Court Structure of Texas

January 1, 2015

Supreme Court
(1 Court -- 9 Justices)

-- Statewide Jurisdiction --

- Final appellate jurisdiction in civil and juvenile cases.

Court of Criminal Appeals
(1 Court -- 9 Judges)

-- Statewide Jurisdiction --

- Final appellate jurisdiction in criminal cases.

State Highest Appellate Courts

Civil Appeals

Criminal Appeals

Appeals of Death Sentences

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
(458 Courts -- 458 Judges)

(360 Districts Containing One County and 98 Districts Containing More than One County)

-- Jurisdiction --

- 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.

State Trial Courts of General and Special Jurisdiction

County-Level Courts
(511 Courts -- 511 Judges)

Constitutional County Courts (254)
(One Court in Each County)

-- Jurisdiction --

- Original jurisdiction in civil actions between $200 and $10,000.
- Probate (contested matters may be transfered 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.

Statutory County Courts (239)
(Established in 89 Counties plus 1 Multi-county Court)

-- Jurisdiction --

- All civil, criminal, original and appellate actions prescribed by law for constitutional county courts.
- In addition, jurisdiction over civil matters up to $200,000 (some courts may have higher maximum jurisdiction amount).

Statutory Probate Courts (18)
(Established in 10 Counties)

-- Jurisdiction --

- Limited primarily to probate matters.

County Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

Justice Courts[1]
(811 Courts -- 811 Judges[2])

(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[1]
(926 Cities -- 1,288 Judges[2])

-- Jurisdiction --

- Criminal misdemeanors punishable by fine only (no confinement).
- Exclusive original jurisdiction over municipal ordinance criminal cases.[3]
- Limited civil jurisdiction.
- 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. Some municipal courts are courts of record--appeals from those courts are taken on the record to the county-level courts. As of March 2014, 158 courts indicated that they were a court of record.
2. Some justices of the peace also serve as a judge in one or more municipal courts. Municipal judges may also serve in multiple 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.