

COURT STRUCTURE OF TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 1, 1998

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

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

DISTRICT COURTS
(396 Courts -- 396 Judges)

(Established in 396 Districts Containing One or More Counties)

-- Jurisdiction --

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

State Trial Courts of General and Special Jurisdiction

COUNTY-LEVEL COURTS
(447 Courts -- 447 Judges)

<p>Constitutional County Courts (254) <i>(One Court in Each County)</i></p> <p>-- Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original jurisdiction in civil actions between \$200 and \$5,000. • Probate (contested matters 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 (181) <i>(Established in 74 Counties)</i></p> <p>-- Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited jurisdiction over civil matters, most under \$100,000. • Limited jurisdiction over misdemeanor criminal matters. • Appeals <i>de novo</i> from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record. 	<p>Probate Courts (16) <i>(Established in 8 Counties)</i></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 COURTS
(850 Cities -- 1,122 Judges)

-- Jurisdiction --

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

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS
(843 Courts -- 842 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 Some Municipal Courts are courts of record – appeals from those courts are taken on the record to the county-level courts.

² All Justice of the Peace Courts and most Municipal Courts are not courts of record. Appeals from these courts are by trial *de novo* in the county-level courts, and in some instances in the district courts.

³ An offense that arises under a municipal ordinance is punishable by a fine not to exceed: 1) \$2000 for ordinances that govern fire safety, zoning, and public health; or, 2) \$500 for all others.

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

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