



Maricopa County Justice Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2019

Text Messaging Helps Defendants Make Payments, Court Dates

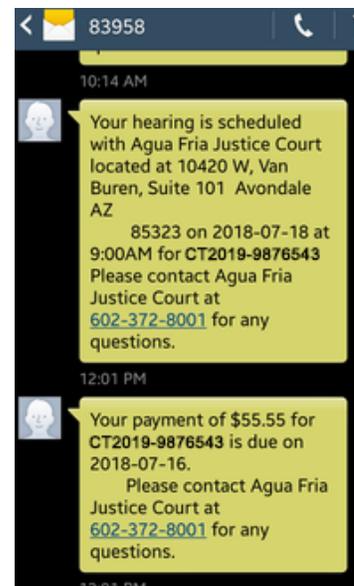
Months of Data Show Lower Rates of Failure to Appear/Pay

PHOENIX – Maricopa County’s 26 Justice Courts have implemented text message reminders for drivers who received tickets, notifying them of important dates. Defendants with a mobile number can receive messages alerting them to upcoming hearings and payments due, and court dates and payments they have missed.

On any given day, dozens of people fail to show up in court for scheduled hearings. This can result in a judge issuing a warrant for their arrest. The program, implemented in phases beginning in October 2018, has shown great success in reducing these failures to appear and failures to pay.

The reminder text message is sent two or three days prior to an important upcoming date. If a payment or hearing is missed, defendants receive the next message one to two days later. They may opt out of the program at any time.

In the six months after the Justice Courts launched *e-notification*, almost 60,000 messages had been sent on 15,000 cases. In criminal arraignments, cases with **no** text reminders had a 22% failure to appear. The rate on cases which **did receive** text reminders was 15%.



The program, implemented in phases beginning in October 2018, puts Maricopa County ahead of many other jurisdictions across the United States.

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ABOUT US:

There are 26 Justice Courts throughout Maricopa County. Each is presided over by an elected Justice of the Peace. These 'limited jurisdiction' courts handle civil lawsuits (\$10,000 or less, small claims cases (\$3,500 or less), evictions, misdemeanor offenses (shoplifting, writing bad checks, etc), and the full range of civil and criminal traffic offenses, including DUIs. Like other trial and municipal judges, they also preside over orders of protection and injunctions against harassment.

Maricopa County Justice Courts
222 N. Central Avenue #210
Phoenix, AZ 85004

<http://justicecourts.maricopa.gov>

Contact: Scott Davis
Communications/Public Information
o: 602-372-3909

