 Judge Qualifications and Selection in the State of Texas

Supreme Court
Number: 1 chief justice and 8 justices.
Selection: Partisan, statewide election. Vacancies between elections filled by gubernatorial appointment with advice and consent of Senate.
Qualifications: Citizen of U.S. and of Texas; age 35 to 74; and a practicing lawyer, or lawyer and judge of court of record together, for at least 10 years.
Term: 6 years.

Court of Criminal Appeals
Number: 1 presiding judge and 8 judges.
Selection: Partisan, statewide election. Vacancies between elections filled by gubernatorial appointment with advice and consent of Senate.
Qualifications: Citizen of U.S. and of Texas; age 35 to 74; and a practicing lawyer, or lawyer and judge of court of record together, for at least 10 years.
Term: 6 years.

Courts of Appeals
Number: Each court has 1 chief justice and from 2 to 12 additional justices, for a total of 80 justices statewide.
Selection: Partisan election within each court of appeals district. Vacancies between elections filled by gubernatorial appointment with advice and consent of Senate.
Qualifications: Citizen of U.S. and of Texas; age 35 to 74; and a practicing lawyer, or lawyer and judge of court of record together, for at least 10 years.
Term: 6 years.

District Courts
Number: 1 judge per court.
Selection: Partisan, district-wide election. Vacancies between elections filled by gubernatorial appointment with advice and consent of Senate.
Qualifications: Citizen of U.S. and of Texas; age 25 to 74; resident of the district for 2 years; and a practicing lawyer or judge, or both combined, for 8 years.
Term: 4 years.

County-Level Courts
Constitutional County Courts
Number: 1 judge per court.
Selection: Partisan, county-wide election. Vacancies between elections filled by appointment by county commissioners.
Qualifications: "Shall be well informed in the law of the State." (Law license not required.)
Term: 4 years.

Statutory County Courts
Number: 1 judge per court.
Selection: Partisan, county-wide election. Vacancies between elections filled by appointment by county commissioners.
Qualifications: Citizen of U.S., age 25 or older; resident of county for at least 2 years; and licensed attorney who has practiced law or served as a judge for 4 years.
Term: 4 years.

Statutory Probate Courts
Number: 1 judge per court.
Selection: Partisan, county-wide election. Vacancies between elections filled by appointment by county commissioners.
Qualifications: Citizen of U.S., age 25 or older; resident of county for at least 2 years; and licensed attorney who has practiced law or served as a judge for 5 years.
Term: 4 years.

Civil Appeals
Criminal Appeals
Appeals of
Death Sentences

Justice Courts
Number: 1 judge per court.
Selection: Partisan, precinct-wide election.
Qualifications: No specific statutory or constitutional provisions apply.
Term: 4 years.

Municipal Courts
Number: Generally, 1 court per incorporated municipality and 1 judge per court. Statutes allow some city governing bodies to establish more than 1 court and/or more than 1 judge per court.
Selection: Most appointed by the governing body of the city as provided by city charter or ordinance. A few elected.
Qualifications: Determined by the governing body of the city.
Term: 2 or 4 years.