

COURT STRUCTURE OF TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 1, 2002

SUPREME COURT
(1 Court -- 9 Justices)

--Statewide Jurisdiction--

- Final appellate jurisdiction in civil cases and juvenile cases.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS
(1 Court - 9 Judges)

--Statewide Jurisdiction--

- Final appellate jurisdiction in criminal cases.

State Highest Appellate Courts

Civil Appeals

Criminal Appeals

COURTS OF APPEALS
(14 Courts - 80 Justices)

--Regional Jurisdiction--

- Intermediate appeals from trial courts in their respective courts of appeals districts.

State Intermediate Appellate Courts

Cases in Which Death Penalty is Imposed

DISTRICT COURTS
(418 Courts - 418 Judges)

(Established in 418 Districts Containing One or More Counties)

--Jurisdiction--

- Original jurisdiction in civil actions over \$200 or \$500,¹ divorce, title to land, contested elections.
- Original jurisdiction in felony criminal matters.
- Juvenile matters.
- 10 District Courts are named Criminal District Courts; some others are directed to give preference to certain specialized areas.

State Trial Courts of General and Special Jurisdiction

COUNTY-LEVEL COURTS
(472 Courts - 472 Judges)

<p>Constitutional County Courts (254) (One Court in Each County)</p> <p>--Jurisdiction--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original jurisdiction in civil actions between \$200 and \$5,000. • Probate (contested matters may be transferred to District Court). • Exclusive original jurisdiction over misdemeanors with fines greater than \$500 or jail sentence. • Appeals <i>de novo</i> from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record. 	<p>County Courts at Law (202) (Established in 79 Counties)</p> <p>--Jurisdiction--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited jurisdiction over civil matters, most under \$100,000. • Limited jurisdiction over misdemeanor or criminal matters. • Appeals <i>denovo</i> from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record. 	<p>Probate Courts (16) (Established in 8 Counties)</p> <p>--Jurisdiction--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited primarily to probate matters.
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County Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

MUNICIPAL COURTS²
(877 Cities -- 1,310 Judges)

--Jurisdiction--

- Criminal misdemeanors punishable by fine only (no confinement).
- Exclusive original jurisdiction over municipal ordinance criminal cases.⁴
- Limited civil jurisdiction in cases involving dangerous dogs.
- Magistrate functions.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS³
(834 Courts - 834 Judges)

(Established in Precincts Within Each County)

--Jurisdiction--

- Civil actions of not more than \$5,000.
- Small claims.
- Criminal misdemeanors punishable by fine only (no confinement).
- Magistrate functions.

Local Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

¹ The dollar amount is currently unclear. See district courts section of Subject Matter Jurisdiction of the Courts.

² Some Municipal Courts are courts of record -- appeals from those courts are taken on the record to the county-level courts.

³ All Justice of the Peace Courts and most Municipal Courts are not courts of record. Appeals from these courts are by trial *denovo* in the county-level courts, and in some instances in the district courts.

⁴ An offense that arises under a municipal ordinance is punishable by a fine not to exceed: (1) \$200 for ordinances that govern fire safety, zoning, and public health or (2) \$500 for all others.

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

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