

# **Role of Municipal Courts in Municipalities and in the Judicial System**

This is a sample PowerPoint presentation for municipal judges and court support personnel to use when speaking before city councils and civic and school groups.

# Municipal Courts

- **917 municipal courts**
- **Approximately 1,500 municipal judges.**
- **7,561,659 cases**
- **4,902 jury trials**
- **2.75 million arrest warrants**
- **9,529 search warrants**
- **39% of the entire state's judiciary**
- **Handles more defendants and other participants than all other courts**

# Authority

- **Created by Federal and State Constitutions**
- **Authorized by State Law**
- **Enacted by Local Ordinance or Charter**
- **U.S. Constitution creates Right to Impartial Judge**
- **Separation of Powers requires Judicial Independence**

# **Jurisdiction**

- **Concurrent with JP for all State Fine-Only Criminal Offenses**
- **Exclusive for all Fine-Only Municipal Ordinances**

# Prosecutors

- **45.201, CCP**
  - **City Attorney**
  - **Deputy City Attorney**
  - **County Attorney may Volunteer**
- **To see that Justice is Done**
- **Role:**
  - **File**
  - **Plea Bargain**
  - **Dismiss**
  - **Trial Presentation**
  - **Advise Police**

# Judges Role

- **Judicial Duties**
- **Administrative Duties**
- **Magistrate Duties**

# Judicial Duties

- **Accepting Pleas**
- **Making and Rendering Judgments**
- **Setting Fines**
- **Decisions of Law**
- **Ruling on Objections**
- **Setting or Forfeiting Bail**
- **Granting or Denying Motions,**
- **Granting and Revoking Deferred Disposition**
- **Fine Collection**

# **Administrative Duties**

- **With Court Clerks**
- **Management of Dockets**
- **Financial Reports**
- **Guiding the Operation of the Court**

# Magistrate Duties

- **Preserve the peace within their jurisdictions by the use of all lawful means; to issue all process intended to aid in preventing and suppressing crime; to cause the arrest of offenders by the use of lawful means in order that they may be brought to punishment.**
- **Fair determination of whether probable cause exists in order to empower police to make searches, arrest, hold persons in custody, or limit defendant's conduct while on bond.**

# **Municipal Judges...**

- **Represent the Municipality**
- **Represent Judicial System**
- **Provide for Quality of Life**
- **Serve as a Buffer Between Citizens and Police**