

# COURT STRUCTURE OF TEXAS

DECEMBER 1, 2007

**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**  
(442 Courts -- 442 Judges)

(345 Districts Containing One County and 97 Districts Containing More than One County)

-- Jurisdiction --

- Original jurisdiction in civil actions over \$200 or \$500,<sup>1</sup> divorce, title to land, contested elections.
- Original jurisdiction in felony criminal matters.
- Juvenile matters.
- 12 district courts are designated *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**  
(494 Courts -- 494 Judges)

<p><b>Constitutional County Courts</b> (254) (One Court in Each County)</p> <p>-- Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original jurisdiction in civil actions between \$200 and \$10,000.</li> <li>• Probate (contested matters may be transferred to District Court).</li> <li>• Exclusive original jurisdiction over misdemeanors with fines greater than \$500 or jail sentence.</li> <li>• Juvenile matters.</li> <li>• Appeals de novo from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record.</li> </ul>	<p><b>County Courts at Law</b> (222) (Established in 84 Counties)</p> <p>-- Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All civil, criminal, original and appellate actions prescribed by law for constitutional county courts.</li> <li>• In addition, jurisdiction over civil matters up to \$100,000 (some courts may have higher maximum jurisdiction amount).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Statutory Probate Courts</b> (18) (Established in 10 Counties)</p> <p>-- Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited primarily to probate matters.</li> </ul>
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County Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

**Justice Courts**<sup>2</sup>  
(821 Courts -- 821 Judges)

(Established in Precincts Within Each County)

-- Jurisdiction --

- Civil actions of not more than \$10,000.
- Small claims.
- Criminal misdemeanors punishable by fine only (no confinement).
- Magistrate functions.

**Municipal Courts**<sup>3</sup>  
(918 Cities -- 1,416 Judges)

-- Jurisdiction --

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

Local Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

<sup>1</sup> The dollar amount is currently unclear.

<sup>2</sup> All justice 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.

<sup>3</sup> Some municipal courts are courts of record -- appeals from those courts are taken on the record to the county-level courts.

<sup>4</sup> An offense that arises under a municipal ordinance is punishable by a fine not to exceed: (1) \$2,000 for ordinances that govern fire safety, zoning, and public health or (2) \$500 for all others.