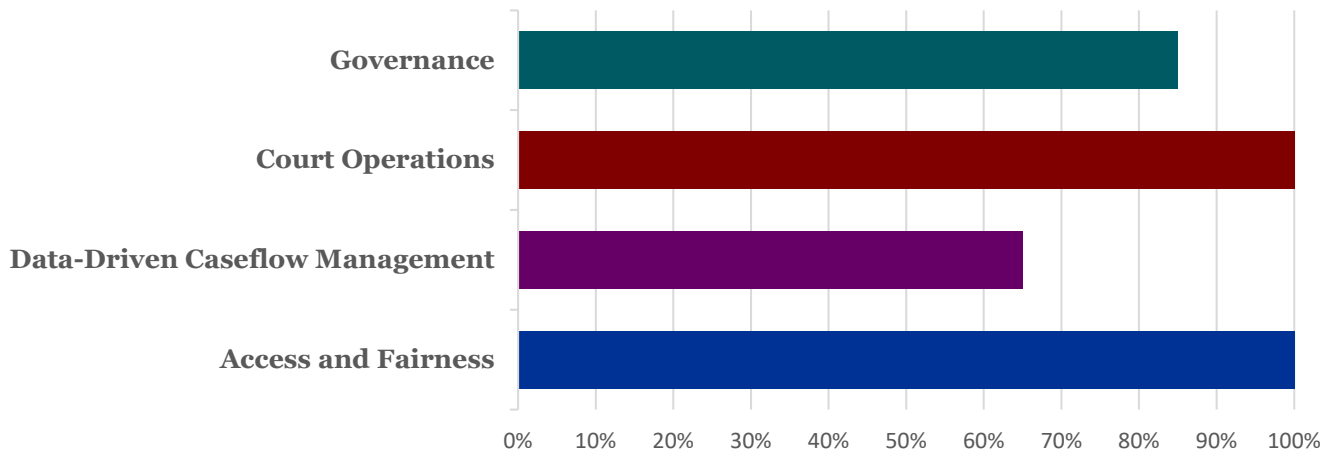
Presiding Judge: Honorable Valencia Nash
September 27th, 2024

Introduction to Dallas County Justice of the Peace Precinct 1, Place 2

Justice of the Peace Precinct 1 Place 2, Dallas County, is one of ten justices of the peace for Dallas County, home to over 2.6 million residents. Judge Nash is one of two justices serving the largest precinct in the county stretching from downtown Dallas, to DeSoto, and east into Lancaster. Justice of the Peace 1-2 has jurisdiction over criminal misdemeanors, traffic cases, evictions, small claims, dangerous animals, and animal cruelty cases.

Baseline Performance Measures:

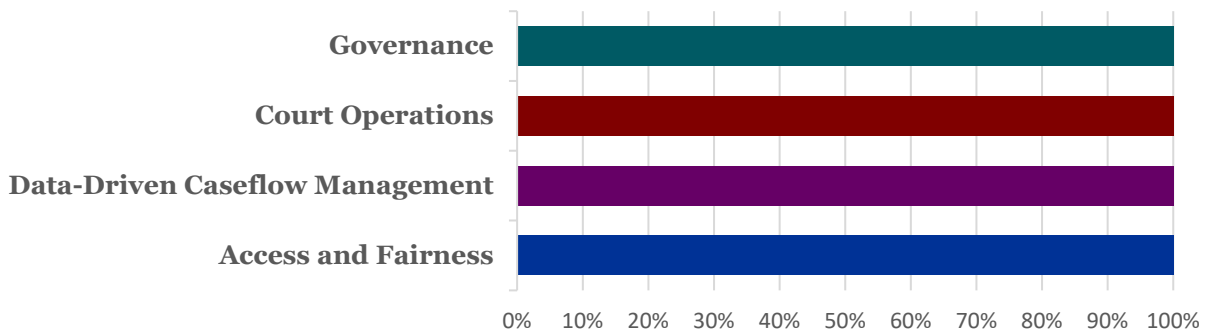
Performance Area Strength Index



Dallas Justice of the Peace 1-2 was a strong performer in the *Court Operations* and *Access and Fairness Performance Areas*. There was significant opportunity for improvement in the *Data-Driven Caseflow Management* area. This is driven largely by Judge Nash’s ongoing transition to the Odyssey Case Management System. Prior to October 2022, justice of the peace courts in Dallas did not have a dedicated case management system and were tracking caseflow manually in paper files. Since 2022, the court has made significant strides towards digitizing records, including archival records, and is striving towards a paperless process.

Post Centers of Excellence Performance Measures:

Performance Area Strength Index



Judge Valencia Nash is a stalwart public servant and committed member of her community. Beyond that, she is an effective administrator and assiduous judge. What stands out most about her court is the way in which each function of the court is tied in and reinforced through the day-to-day court operations. At the windows, Judge Nash uses a sign in and ticketing system to track where court visitors are getting service. This allows her Chief Clerk to identify areas where staff may need training and allows senior staff to provide on the spot support to court users.

This translates further into her calendar, where dockets are kept on a regular schedule every week, and where good caseflow management practices allow Judge Nash to set the docket and ensure every case is heard within the time set on the calendar. This is further aided by a seamless hybrid court model, wherein Judge Nash utilizes her Zoom license to its fullest extent, using her physical court spaces to set up Zoom Rooms and transition seamlessly between live hearings and virtual ones.

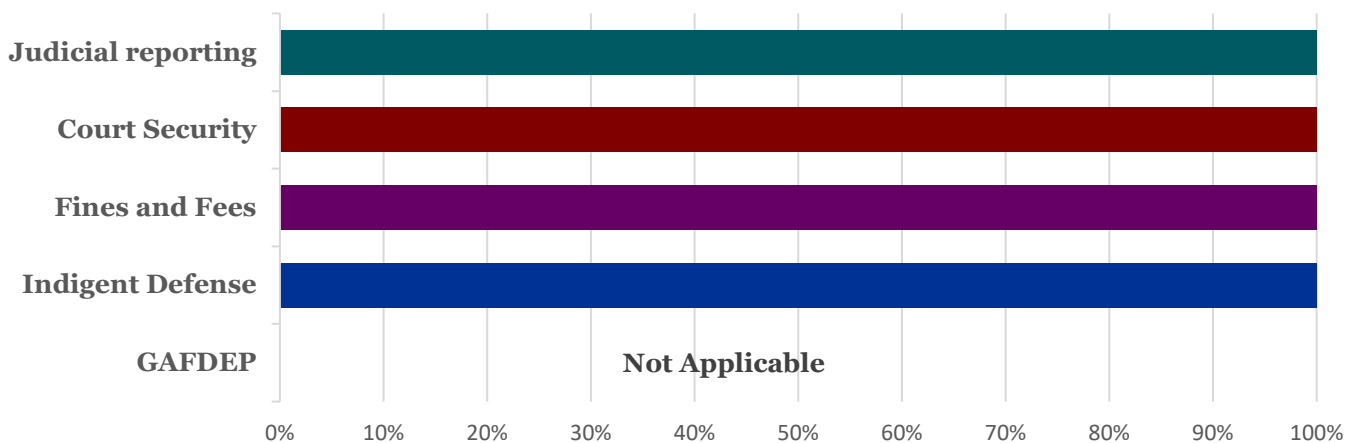
This functionality provides greater access to justice for the court visitors, a cause to which Judge Nash is imminently dedicated to. All forms that a court visitor could need are available in the lobby area of her court. Beyond that, forms and court guidance about what to do following a hearing are also provided in that same area.

Finally, Judge Nash maintains a relationship with the county housing department and allows the Dallas Eviction Advocacy Center and the MINT Foundation to set up tables outside her courtroom and provide direct service to court visitors. These services provide court users with additional resources above and beyond what can be provided by the court itself, often ensuring that court users can resolve their issues fully before the court and engage with further county resources in the same location.

Compliance Areas

Justice of the Peace 1-2 maintains strong compliance with each required compliance area. The court has faced challenges in the past with timely reporting, largely due to the lack of a dedicated case management system. As the court has adopted and begun configuring Odyssey to its needs, Judge Nash and her staff have coordinated with the county and a staffed business analyst to ensure that her court’s needs are met by the system and can accurately meeting the reporting requirements set by the legislature. Furthermore, the judge ensures that all available options to satisfy fines and fees are available in writing in her lobby, while providing deferred payments, community service in multiple forms, and keeping track of overdue payments.

Compliance Area Strength Index



Summary of Findings

Justice of the Peace 1-2 is one of two justices of the peace in the largest precinct in Dallas County. The issues before her court involve people spread across hundreds of square miles. Inevitably, her court processes a high volume of cases. And did so, and until recently, without the aid of a dedicated case management system. To do that, Judge Nash has consistently innovated, adapted, and adopted policies and best practices that allow her to effectively and efficiently manager her court.

In 2023, Judge Nash was appointed the first Administrative Judge of Justice of the Peace Courts for Dallas County. That administrative role displays the trust and leadership that her court has developed in Dallas County. She is a dedicated jurist, concerned not only with the fullness of the law, but with sustaining the rights of her court visitors and their respective communities.