

Assignment of Judges to Active Duty in the Trial Courts

The State is divided into nine Administrative Judicial Regions, in each of which a Presiding Judge is designated by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. These presiding judges are authorized by Sections 74.054 and 74.056, Government Code, to assign judges of their respective regions for service on courts other than those to which they were elected. Judges who may be assigned are regular, retired (“Senior”), and former district judges, and regular, retired, and former statutory county court judges.

The presiding judge of one administrative judicial region may request that the presiding judge of another region furnish judges for assignment in the region of the requesting judge. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court also is authorized by Section 74.057, Government Code, to assign judges of one administrative judicial region for service in another. The Chief Justice may also assign active and retired appellate judges to the trial bench.

During the year ended August 31, 1999, a total of 8,060 assignments were made to the trial courts of the State and 24,648 days were served by the judges on assignment. Assuming 250 working days per year, this service was the equivalent of 98 full-time judges being added to the trial courts of the state.

Retired and former judges who served during the year totaled 291. These judges received 7,364 assignments and served 23,779 days -- the equivalent of adding 95 full-time judges to active service during the year.

Active judges serving a regular court were assigned to courts in other areas 636 times. These judges served 756 days, adding the equivalent of 3 full-time judges to service.

The highest number of assignments were made within or to the Second Administrative Judicial Region (Houston area) with 1,724 assignments and 5,103 days of service and the Third Administrative Judicial Region (Seguin area) with 1,429 assignments and 2,734 days of service.

The nine administrative regions made a total of 569 assignments of their resident judges for service in other regions: First (49); Second (95); Third (203); Fourth (22); Fifth (10); Sixth (52); Seventh (31); Eighth (71); and Ninth (36).

