



Parish Courts of Jamaica
The Chief Justice's First Quarter Statistics
Report for 2022
(Traffic Courts)

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Executive Summary

This 2022 first quarter statistics report on the operations of the traffic courts represents an important step in expanding the range of business lines on which regular court activity reports are produced and published. The findings are insightful and informative and forms a good basis for the pursuit of policy and operational interventions which are required to significantly improve efficiency.

A total of 60,096 new cases were filed across the traffic courts in the first quarter of 2022, almost 60% of which resulted in warrants ordered. The Corporate Area Court – Traffic Division accounted for the highest share of new cases filed across the traffic courts with 44.86%, followed by St. Catherine with 16.52% and St. Ann with 6.32% of the total. The traffic division of the parish courts in Hanover, St. Thomas and Trelawny accounted for the lowest share of new cases filed, each with less than 2% of the total. A total of 12,191 or 20.29% of the new cases filed in the traffic courts during the quarter were disposed, representing the overall gross disposal rate, unadjusted for warrants ordered. The Corporate Area Parish Court – Traffic Division with 16.96%, the St. James Parish Court with 12.74% and the Westmoreland Parish Court with 10.37% accounted for the highest shares of the new cases disposed in the quarter. When cases brought forward from the previous year and new cases filed are combined, the data suggests that 20,148 cases were disposed across the traffic courts during the quarter, the largest shares of which were accounted for by the Corporate Area Court – Traffic Division with 23.34%, the St. Catherine Parish Court with 8.30% and the Westmoreland Parish Court with 7.84%. The Trelawny, St. Thomas and St. Elizabeth Parish Courts accounted for lowest shares of the overall number of cases resolved in the period, each with under 5% of the total.

Interestingly there were a total of 35,339 warrants ordered during the quarter, an alarming 15,391 more cases than the number disposed. The Corporate Area Court – Traffic Division accounted for the largest share of warrants issued during the quarter with 66.99%, followed by the St. Ann and St. James Parish Courts with 9.10% and 7.56% respectively. The Trelawny, St. Catherine, St. Thomas and St. Elizabeth Parish Courts accounted for the lowest shares of warrants ordered during the quarter, each with under 1% of the overall total.

The overall gross case clearance rate, treating warrants in the same manner as disposed cases in the computation was 92.66%, however when warrants were not treated in this way and only the strictly disposed cases are used in the computation, the overall gross case clearance rate falls drastically to 33.53%. The net case clearance rate which is the arguably fairest of the three measures outlined here, excludes warrant cases completely from the calculation of the case clearance rate and reveals an overall case clearance rate of 50.57%. The St. James Parish Court with 126.76%, the Westmoreland Parish Court with 116.07% and the Hanover Parish Court with 109.91% were the leaders on this measurement while five courts overall exceeded the 100% mark, the others being the Corporate Area Court – Traffic Division and the St. Ann Parish Court.

Further analysis of warrant activity across the courts over the period paints a dismal picture with only an estimated 6% of warrants ordered in the period being issued to the police while the overall estimated warrants clearance rate was roughly 21%, suggesting that for every 100 new warrants ordered only about 21 warrants were issued across the courts in the reporting period, a potential sign of the existence of a chronic backlog in warrant preparation and issuance. The estimated warrant execution rate returns better output with a rate of 42% which means that for every 100 warrants issued to the police in the period, 42 warrants were executed. When these

statistics are paired with the fact that warrants were issued on nearly 60% of new cases filed and that warrants were issued on more cases than the number of cases disposed in the period, the situation is indeed grim.

The total traffic fines collected across the court during the first quarter of 2022 was approximately 68.03 million, the largest proportion of which was accounted for by the Corporate Area Court – Traffic Division with approximately 16.80 million or 24.66%, the St. Catherine Parish Court with 8.28 million or roughly 12.17% and the St. James Parish Court with approximately 7.78 million or 11.42% of the total.

Although it is clear that some traffic courts across the island are performing creditably, significant reforms in areas such as the warrant management process are required to improve productivity which will invariably redound to greater levels of enforcement and compliance among in the public space. The court and the associated institutions and stakeholders should be guided by these instructive findings and pursue the necessary strategic improvements. The introduction of the new Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) across the courts could assist greatly in digitizing the traffic court operations and make the production of warrants for example way more efficient but the required processes to integrate the JCMS and the existing Traffic Ticketing Management System (TTMS) is far behind schedule at this time.

Introduction

The Traffic Court Division forms an important part of the Jamaican court system, accounting for over 70% of total annual caseload. The island has one specialized traffic court based in the Corporate Area, which is the single largest court by caseload in the country, however all parish courts have a traffic court division. Statistical reports on case activity in all traffic court across the island will hereafter be produced quarterly and annually. Quarterly data are subject to change in the annual reports. These reports provide a range of measurement on the productivity and state of affairs of the traffic courts, deploying a range of metrics which allow for the contextual measurement of performance. Such appraisal forms the basis of understanding the dynamic nature of the traffic courts, its peculiar challenges and thus informs operational and policy interventions which are necessary to improving productivity outcomes.

This report is for the first quarter ended March 31, 2022. It is divided into three primary sections, the first providing a basic summary of new case activity, overall caseload movement and case dispositions and associated case disposal and case clearance rates for the traffic divisions of all parish courts across the island. The second section summarizes warrant activity for the reporting period as well as the necessary statistical appraisal of the efficiency in relation to the handling of this critical facet of daily activity in the traffic division of the parish courts. The third and final section provides a summary of the amount collected in traffic fines across the courts during the reporting period. The analysis in each section is conducted in both absolute and relate terms.

The quarterly and annual traffic court reports are produced based on metadata submissions made by the individual traffic divisions of the parish courts across the island at the end of each

reporting period. These submissions are subjected to internal data validation processes in the respective courts which are utilized to guarantee data integrity.

Section 1.0: Case Activity Summary

Table 1.0: Case disposal rate summary for the first quarter ended March 31, 2022

Parish Court	Number of new cases filed in the quarter	Number of new cases filed [which did not require the ordering of a warrant]	Number of new cases disposed [which did not require the ordering of a warrant]	Number of new cases disposed [regardless of whether a warrant was issued]	Gross case disposal rate (%) [unadjusted for warrants]	Gross case disposal rate (%) [adjusted for warrants issued on new cases]	Net case disposal rate (%) [excluding warrants]
Trelawny	1105	358	53	303	27.42	95.02	14.80
Portland	1656	597	554	492	29.71	93.66	92.80
St. Elizabeth	2062	2036	593	981	47.58	48.84	29.13
Hanover	1177	545	545	603	51.23	-	100.00
St. Thomas	906	666	411	420	46.36	72.85	61.71
Westmoreland	3167	1247	1264	1264	39.91	-	-
St. James	3438	799	1013	1553	45.17	-	-
Clarendon	2175	2083	819	1230	56.55	60.78	39.32
Manchester	1591	1470	599	695	43.68	51.29	
St. Ann	3827	641	589	589	15.39	98.64	91.89
St. Mary	2104	1742	839	840	39.92	57.13	48.16
St. Catherine	9930	9871	1151	1154	11.62	12.22	11.66
Corporate Area Traffic Court	26958	2300	2067	2067	7.67	99.14	89.87
Total/Mean	60096	24355	10497	12191	20.29	79.76	43.10
Standard Deviation	6828.304	2395.63	476.603	485.6442	15.19553	28.36158	32.32007
Skewness	2.67	2.79	1.13	0.78	-0.58	-0.68192	-0.07

A total of 60,096 new cases were filed in the traffic division of the parish courts across the island during the first quarter of 2022. The overwhelming proportion of these were accounted for by

the Corporate Area Court – Traffic Division with 26,958 or 44.86% of the total, followed by the St. Catherine and St. Ann Parish Courts with 9930 or 16.52% and 3827 or 6.37% respectively. The St. Thomas, Hanover and Trelawny Traffic Courts accounted for the lowest shares of new cases filed, each with under 2% of the total. The standard deviation for the number of new cases filed across the courts in the quarter was fairly large, an indication of a wide dispersion of the scores around the mean. Of the 60,096 new cases filed in the traffic courts, an estimated 35,741 or 59.47% required the issuance of a warrant. This result suggests that only around 40.53% of the persons listed to appear before the traffic courts island wide actually attended during the reporting period. The skewness of the data points for new cases filed across the various traffic courts is strongly positive, which is an indication that proportionately more courts had new caseload which fell below the overall series mean of 4623 new cases per court.

A total of 12,191 of the new cases filed in the traffic courts during the first quarter of 2022 were disposed, yielding an overall gross case disposal rate (unadjusted for warrants) of 20.29%. The traffic courts in Clarendon (56.55%), Hanover (51.25%) and St. Elizabeth with 47.58% account for the highest gross disposal rates in the quarter. The gross case disposal rate (unadjusted for warrants) is simply the proportion of new cases filed which are disposed in a given period, regardless of whether warrants were ordered on the matters. The Corporate Area Court – Traffic Division accounted for the highest share of cases disposed in the first quarter of 2022 with 2067 or 16.96%, followed by the St. James Parish Court with 1553 or 12.74% and the Westmoreland Parish Court with 1264 or 10.37%. The overall skewness of the distribution of the cases disposed across the parish courts was moderately positive, which is an indication that proportionately more of the individual courts disposed of less cases than the overall average of 938 disposed

cases per court. The overall standard deviation for the distribution of cases disposed is moderate, indicating that there is some amount of variation in the dispersion of the scores across the courts. The gross case disposal rate (adjusted for warrants) provides another measurement of case activity in relation to new cases filed. It treats warrants ordered in the same manner as disposed cases and is therefore also a fairer measurement of controllable case activity than the gross disposal rate (unadjusted for warrants). Its limitation is however that it has the potential to give a misleading impression of the rate of case resolution in the Traffic Courts, which is a business line that has an acutely high number of warrant cases. Thus, although the gross case disposal rate (adjusted for warrants) provides useful insights into case activity, it should be used in a limited way in making inferences. As shown in the above table in relation to this measurement, the Corporate Area Traffic Court (99.14%), St. Ann (98.64%), the Trelawny Parish Court (95.02%) and Portland Parish Court (93.66%) ranked among the bests on this metric. The overall gross case clearance rate, when warrants are treated in the same manner as disposed cases is roughly 79.76%, suggesting that for every 100 new cases that were filed across the traffic courts in the period, a combine 80 cases were either disposed or had warrants ordered.

When cases in which warrants were ordered are excluded from the calculation of the case disposal rate for the quarter we derive the net case disposal rate (excluding warrants) which yields a result of 43.10%, arrived at based on the disposal of 10,497 out of the 24,355 cases which did not require the ordering of a warrant. The top performing Traffic Courts on this measurement for the first quarter of 2022 are the Hanover Parish Court with 100%, the Portland Parish Court (92.80%) and the St. Ann Parish Court with 91.89%. The net case disposal rate tends to give a

fairer measurement of productivity than the gross case disposal rate measures in relation to case activity over which court has more direct control.

All three metrics discussed in this section have weak to moderate negative skewness which suggests that slightly more of the scores for the various courts fell above the overall series means.

In general, disposal rates are a limited measurement of total productivity, particularly within a relatively short period of time such as a quarter. The longer the time series used the more meaningful the inferences that can be derived from the case disposal rate. An examination of the case clearance rates are however more robust and reliable measurements of overall case handling than disposal rates. These are summarized in the table below.

Table 2.0: Case clearance rate summary for the first quarter ended March 31, 2022

Parish Court	Number of new cases filed	Number of new cases filed [which did not require the ordering of a warrant]	Overall number of cases disposed [which did not require the ordering of a warrant]	Overall number of cases disposed [regardless of whether a warrant was issued]	Overall number of warrants ordered by Judge in the reporting period	Gross case clearance rate (%) [unadjusted for warrants]	Gross case clearance rate (%) [adjusted for warrants]	Net case clearance rate (%) [excluding warrants]
Trelawny	1105	358	109	258	308	23.35	51.22	30.45
Portland	1656	597	595	1348	1063	81.40	145.59	99.66
St .Elizabeth	2062	2036	946	981	72	47.58	51.07	46.46
Hanover	1177	545	599	868	632	73.75	127.44	109.91
St. Thomas	906	666	418	560	240	61.81	88.30	62.76
Westmoreland	3167	1247	1447	1580	1948	49.89	111.40	116.04
St. James	3438	799	1013	2773	2687	80.66	158.81	126.78
Clarendon	2175	2083	819	1230	104	56.55	61.33	39.32
Manchester	1591	1470	595	1417	150	89.06	98.49	40.48
St. Ann	3827	641	650	1179	3239	30.81	115.44	101.40
St. Mary	2104	1742	1217	1577	1217	74.95	132.79	69.86
St. Catherine	9930	9871	1575	1673	72	16.85	17.57	15.96
Corporate Area	26958	2300	2334	4704	23807	17.45	105.76	101.48
Total/Mean	60096	24355	12317	20148	35539	33.53	92.66	50.57
Standard Deviation	6828	2396	562	1081	6166	24.55	40.07	35.63
Skewness	2.67	2.79	0.94	1.79	3.03	-0.24	-0.39	-0.08

The above data is supplementary to the previous table, providing deeper analysis of case activity across the Jamaican traffic courts in the first quarter of 2022. The data reveals that a total of 20,148 cases were disposed across the traffic courts in the period, the largest proportion of which were disposed by the Corporate Area Traffic Court, accounting for 4704 or 23.34%, followed by the St. Catherine Parish Court with 1673 or 8.30%, and the Westmoreland Traffic Court with 1580

or 7.84%. The parish courts which accounted for the lowest shares of cases disposed in the period were Trelawny, St. Thomas and St. Elizabeth accounted for the smallest share of traffic cases disposed in the quarter, each with less than 5%. The data suggests that the majority of the cases disposed during the quarter were new traffic cases, accounting for 60.51% of the cases of the total number of disposed cases in the quarter. There were 35,539 bench warrants ordered across the traffic courts in the quarter, 15,391 more than the number of cases actually disposed in the period. The Corporate Area Court – Traffic Division accounted for the largest share of bench warrants ordered in the period, accounting for 23,807 or 66.99%, followed by the St. Ann Parish Court with 3239 or 9.10% and the St. James Parish Court with 2687 or 7.56%. The parish courts of Trelawny, St. Catherine, St. Thomas and St. Elizabeth accounted for the lowest proportion of the bench warrants ordered, each with under 1% of the total in the period.

When bench warrants ordered are excluded from cases classified as “resolved”, we compute the gross case clearance rate (unadjusted for warrants), which reveals an overall result of 33.53%. which suggests that for every 100 new cases that were filed across the traffic courts during the quarter, roughly 34 were disposed. The Manchester Parish Court was the leader on this metric with a clearance rate of 89.06%, followed by the Portland Parish Court with 81.40% and the St. James with 80.66%. The Corporate Area Traffic Court, the St. Catherine Parish Court and the Trelawny Parish Court each with under clearance rates of under 30%. This gross case clearance rate (unadjusted for warrants) is a crude measurement of court performance because of the high proportion of warrants which are issued in traffic matters. As highlighted earlier, close to 60% of new cases filed in the period required the issuance of a warrant, hence this measurement though useful does not give the fairest impression of the performance of the traffic courts.

A slightly better measurement of the productivity of the traffic courts is the gross case clearance rate (adjusted for warrants ordered). This measurement treats bench warrants ordered in the same way as cases disposed and is therefore a more reasonable metric of case activity within the realms of control of the court than the previous clearance rate measurement discussed, but its disadvantage is that it inflates the case clearance rates figures due to the large incidence of warrants ordered across and may therefore exaggerate the performance of some courts which have proportionately more warrants issued and thus does not allow for sufficiently standardized comparisons. Nevertheless, the gross case clearance rate (adjusted for warrants ordered) provides interesting insights into the case activity during the period of analysis. Using this measurement, the Parish Courts of St. James (158.81%), Portland (145.59%) and St. Mary (132.79%) ranked the highest while the Parish Courts of Trelawny, St. Catherine and St. Elizabeth, each with rates of under 55% had the lowest output on this metric. The overall weighted average case clearance rate (adjusted for warrants ordered) during the quarter was 92.66%, suggesting that a combined 93 cases were either disposed or became inactive due to the ordering of warrants, for every 100 new cases filed. The distribution of the scores in this series across the various courts were moderately large as indicated by the moderate standard deviation while the skewness of the scores was moderately negative, an indication that a proportionately larger share of the courts had rates which were above the overall mean.

Arguable, the purest of all three measures of case clearance rate illustrated in this table is the net case clearance rate (excluding warrants). This metric computes the clearance rate as a ratio of the number of cases disposed in which no warrants were ordered to the number of new cases filed and listed which did not require the ordering of a warrant. In this way, the net case clearance

rate only considers cases in which the courts have full control over their progression. With this approach, the net case clearance rate (excluding warrants) will typically fall somewhere on the continuum between the case clearance rates adjusted and unadjusted for warrants respectively which were outlined earlier. In the first quarter of 2022, the overall weighted average net case clearance rate (excluding warrants) was 50.57%, an indication that for new case filed and listed which did not require the ordered of a warrant, 51 cases were disposed on which no warrants were ordered. The St. James Parish Court with an impressive rate of 126.78% was the leading court on this metric, followed by the Parish Courts of Westmoreland with 116.04% and Hanover with 109.91%. Five of the courts exceeded the 100% mark on this metric during the first quarter of 2022, the other being the Corporate Area Traffic Court and the St. Ann Parish Court while the rate for Portland was approximately 100%. The standard deviation for this data series stood at a moderately high level, suggesting a fairly wide dispersion of the scores around the mean while the skewness was weakly negative, suggesting that a slightly higher proportion of the scores in the series were above the overall mean.

On a balance of the case clearance rate metrics, the data suggests that the Parish Courts of Hanover, Westmoreland, St. Ann and Portland were among the very best performing traffic courts in the first quarter of 2022.

Section 2.0: Warrant Activity Summary

This section of the report focusses on warrant activity and associated efficiency measurements in the traffic courts island-wide for the first quarter of 2022.

Table 3.0: Basic warrant activity summary

Parish Court	Overall number of warrants ordered by Judge in the reporting period	Number of warrants ordered but stayed	Number of warrants vacated	Number of warrants ordered in which payments were already made
Trelawny	308	-	-	-
Portland	1063	1	58	-
St. Elizabeth	72	73	2	-
Hanover	632	3	158	105
St. Thomas	240	1	5	-
Westmoreland	1948	0	321	822
St. James	2687	4	1017	-
Clarendon	104	9	10	-
Manchester	150	4	14	-
St. Ann	3239	17	324	-
St. Mary	1217	177	17	-
St. Catherine	72	18	2	-
Corporate Area	23807	75	1654	-
Total/Mean	35539	382	3582	-
Standard Deviation	6166	51	495	-
Skewness	3.03	1.94	1.86	-

The above dataset provides a summary of warrant activity across the traffic courts during the first quarter of 2022. Some of the variation across the courts in the number of warrants ordered is partly a result of variations in the confidence of Judges in the quality of available data on non-payment of fines by persons brought before the courts in the particular parish. Hence, the data

on warrant activity is not entirely comparable across the courts at this time. The dataset is based on a sample of 35,539 warrants ordered in the quarter, roughly 67% of which were accounted for by the Corporate Area Traffic Court, followed by the St. Ann Parish Court with just over 9% and the St. James Parish Court with 7.56%. In a number of Parish Courts, the number of warrants ordered is well below potential, for example in courts such as St. Catherine, Clarendon and St. Elizabeth, partly on account of the lack of confidence in the available digital data on the status of payments of persons who did not show up for court. Sometimes warrants are ordered and it is later found out that payments were actually made but such information is not always accurately reflected in the Traffic Ticketing Management System (TTMS). The data on this is not widely available for all courts for this first quarter of reporting but will be strengthened over time. A warrant ordered may be stayed by the Judge on application by the client or based on peculiar circumstances surrounding the case, thus delaying the issuance of such warrants. The sample of 382 warrants which were issued but stayed, the St. Mary Parish Court accounted for the largest proportion, followed by the Corporate Area Traffic Court and the St. Elizabeth Parish Court. Further, of the sample of warrants vacated which are included in this illustration, the largest proportions are accounted for by the Corporate Area Traffic Court, the St. James Parish Court, the St. Ann and Westmoreland Parish Courts. Persons charged with traffic offences sometimes apply for a warrant ordered to be vacated whenever the warrant that ordered may not yet be issued to the police for execution or when due to peculiar circumstances which prevented court appearance or both, in which cases they may pay the fine and settle the case, having received the requisite approval from the relevant court.

**Table 4.0: Efficiency measurements for warrant handling in the Traffic Courts of Jamaica
[Sampling distribution]**

Parish Court	Number of warrants issued to the Police [from those newly ordered in the reporting period]	Overall number of warrants issued to the Police	Number of warrants executed by the Police	Warrant issuance rate (%)	Warrant clearance rate (%)	Warrant execution rate (%)
Trelawny	0	0	0	-	-	-
Portland	170	1404	692	16.93	139.84	49.29
St. Elizabeth*	26	72	50	36.11	100	69.44
Hanover	65	520	109	13.80	110.40	20.96
St. Thomas	127	192	145	54.27	82.05	75.52
Westmoreland	1126	2077	421	69.21	127.66	20.27
St. James	-	1477	241	-	88.66	16.32
Clarendon*	92	104	91	88.46	100	87.50
Manchester	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Ann	-	836	365	-	28.85	43.66
St. Mary	177	522	194	17.30	51.03	37.16
St. Catherine	47	58	30	90.38	111.54	51.72
Corporate Area	193	319	828	0.874	1.44	259.56
Total/Weighted Average	2023	7581	3166	5.69	21.33	41.76
Standard Deviation	632.57	2034.18	844.32	33.80	42.35	68.14
Skewness	2.93	1.12	1.22	0.35	-0.88	2.64

*Metrics unadjusted for warrants stayed and vacated

The Traffic Courts are quite peculiar in the Jamaican court system in that a large number of warrants are issued in this business line largely due to the non-appearance of ticketed persons for listed cases. As an example it was highlighted earlier that warrants were ordered in almost 60% of the new cases heard across the traffic courts in the first quarter of 2022. Despite the large number of warrants ordered, that is, the high warrant ordering rate, the rate of preparing and issuing warrants, the warrant clearance rate and the warrant execution rate do not appear to be

keeping pace. For example, only an estimated 6% of warrants ordered on new cases during the first quarter of 2022 were issued (i.e. the warrant issuance rate). Furthermore, for every 100 new warrants which were ordered in the period of analysis, roughly 21 warrants were prepared and issued. The warrant execution rate is however better than both the warrant issuance and warrant clearance rate for the period, with an estimated figure of 42% for the period, suggesting that for every 100 warrants which were issued by the courts to the police in the period, roughly 42 were executed. This warrant execution rate is however partly helped by the fact that a relatively low ratio of warrants ordered are issued in the same quarter and that the warrant clearance rate is relatively low. Because of the varying extents to which the courts order and hence issue warrants, comparisons of the applicable rates across the courts may not be entirely equitable, nevertheless they produce some useful insights. The Parish Courts of Clarendon, St. Catherine and St. Thomas had the highest warrants issuance rates over the period but the fact that the St. Catherine Parish Court makes so few warrant orders even compared to much smaller courts bears out the point of potential statistical inequity in comparing these rates. The Parish Courts of Portland, Hanover, Westmoreland and St. Catherine registered the highest estimated warrant clearance rates while Corporate Area Traffic Court and the St. Thomas and Clarendon Parish Courts registered the highest warrant execution rates during the period.

Overall this dataset on warrant activity for the first quarter of 2022 suggests that there is much to be desired in terms of the rate of warrant preparation and issuance by the traffic courts and the rate at which warrants are executed by the police. Together, these observed deficiencies which are a confirmation of prior anecdotal observations make for an inefficient traffic management system in Jamaica.

Section 3.0: Traffic Fines Collected

The final section of the report highlights the distribution of amounts collected by the courts in traffic fines for the first quarter of 2022

Table 5.0: Fines collected during the quarter ended March 31, 2021

Traffic Court	Amount collected in fines (JMD\$)	Percentage (%)
Trelawny	1,626,800	2.39
Portland	3,172,000	4.66
St. Elizabeth	3,577,300	5.26
Hanover	2,561,800	3.77
St. Thomas	2,355,000	3.46
Westmoreland	4,667,300	6.86
St. James	7,771,400	11.42
Clarendon	4,281,500	6.29
Manchester	5,022,100	7.38
St. Ann	3,869,128	5.69
St. Mary	4,072,400	5.99
St. Catherine	8,282,300	12.17
Corporate Area	16,773,552.82	24.66
Total	68,032,581	100.00
Mean	5,233,275	
Standard Deviation	3,811,066.735	
Skewness	2.04747209	
Maximum	16,773,552.82	
Minimum	1,626,800	

The above dataset shows that for the first quarter ended March 31, 2022, approximately \$68.03 million in fines for road traffic breaches were collected across the Parish Courts of Jamaica. The

highest figure was collected at the Corporate Area Traffic Court with roughly \$16.77 million, while the lowest amount of \$1,626,800 was collected at the Trelawny Parish Court. The overall average amount of traffic fines collected across the parish courts for the quarter was \$5,233,275 while the standard deviation stood at a relatively large 3.81 million, suggesting a wide variation of the amounts collected for the individual parishes around the mean. The data distribution of the data had a fairly high positive skewness which suggests that a proportionately larger share of the data points fell below the overall average. The Parish Courts in the Corporate Area, St. Catherine and St. James accounted for the largest shares of traffic fines collected, together accounting for 48.25% of the total fines collected in the period. The individual traffic fines collected by these three courts are higher outliers as determined by the fact that they fall outside of the range of the sum of 1.5 multiplied by the interquartile range and the third quartile.

Conclusion

This first quarter 2022 report on the operations of the Jamaican traffic courts is seminal and insightful. It confirms many anecdotal evidence previously put forward and unveils important variations in performance, efficiency and practices across the traffic courts. Since the traffic courts occupy such a large percentage of the island's caseload and judicial activity, the efficiency of its operation is of central importance. This also has major national implications given the significance of effective road traffic management and revenue collection.

Among the most critical findings from this report are that on a balance of a host of measurements deployed, the Traffic Court Divisions in Hanover, Westmoreland, St. James, Portland and St. Ann were among the most productive in the island for the first quarter of 2022. Interestingly, of the 60,096 new traffic court cases which were filed in the period of analysis, warrants were ordered in almost 60% of the instances, an alarming outcome which raises legitimate concerns about the effectiveness of the overall traffic ticketing management apparatus with respect to enforcement and compliance. This is however not surprising considering that the data also reveals that the warrant issuance rate in the period, that is, the estimated proportion of warrants issued from those ordered was a mere 6%, suggesting either the existence of a large backlog across most locations or severe administrative weaknesses in the warrant management process. Furthermore, the data reveals a modest warrant clearance rate of 21% which suggests that the issuance and preparation of warrants in most parish courts are in a chronic state of backlog. The warrant execution rate fares a little better at 42%, but this is partly because of the paucities in the rate at which the courts are preparing and issuing warrants. The sum total of this situation reveals severe weaknesses which require significant overhauling in order to increase efficiency,

compliance and enforcement among stakeholders and clients in the traffic ticket management process and the courts should play a momentous role in informing the directions. A crucial indicator of the poor state of affairs is that the gross case clearance rate across the courts computed based on just disposed cases is a mere 33.50%, however when warrants are treated in the same manner as disposed cases, which is a slightly fairer measurement of what the court has more direct control over, the gross case clearance rate adjusts to 92.66% and when warrants are completely excluded from the calculation (i.e. the net case backlog rate), the rate stands at 50.57%, which is on balance the best indicator in terms of clearance rate of where the traffic courts are as a whole.

It is evident that there is much to be desired in terms of the engenderment of a modern, functional traffic court system that guarantees a timely resolution of all cases, an efficient warrant preparation, issuance and execution process and an optimal traffic ticket management platform. The new Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) bodes much potential in this regard but there is still a long way to go in creating the necessary framework to facilitate the integration of this new system with the existing Traffic Ticket Management System (TTMS).

Glossary of Terms

Sampling Distribution: A sampling distribution of a given population is the distribution of frequencies of a range of outcomes that could possibly occur for a statistic of a population. A population is the entire pool from which a statistical sample is drawn.

Clearance rate: The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is $110/100$ or 110%. A distinction is sometimes made between the gross and net case clearance rates. The simple difference is that the net rate completely excludes inactive cases from its computation while the gross rate does not.

Note: The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%.

A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90%-110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system.¹

Disposal rate: As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%. A distinction is sometimes made between the gross and net case disposal rates. The simple difference is that the net rate completely excludes inactive cases from its computation while the gross rate does not.

Note: A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system.ⁱⁱ

Trial/hearing date certainty: This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and 40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%. The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

Courtroom utilization rate: The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis. The international standard for this rate is 100%.

Case congestion rate: The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example, is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

Case File Integrity Rate: Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the case file integrity is 100%

Standard deviation: This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are **around** the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of

the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

Outlier: An outlier is a value that is too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

Skewness: This is a measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure, it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is roughly equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

Range: This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

Case backlog: A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition.

Case backlog: A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition. The **gross backlog rate** measures the proportion of all cases filed within a given period which remain unresolved for a period of over two years. The **net backlog rate** on the other hand measures the proportion of active cases filed in a given period which are unresolved for over two years.

Weighted Average: Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups, and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance rate than a smaller court.

A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

Gross case clearance rate

The Gross Case Clearance rate measures the ratio of the sum of disposed and inactivated cases in a given period to the number of new cases filed in said period.

Net case clearance rate

The Net Case Clearance Rate measures the ratio of the overall number of cases disposed in a given period to the number of new cases filed in that period, exclusive of inactive cases.

Gross case disposal rate

The Gross Case Disposal Rate measures the ratio of the number of new cases disposed in a particular period to the number of new cases filed in that period.

Net case disposal rate

The Net Case Disposal Rate is a measurement of the proportion of disposed in a given period to the number of new cases filed, excluding all inactive new cases.

Gross case clearance rate (adjusted for warrants)

The gross case clearance rate (adjusted for warrants) measures the ratio of the sum of cases disposed and warrants ordered in a given period to the number of new cases filed in that period.

Gross case clearance rate (unadjusted for warrants)

The gross case clearance rate (unadjusted for warrants) is the ratio of the overall number of cases disposed in a given period, divided by the number of new cases filed in that period.

Net case clearance rate

The net case clearance rate is the number of cases disposed in a particular period which did not require the issuance of a warrant to the number of new cases filed in said period which did not require the issuance of a warrant.

Gross case disposal rate (adjusted for warrants)

The gross case disposal rate (adjusted for warrants) is the ratio of the sum of the number of new cases disposed and warrants issued on new cases filed in a given period to the number of new cases filed in said period.

Gross case disposal rate (unadjusted for warrants)

The gross case disposal rate (unadjusted for warrants) is the ratio of the number of new cases disposed in a particular period (regardless of whether warrants were ordered on them) to the number of new cases filed in that period.

Net case disposal rates (excluding warrants)

The net case disposal rate is the ratio of new cases disposed on which warrants were issued in a particular period to the number of new cases filed in which no warrants were ordered in said period.

Warrant Issuance Rate

The warrant issuance rate is the ratio of warrants issued from those ordered in a particular period to the number of warrants issued in said period.

Warrant Clearance Rate

The warrants clearance rate is the ratio of the overall number of warrants issued in a particular period to the number of warrants ordered in a said period.

Warrant Execution Rate

The warrant execution rate is the ratio of the number of warrants executed by the police in a given period to the number of warrants issued in said period.

Source:

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

ⁱ *Source:*

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>