

# Court Structure of Texas

September 1, 2019

State Highest Appellate Courts

State Intermediate Appellate Courts

Office of Court Administration

Administrative Judicial Regions

State Trial Courts of General and Special Jurisdiction

County Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

Local Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

**Supreme Court**  
(1 Court – 9 Justices)

- Final appellate jurisdiction in civil and juvenile cases

**Court of Criminal Appeals**  
(1 Court – 9 Justices)

- Final appellate jurisdiction in criminal cases

Civil Appeals

Criminal Appeals

**Courts of Appeals**  
(14 Courts – 80 Justices)

- Regional jurisdiction
- Intermediate appeals from trial courts in their respective courts of appeals districts

**District Courts**  
(476 Courts – 476 Judges)

- Original jurisdiction in civil actions over \$200\*, divorce, title to land, contested elections
- Original jurisdiction in felony criminal matters
- Juvenile matters
- 13 district courts are designated *criminal district courts*; some others are directed to give preference to certain specialized areas
- 379 districts containing one county and 97 districts containing more than one county

Appeals of Death Sentences

**County-Level Courts**  
(520 Courts – 520 Judges)

Constitutional County Courts (254) (1 in each county)	Statutory County Courts (248) (in 89 counties plus 1 multi-county court)	Statutory Probate Courts (18) (in 10 counties)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original jurisdiction in civil actions between \$200 and \$10,000</li> <li>Probate and guardianship (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 <i>de novo</i> from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record</li> </ul>	<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 between \$200 and \$200,000 (some courts may have higher maximum jurisdiction amount)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited primarily to probate and guardianship matters</li> </ul>

**Justice Courts<sup>1</sup>**  
(802 Courts – 802 Judges<sup>2</sup>)

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

**Municipal Courts<sup>1</sup>**  
(944 Courts – 1,325 Judges<sup>2</sup>)

- Criminal misdemeanors punishable by fine only (no confinement)
- Exclusive original jurisdiction over municipal ordinance criminal cases<sup>3</sup>
- Limited civil jurisdiction
- Magistrate functions

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 the courts are taken on the record to the county-level courts. As of April 2019, 179 courts indicated that they are a court of record; a list is posted at <http://www.txcourts.gov/about-texas-courts.aspx>.  
 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, (2) \$4,000 for dumping of refuse or (3) \$500 for all others.