

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, 2004, a total of 5,343 assignments were made to the trial courts of the state, and 12,321 days were served by the judges on assignment. Assuming 250 working days per year, this service was equivalent to approximately 49.3 additional full-time judges serving in the trial courts of the state.

Retired and former judges received 4,640 assignments and served 11,688 days, while active judges serving a regular court received 703 assignments to courts in other areas and served 633 days.

The highest total number of assignments occurred in the Second Administrative Judicial Region, with 1,261 assignments made. However, assignments in the First Administrative Judicial Region resulted in the highest total number of days of service (3,689 days).

The presiding judges of the nine administrative judicial regions also made a total of 241 assignments of their resident judges for service in other regions.