

COURT STRUCTURE OF TEXAS

JANUARY 10, 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
(438 Courts -- 438 Judges)
(438 Districts Containing One or More Counties)
-- Jurisdiction --
• Original jurisdiction in civil actions over \$200 or more, 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
(491 Courts -- 491 Judges)

<p>Constitutional County Courts (254) (One Court in Each County) -- Jurisdiction -- • 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. • Juvenile matters. • Appeals de novo from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record.</p>	<p>County Courts at Law (220) (Established in 84 Counties) -- Jurisdiction -- • All civil, criminal, original and appellate actions prescribed by law for constitutional county courts. • In addition, jurisdiction over civil matters between \$200 - \$100,000 (some courts may have higher maximum jurisdiction amount).</p>	<p>Statutory Probate Courts (17) (Established in 10 Counties) -- Jurisdiction -- • Limited primarily to probate matters.</p>
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County Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

Justice Courts¹
(823 Courts -- 823 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.

Municipal Courts²
(914 Cities -- 1,396 Judges)
-- Jurisdiction --
• Criminal misdemeanors punishable by fine only (no confinement).
• Exclusive original jurisdiction over municipal ordinance criminal cases.³
• Limited civil jurisdiction in cases involving dangerous dogs.
• Magistrate functions.

Local Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

¹ 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.

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

³ 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.