

---

# Justice backlog update

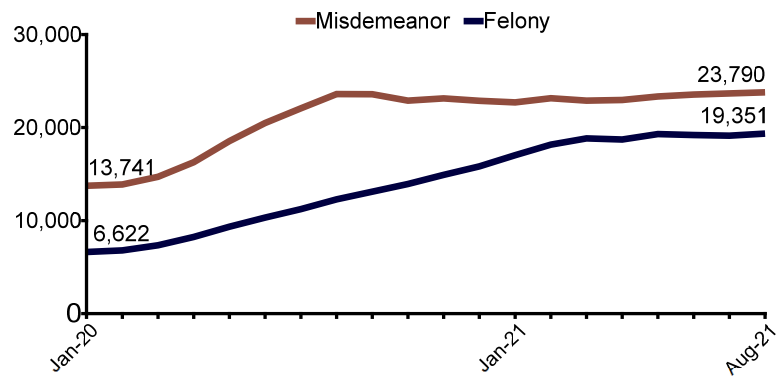
---

09/07/2021

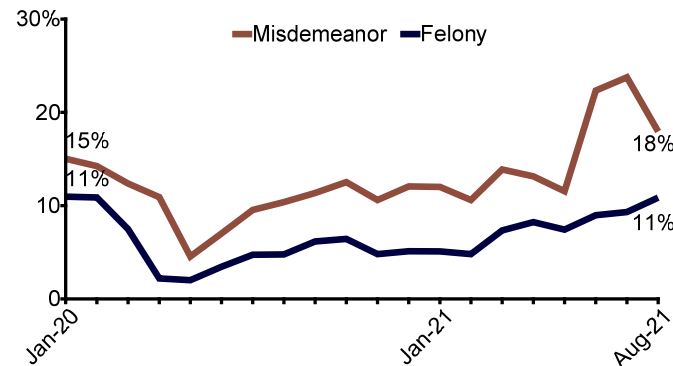


# Criminal Courts: Backlog progress using key indicators

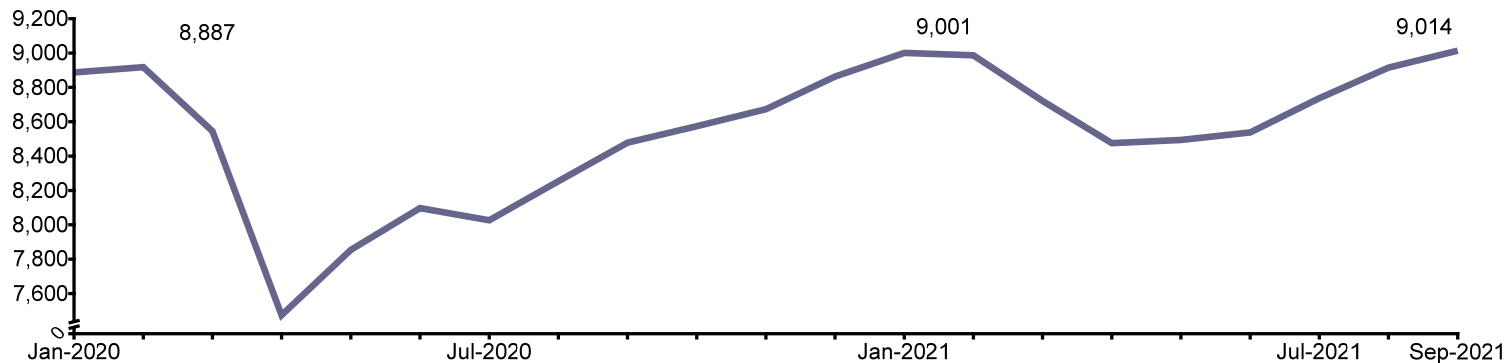
## Number of cases in backlog



## Monthly % of backlog cases disposed



## Number of jailed defendants



## Key Takeaways

There is **improvement in the clearing out of the backlog** relative to several months ago. Two datapoints suggest this:

- **Number of cases in backlog has flatlined** from January through August for Felony cases. Misdemeanor has ranged between 22K – 23K since mid-last year
- The % of **backlog cases disposed** is **back up to/greater than pre-pandemic levels**

Another measure to keep an eye on is the jail population – a growing population may indicate that we're falling behind in processing serious cases

Note: Number of cases in backlog calculated as cases older than 360 days for felonies and 180 days for Misdemeanor; Number of backlog cases disposed is cases disposed that are over 360 days for felonies and 180 days for misdemeanor; Number of jailed defendants is an average for the month, for September it is for the first two days- this includes both pre-trial and disposed cases and is primarily Felony cases. Cases disposed and in backlog are end of month snapshots Source: Office of Court Management; District Court Administration; Sheriff's Office Jail dashboard

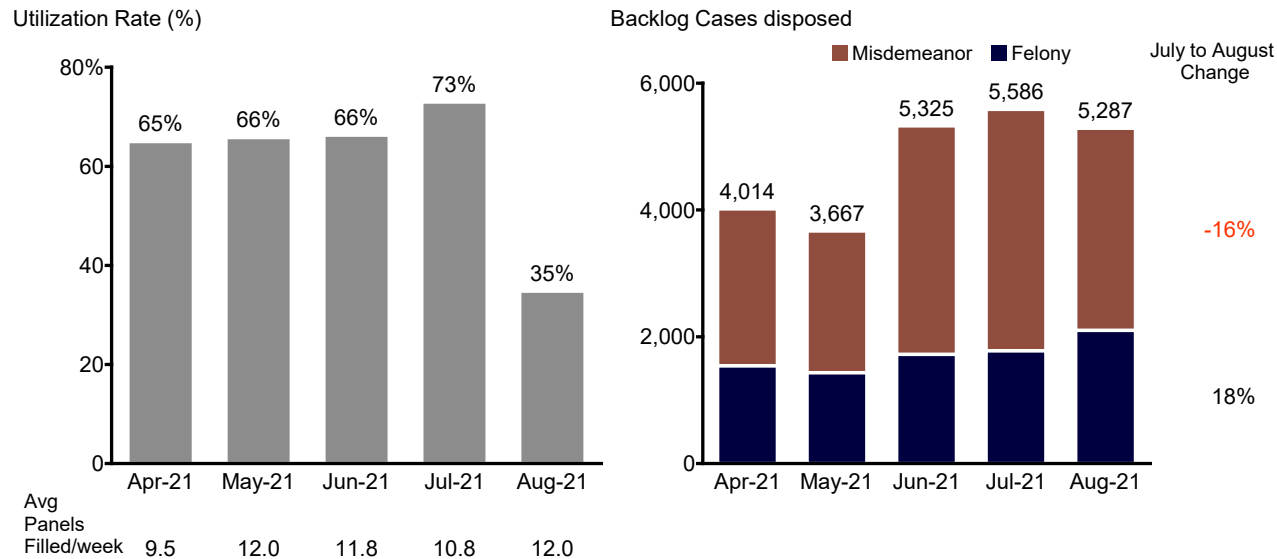
## Initiatives funded, requested and in the process of evaluation

---

| Under evaluation   | Requesting funding    | Funded  |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Potential extension of Jury operations at NRG through February 2022</li><li>2. District Attorney needs for evidence support</li><li>3. District Court Associate Judges - these have been approved by the Harris County Rules committee but are awaiting approval from Texas Supreme Court</li></ol> | <p>N/A this Court</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Extension and expansion of Jury operations at NRG</li><li>2. Temporary staff for Sheriff's Office and Constables to process Body worn camera footage</li><li>3. Three emergency response dockets for District Courts</li><li>4. Two emergency response dockets for County Courts</li><li>5. New district court</li><li>6. 7 additional staff for the Public Defender</li></ol> |

# Jury operations underway; kick-off and results for other projects awaited

## Expanded Jury Operations



Expanded jury operations kicked off on 2<sup>nd</sup> of August with the addition of 3 additional juries per day (75% increase in juries). Some key takeaways from the limited data we have are:

- Utilization rates (defined as juries filled/juries available) have dropped to 35% In absolute numbers average panels filled per week are 12, similar to May
- Older/backlogged cases disposed by Courts is up ~18% in Felonies but down ~16% in the Misdemeanor Courts from July to August
- One caveat on August numbers is that they may not be representative since the last day to pick a panel for August was June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 which was prior to the approval for expansion of juries

## Sheriff's Office Evidence

Sheriff's office is looking at candidates for the open positions. They expect bringing staff on board within the next week or so

## Emergency Dockets

The first set of trials for Felony Courts are scheduled for 09/21/2021. Misdemeanor Courts are tentatively scheduled to kick off operations as early as 11/06/2021..

## 482<sup>nd</sup> District Court

New District Court was added and commenced operations on 9/1/2021. Judge Susan Brown is currently acting as visiting judge, as well as appointing others on a rotational basis, while we wait for the formal appointment from the Governor

## Public Defender

Interviewing for positions has begun with the all efforts being made to add PDs as soon as possible

## Next Steps

---

We are working with the Courts to get access to the following data to add further depth of analysis to this report:

1. Case Disposition by type
2. Trials conducted by Court
3. Number of Settings
4. Cases moved based on "severity" – we are working with Courts to define this