

# COURT STRUCTURE OF TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 1, 1996

**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**  
(395 Courts -- 395 Judges)

*(Established in 395 Districts Containing One or More Counties)*

-- Jurisdiction --

- Original jurisdiction in civil actions over \$200, divorce, title to land, contested elections, and contested probate matters.
- Original jurisdiction in felony criminal matters.
- Juvenile matters.
- 10 District Courts are named Criminal District Courts; others are directed to give preference to certain specialized areas.

State Trial Courts of General and Special Jurisdiction

**COUNTY-LEVEL COURTS**  
(446 Courts – 446 Judges)

<p><b>Constitutional County Courts (254)</b> <i>(One Court in Each County)</i></p> <p>– Jurisdiction –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original jurisdiction in civil actions between \$200 and \$5,000.</li> <li>• Probate (contested matters transferred to District Court.)</li> <li>• Exclusive original jurisdiction over misdemeanors with fines greater than \$500 or jail sentence.</li> <li>• Appeals <i>de novo</i> from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record.</li> </ul>	<p><b>County Courts at Law (172)</b> <i>(Established in 71 Counties)</i></p> <p>– Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited jurisdiction over civil matters, most under \$100,000.</li> <li>• Limited jurisdiction over misdemeanor criminal matters.</li> <li>• Appeals <i>de novo</i> from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probate Courts (19)</b> <i>(Established in 8 Counties)</i></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

**MUNICIPAL COURTS<sup>1</sup>**  
(844 Cities -- 1,207 Judges)

– Jurisdiction –

- Criminal misdemeanors with fines less than \$500.
- Exclusive jurisdiction over municipal ordinance violations. (Fines up to \$2,000.)
- Limited civil penalties in cases involving dangerous dogs.
- Magistrate functions.

**JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS<sup>2</sup>**  
(839 Courts – 839 Judges)

*(Established in Precincts Within Each County)*

– Jurisdiction –

- Civil actions under \$5,000.
- Small Claims
- Criminal misdemeanors with fines less than \$500.
- Magistrate functions.

Local Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

<sup>1</sup> Some Municipal Courts are courts of record – appeals from those courts are taken on the record to the county-level courts.  
<sup>2</sup> All Justice of the Peace 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.