

Metropolitan General Sessions Court Nashville-Davidson County

ANNUAL REPORT
2013

"The Court of
First Resort"

This Issue

The Judges

Mental Health/Treatment Court

Environmental /Night Court

Administration Office

Traffic Safety Education

Probation/Electronic Monitoring

Dispensing Justice

Presiding Judge

William "Bill" Higgins

THE DOCKETS

The Metropolitan General Sessions Court system is committed to excellence in administering justice and is a contributing partner working toward a safe and vital community in Nashville-Davidson County. The Court handles a vast array of cases such as traffic offenses, preliminary hearings on felony and misdemeanor cases, mental health, various alcohol and drug related cases and civil related cases up to \$25,000. It is estimated that the General Sessions Court system processed cases representing over 300,000 litigants in 2013. The following is a general overview of the docket system handled by the Court:

Criminal Bond

Felony/Misdemeanor

Daily Traffic

Daily Civil

Daily Driver License/Misdemeanor

Daily Orders of Protection

Domestic Violence

Environmental

Emergency Committals

Special Committals

State Traffic

Felony Drug

Mental Health

Treatment Court

Court Jurisdiction

The Metropolitan General Sessions Court of Nashville-Davidson County serves as a very important "spoke in the wheel" as the basic foundation in the local justice system. It is a high volume limited jurisdiction Court that hears civil, misdemeanor, felony, traffic, environmental, and metropolitan ordinance violations. This court is served by 11 judges that are elected to an eight year term. There are also 5 law-trained judicial commissioners that handle the probable cause hearing's in the issuance of a criminal warrant and 1 referee that handles the environmental cases and other non-traffic metro ordinance violations. For a majority of the citizens, this level of Court will be their only encounter with the state's justice system. Consequently, it has been frequently described as "the court of first resort." The list below shows the area of law under the court's jurisdiction.

- **Criminal**—Cases in which the applicable penalty is no more than 11 months, 29 days; Preliminary Hearing; Amount and conditions of all appearance bonds; Forfeiture of property used in commission of crime; Issuance of search warrants.
- **Civil**—Civil warrants with a jurisdictional limit of \$25,000 and monetary jurisdiction is unlimited in detainer actions; Orders of Protection; Mental Health (involuntary Committal); Tuberculosis Treatment (Non-Compliance).
- **Environmental**—Animal control. Housing code violations; Building code violations.
- **Metro Ordinance**—Traffic law violations; All other county ordinance violations.

2013 Case Load Overview

Criminal-Warrants/Citations	97,017
Traffic-Metro/State	81,787
Judicial Committals	8,428
Civil	33,574
Orders of Protection	3372
Metro & Environmental	4545
Combined Caseload	228,723

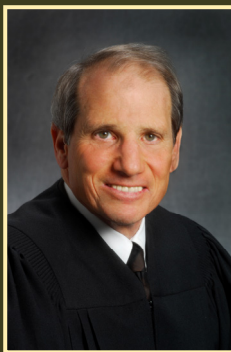
Source: Criminal Justice Planning Office, Criminal & Civil Clerk's Offices

WEB ADDRESS:
WWW.GSCOURT.NASHVILLE.GOV

General Sessions Court Judges



Judge Gale Robinson
Division I



Judge Dan Eisenstein
Division II



Judge Angelita Blackshear Dalton
Division III

Presiding Judge



Judge Gloria Dumas
Division IV



Judge Dianne Turner
Division V



Judge Michael F. Mondelli



Judge William E. Higgins
Division VII



Judge Rachel L. Bell
Division VIII



Judge Sue McKnight Evans
Division IX



Judge Casey E. Moreland
Division X



Judge John Aaron Holt
Division XI

Central Address for All Judges: Justice A.A. Birch Building,
408 2nd Ave. N., P.O. Box 196300, Nashville, TN 37219



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Mental Health Court

The Davidson County Mental Health Court celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2012. The Court was one of the first of five Mental Health Courts established in the United States.

The Mental Health Court is a part of Division II of the General Sessions Court. Judge Daniel B. Eisenstein presides over its operation. Over the past several years state funding of Mental Health services has decreased dramatically and as a result the Mental Health Court has seen a large increase in the number of people it serves. In the year 2013 Court personnel had direct contact with over 500 people who were in the criminal justice system who suffered from mental illness. The Court accepted 411 people to participate in its program during 2013.

The mission and purpose of this Court is to serve individuals in the criminal justice system who suffer from serious and persistent mental illness. The Court supervises those individuals who are accepted and choose to be in the Court. These individuals are on probation for criminal charges or on a diversion program for criminal charges. The most common period of supervision is 11 months and 29 days although some people are supervised for longer periods of time. The supervision includes developing and implementing a mental health treatment plan, finding appropriate housing when necessary, assisting in other areas of a person's life including transportation, medical services, alcohol and drug addiction treatment, and any other area that may need attention. The goal of the intensive supervision plan is to assist the individual in developing a life that does not involve the criminal justice system and to help the individual reach his or her greatest potential in society.

The Court added a new dimension to its program in 2013. A special docket for veterans has been requested, formed and now in operation. This Treatment Court has been established to assist Veterans who are on probation for criminal charges or are soon to be released from jail. A counselor with the Veterans Administration meets with these individuals at this special court docket to assist these Veterans in securing services to which they are entitled.

Program Manager
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Client Service Specialists
Patricia Breeding
Tamika Dobbins
Tonya Simmons

Administrative Assistant
Cynthia Nelson

General Sessions Court
Mental Health Court & Treatment Court

Ben West Building,
100 James Robertson Parkway
Suite 100, P.O. Box 196300
Nashville, TN 37219



Treatment Court

The General Sessions Treatment Court was recognized as 1 of 12 State Certified Drug Courts in the State of Tennessee in 2009. Under the direction of Judge Casey Moreland, certain drug offenders who have been arrested for nonviolent offenses are given opportunities to participate in a three-phase supervised rehabilitation program. They come on their own accord, because the program is available only to those who want help for their addiction. Treatment Court meets each Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. in Courtroom 4D of the Justice A.A. Birch Building.

Since its inception, the number of those opting for the treatment program has grown significantly to 95 active participants. The court offers an intensive and lengthy program, requiring from 12-18 months to successfully complete. Some find the rules too rigid and opt to serve jail time for their original offenses. Others subject themselves to electronic monitoring, four-times-a-week drug testing, alcohol monitoring and half-way house residency while taking classes in anger management, life skills and job readiness. Classes are also offered to those wishing to earn their GED diplomas. In 2013, the county realized a \$2.9 million savings in incarceration fees with participants logging 45,864 days in alternative jail time.

There are numerous members of the Treatment Court team who play key roles in the recovery of each participant. In addition to Judge Moreland, members of the team include Probation Officers, Public Defender, District Attorney, Case Managers, Electronic Monitoring, the Davidson County Sheriff's Department, the Metro Police Department and several treatment providers around the Nashville area.

2013 Activity Total

Participants from 01/01/13 to 12/31/13	179
Active Participants	95
• Phase One (61)	
• Phase Two (19)	
• Phase Three (15)	
Graduates	15
Participants in Half-way House	61
Participants on Electronic Monitoring	0
Participants in Inpatient Treatment	6
Participants Terminated from Program	44
Outstanding Warrants	25
Drug Free Babies in Treatment Court	3

Program Manager
Nancy Derrick

Probation Officers
Jimmy Waggoner
Scott Yates
Tonya Howell

Administrative Assistant
Sutton Nelson



Environmental Court

When disputes arise over enforcement of the county's environmental codes, the issues are brought before Special General Sessions Referee Jim Todd, who presides over a weekly Environmental Court Docket. The docket was created in October 2001 to address Metro Code violations pertaining to buildings, trash and debris in neighborhoods and business sites, as well as leash law cases involving nuisance complaints about barking dogs, at-large or vicious dogs.

A double docket call is held each Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. in Courtroom 5D of the Justice A.A. Birch building. Environmental, police and animal control violation cases are heard at the 1:00 p.m. time slot with civil and environmental warrants being addressed at 2:30 p.m. The combined Metro and Environmental caseload for 2013 was 4,545. Of that number 2,897 were citations for both Environmental and Metro violations and 1,648 issued through the civil clerk's office. Todd was appointed referee of the court in 2007 by Division IV Judge Gloria Dumas. He is a graduate of Memphis School of Law and previously worked for Sen. Albert Gore (1984-1989) for whom he served as assistant campaign manager during the 1998 presidential election. Additionally, he served as executive director of the Tennessee Sports Festival under former Gov. Ned McWherter (1989-1991.) Prior to entering private law practice in 2005, he was an assistant district attorney general for 12 years.



Referee Jim Todd



Judicial Commissioners

Five judicial commissioners—each possessing the qualifications of a judge—comprise what is known collectively as “Night Court,” a viable and productive extension of the General Sessions Court. The identifying label is derived from the fact that the commissioners preside over proceedings that take place after normal business hours. But it is misleading in that the panel is actually on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, serving a broad range of functions relevant to the criminal justice process.

In addition to their other job responsibilities, the commissioners:

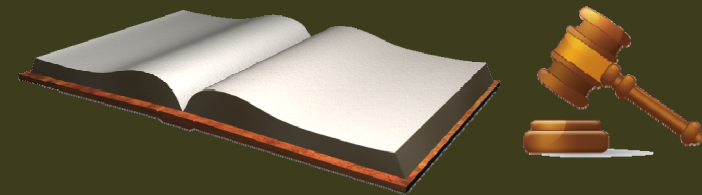
- Conduct probable cause hearings, issue warrants and set bail bonds in criminal cases
- Determine probable cause for judicial committals from county psychiatric facilities
- Issue Ex Parte Orders of Protection, as well as warrants for violations of such orders
- Issue property seizure warrants upon probable cause

Each commissioner is appointed by the court for a one-year term that dictates seven-day work weeks and alternating eight-hour work shifts with no annual leave, sick time or holiday leave time.

Activity for the 2013 Reporting Period

Warrants & Summons Issued	45,556
Conditions of Release/Orders	63,432
Emergency Committals	8,428
Mittimus for Appearance	67,282
Ex Parte Orders of Protection	3,372
Parole Violations	341
Order of Protection Violations	689
Property Seizure Hearings	1,033
Search Warrants	394

Source: Criminal Justice Planning Office, Criminal & Civil Clerk's Offices



Commissioner
Howard Taradash



Commissioner
Carolyn Phipus



Commissioner
Thomas Nelson



Commissioner
Steve Holzapfel



Commissioner
Evan Harris

**Night Court
Commissioner's Office**

Phone: (615) 862-8304



Court Administrator
Warner C. Hassell



Assistant to the
Administrator
Gina Fox

Administrative
Assistant
Angie Von Mann



Assistant Security Officer
Coordinator
Lt. Chris Edmondson



Security Officer
Coordinator
Capt. Donnie
Dixon

Address for

General Sessions Court Administration Office

Justice A.A. Birch
408 2nd Ave. N.
Suite 1140
P.O. Box 196300
Nashville, TN 37219



Court Interpreter
Coordinator
Delma Aguilar

Language Interpretations

Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 41 was promulgated to assist the courts in providing equal access to participants who have limited ability to speak or understand the English language. It is the responsibility of the court to determine whether a participant in a legal proceeding has limited ability to understand and communicate in English. In 2013 the General Sessions Court's language interpreter coordinator scheduled 8,705 total court interpretations with 8,368 of those requiring Spanish interpretations. That computes to an average of 725 court interpretations monthly. The predominant foreign languages involved include Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Laotian, Korean, Chinese, Kurdish and Somalian.



Information Systems
Application Analyst II

Brad Freeman

Technology Report

Information Services handled the following requests for the year 2013: **(T) 9,452**

Helpdesk Phone Calls	3,162
Helpdesk Emails	5,282
Helpdesk Request Walk-Ins	636
Helpdesk Calls to ITS	136
Helpdesk Calls to JIS	236

ITS—Information Technology Services
JIS—Justice Integration Services

Information Technology
Service Representative

Amber Johnson



Administration Office

According to the Metro Charter, the office of the court administrator assists the presiding judge with the improvement in the efficiency and operation of the Metropolitan General Sessions Court. These duties, include but are not limited to, the following: budget and fiscal management, personnel management, office automation management, manage multiple courtrooms' digital recording system, assist in resolving court facility issues, court interpretative services coordination, manage supplemental court security personnel, and preparation of the annual report.

Overview of Principal Services

- Daily manage the Court's budget for FY 2014 of \$10,683,400 with a total of 110 court personnel
- Review, oversee, and/or process various Metro Electronic Business system transactions:
 - Over 1,000 payment transactions totaling \$638,000
 - Over 2,500 revenue transactions totaling over \$3.8million
 - Over 150 separate payroll, human resources, and employee benefit related transactions for over a \$7.0 million payroll
- The estimated number of Metro government and court related emails received and acted upon by all services: Over 35,000
- The estimated number of total phone calls handled in 2013 by all services: Over 14,000
- Number of in-court language interpretations coordinated from over 576 email requests: 8,705
- Provide supplemental security in the public hallways and in courtrooms:
 - Over 300,000 litigants were monitored
 - Serious security related incidents: 12
 - Medical incidents reported: 7
 - Prisoners transported: 250
- Manage Master Calendar for all Courtrooms for special hearings/events: 66
- The number of web e-mails received from the public and acted upon: 207
- The number of General Services work orders submitted by the Court Administration office: 183
- The number of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations made: 34
 - 22 Criminal docket related
 - 12 Civil and/or Traffic related
 - 0 MTMHI

WEB ADDRESS: WWW.GSCOURT.NASHVILLE.GOV



Traffic Safety Education

General Sessions Traffic Education - John Slate, Director

Best Performance and Drivers License Reinstatement

The General Sessions Court Traffic School continued to win National Safety Council awards in 2013 for Best On-line and Best Defensive Driving Course (DDC) Performance. For the 5th consecutive year, the main focus has been the "Driver's License Reinstatement" (DLR) class. People who receive state citations for "driving on revoked or suspended license" have their driving history analyzed and an individual plan devised to assist them with the often complicated reinstatement process. Both English and Spanish DLR, DDC4 and DDC8 classes are now regularly used as a an "under advisement" plea offered by the assistant District Attorneys (DA). Individuals completing these classes may avoid jail-time, provided no new arrests occur resulting in subsequent state citations for additional unlicensed driving offenses.

Annually, in 2013, 31,043 persons enrolled in DLR and DDC classes. The DLR enrollments alone grossed \$829,030. The DDC classes grossed \$1,823,941.41, producing a combined annual earnings of \$2,652,971.41, which was a \$63,043.12 annual increase over 2012. Additional DA referrals to DDC4, DDC8 and ADD8 for state-citation defendants attributed to the increase.

On-line Enrollments

2013 was the seventh full year of the on-line Traffic School operation in which 14,228 persons enrolled in traffic schools on-line, totaling \$1,209,380, a decrease of \$57,630 from 2012 online income. The revenue decrease is attributed to the 6,717 drop in moving violations in 2013.

Customer Service

The new "point-of-sale" process integrated into the traffic school software is proving to be an asset by speeding up the length of time it takes to enroll at the counter. The multiple reports generated by the upgrade also provided a more in-depth audit trail.

The "Interactive Voice Recognition" (IVR) System was launched in 2013. This new system allows customers to enroll in the traffic School with a debit or credit card without speaking directly to a school representative. This new service serves a two-fold purpose in that it's convenient to the public on a 24/7 basis and allows staff to provide more individualized attention to walk-in customers.

The General Sessions Traffic School remains one of the best operated programs in the country and is a model according to the National Safety Council's (NSC) court division. Many online programs try to copy our services but still cannot provide matched curriculums for both online and live classes.

The State of Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security approves the standardized curriculums through the NSC and certifies our instructors and programs each year. The NSC curriculums are accepted in all 50 States and used by all branches of the military both in the U.S. and a broad.

In 2013, NSC re-appointed the Traffic School Director to a third term on the "International Advisory Committee" (IAC) in which he has served on since 2007. The committee meets yearly to update the various NSC "Defensive Driving" courses. Aside from members from all regions of the United States, the IAC now has members representing the U.S. Marines, U.S. Air Force, and two countries, Argentina and the United Kingdom.

Traffic Safety Courses

- **FIRST OFFENDER (FOT)** —a four-hour curriculum covering traffic safety rules and consequences, including laws on seat belts, child restraint, speeding, DUI and most commonly committed traffic offenses.
- **ALIVE AT 25 (A25, 4-Hour)**—designed to reduce risk-taking behavior such as driving distracted among people 15-24 years of age and utilizes embedded video and group discussions.
- **DEFENSIVE DRIVING (DDC, 4-Hour)**—certified by the National Safety Council, this course teaches the importance of safety belts and other restraints, dangers of speeding, proper following distance and effects of alcohol and drugs.
- **DEFENSIVE DRIVING (DDC, 8-Hour)** —a more intensive version of the 4-hour course with emphasis on preventing traffic deaths and injuries.
- **ATTITUDINAL DYNAMICS OF DRIVING (ADD, 8-Hour)** —an intense 8-hour curriculum in group format that addresses mental health and attitude as they affect the ability to safely operate a vehicle.
- **DRIVERS LICENSE REINSTATEMENT CLASS (DLR, 2-HOUR)** — a tutorial class, utilizing the students own driving history and state reinstatement letter. The purpose of the class is to devise a viable plan of action for each student to follow for driver's license reinstatement. Ongoing counseling is offered for individuals with complex cases.

Address for Traffic School

Justice A.A. Birch Building, 408 2nd Avenue North,
Suite 1130, P.O. Box 196300, Nashville, TN 37219

MEMBER

The National Safety Council & NSC International Advisory Committee; and The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)



Jan-Dec 2012-2013 Enrollment Comparison

	2012	2013
Defensive Driving (4-Hour)	5,444	5,388
Defensive Driving (8-Hour)	1,368	1,658
First Offender (2-Hour)	11,493	11,399
Alive @ 25 (4-Hour)	3,261	3,180
Attitudinal Dynamics	492	427
Drivers License Reinstatement	8,518	8,991
TOTALS	30,576	31,043



Probation, DUI Bond, GPS, Electronic Monitoring, and SCRAM

Written by: Robert Green, Director

Address for Probation Department

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100 James Robertson Parkway
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Nashville, TN 37219

The General Sessions Probation Department has the responsibility of supervising approximately 6,500 offenders annually. Supervision responsibilities entail working with offenders to ensure compliance with the conditions of probation as ordered by the court. The Department's 23 Probation Officers, 1 DUI Bond-EM Officer, and 6 Management/Support staff utilize current technology such as GPS, SCRAM, and ignition interlock to assist in managing our growing offender population.

The abuse of alcohol and drugs continues to play a significant role in the lives of the offenders we supervise. Thousands are referred annually to private and public treatment providers for substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence services. Success for many offenders depends on their ability to apply treatment concepts to everyday living.

Our department is slowly working towards a paperless operation. At the conclusion on 2013, 7 probation officers are working paperless. We anticipate being a near paperless operation by early 2015 depending upon server expansion. We implemented a manual titled; *The Supervision of Misdemeanant Probationers*. This policy manual provides direction to new and existing Probation Officers in managing our ever growing case-loads. Staff training was a priority in 2013. Training topics included Domestic Violence and Motivational Interviewing. We outsourced our drug testing in July 2013 to a private vendor. This allowed us to significantly increase testing of probationers and provides a seven-day random testing program to the General Sessions Court.

Fee collections in 2013 were outstanding and exceeded 2012 in nearly all categories. Drug Testing fee collections increased 110%, Restitution 10%, and Probation Supervision 4.6%.

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Total Case Load	5,918
Probation	5,549
Multiple DUI Bond	361
GPS/EM/SCRAM	8
Average Probation Officer Caseload	241
Successful Completion	4,704
Revocations	912
Drug Tests Administered	20,198
Percentage Positive	27%
Public Service Work Hours Performed	28,209
Drug Test Fees Collected	\$47,501
GPS/EM/SCRAM Fees Collected	\$7,568
Restitution Collected	\$226,689
Probation Supervision Fees Collected	\$1,213,222
Total Collections	\$1,494,980



Judge Gale B. Robinson



Judge Dianne Turner





Judge John Aaron Holt



Judge Michael F. Mondelli



Judge Angelita Blackshear Dalton



Judge Rachel L. Bell



Judge Sue McKnight Evans

Dispensing Justice One Case At a Time...

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Civil Court Clerk's Office	(615) 862-5195
Metro Environmental Court	(615) 862-5219
Sheriff's Department	(615) 862-8170
District Attorney General's Office	(615) 862-5500
Public Defender's Office	(615) 862-5730

INTERNET SERVICES

WEB ADDRESS: WWW.GSCOURT.NASHVILLE.GOV

Information regarding all services of the General Sessions Court can be found on-line at www.gscourt.nashville.gov. For information regarding civil cases, the address is circuit-clerk.nashville.gov. For information regarding criminal matters, the address is www.ccc.nashville.gov. From there, you can link to such topics as court dockets, judges' schedules, local rules, fees and downloadable forms.