

BIENNIAL DISTRICT COURTS JUDICIAL WORKLOAD ANALYSIS FOR THE 30 MOST POPULOUS COUNTIES



TEXAS OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

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Biennial District Courts Judicial Workload Analysis for the 30 Most Populous Counties

Government Code [Section 72.0395](#) requires the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to conduct a caseload analysis, also known as a judicial officer needs/workload analysis for the district courts in the 30 most populous counties at least every two years. This report includes the judicial needs analyses for 46 counties given the geographical patterns that some counties fall under given jurisdictional boundary overlap.

Though this type of analysis provides valuable perspective into judicial needs, it should be viewed as one tool among many for assessing the need for additional judicial officers. The weighted caseload formulas help identify the need within a threshold, but it should not be the sole determinant. Other factors that can be considered when evaluating judicial needs include case complexities, geographical considerations, specialized court functions, and more.

Government Code [Sec.72.0395](#). DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD ANALYSIS.

(a) In this section:

(1)"Clearance rate" has the meaning assigned by [Section 72.083](#).

(2)"Judicial officer" means a district judge or an associate judge, master, magistrate, or referee who conducts proceedings for district courts.

(b)The office at least once every two years shall conduct a district court caseload analysis. The analysis must concentrate on the weighted caseload of the district courts in the 30 most populous counties in this state, considering the nature and complexity of cases heard by each court, and include the following information, disaggregated by county:

(1) the number of cases filed in each district court with jurisdiction in the county in each of the preceding five state fiscal years;

(2) the clearance rate for each district court with jurisdiction in the county in each of the preceding five state fiscal years;

(3) the number of estimated full-time equivalent judicial officers serving district courts in the county in the preceding state fiscal year;

(4) the number of full-time equivalent judicial officers needed to serve the district courts in the county based on the most recent weighted caseload analysis;

(5) the calendar year for creation of the most recently created district court in the county; and

(6) any other relevant information identified by the director.

(c) Not later than October 1 of each even-numbered year, the office shall report the results of the analysis conducted under Subsection (b) to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and each member of the legislature.

Data Sources

There are two data sources for these analyses: the number of filings reported by the county and judicial officer census surveys. Filings are used to indicate a county's incoming caseload. Judicial Officer census surveys detail the additional judicial resources other than elected judges each county has available to handle their caseload.

County Filings

[Section 71.035\(b\)](#) of the Texas Government Code and [Chapter 171](#) of the Texas Administrative Code require clerks to submit a monthly activity report concerning the criminal, civil, family, and juvenile cases in the county's district courts. Clerks submit one report combining the activity for all district courts in the county. No data are available for individual courts. Monthly reports are due no later than 20 days following the end of the month for which data are reported and are entered into the Court Activity Reporting and Directory System (CARD) (<http://card.txcourts.gov/>).

The key data elements collected in the monthly reports include the number of active and inactive cases pending at the first of the month, the number of cases added during the month and how they were filed, the number of cases disposed during the month and how they were closed, the number of active and inactive cases pending at the end of the month, and the length of time a case remained active before being disposed.

For these analyses, **the number of filings includes new cases filed and reopened cases** (motions to revoke and all other cases added).

For complete descriptions of what is included in the monthly court activity reports, visit: <https://txcourts.gov/reporting-to-oca/judicial-council-trial-court-activity-reports/>.

Judicial Officer Census Survey

In August 2026, OCA sent surveys to the District Clerk in coordination with the Local Administrative District Judge in the 30 most populous counties. An additional 16 surveys were sent to the Local Administrative District Judge of smaller counties that have overlapping geographical jurisdiction with a county included in the 30 most populous.

The survey asked for the names of all county-funded judicial officers (associate judges, magistrates, referees, and masters) that work on filed cases in district courts, their FTE status (full-time employee or part-time employee), and the percentage of time spent on each case category.

The judicial resources from this survey were counted in the existing judicial resources for the county.

Judicial Officer Needs Analysis

Estimated Need

The need for judicial officers in a county is estimated using a weighted caseload methodology, considering the types of cases filed and their complexity. Since some case types require greater amounts of judicial time (e.g., capital murder), those cases are given a higher case weight when determining overall caseload. The **Case Weights** represent the average amount of time in minutes that judicial officers spend on the handling of cases in the courts as determined by the [2023 Texas Judicial Workload Study](#).

To calculate judicial workload, filings for each of the case types are multiplied by the corresponding case weights to obtain the total number of minutes of judicial officer time needed to handle the caseload (**Estimated Need**).

	Case Type					Total
	Divorce with Children	Divorce without Children	Child Support (IV-D)	Child Protection	Other Family	
Case Weight (Minutes)	91	40	20	120	33	
Lone Star County Cases Filed FY 24	1,300	1,550	1,500	325	375	5,050
Estimated Need (Minutes)	118,300	62,000	30,000	39,000	12,375	261,675

To translate the Estimated Need in minutes to the number of judicial officers needed, the Estimated Need in minutes is divided by the **Judicial Officer Year Value**—the amount of time per year that a judicial officer has available to perform case-related work (after subtracting time spent on non-case-related activities such as travel and administrative duties).

The Judicial Officer Year Value is calculated by multiplying the number of workdays in the judicial officer year by the number of hours in a day available for case-related work as determined by the 2023 Judicial Workload Study. Due to travel required for judges with a multi-county district, the time available for case-related work is less than that available for judges serving a single county.

Judicial District Type	Judicial Officer Year Value
Single County	77,400 minutes
Multi-County	70,950 minutes

Lone Star County	
Estimated Need (minutes)	261,675 minutes
Judicial Officer Year Value	77,400 minutes
Estimated Number of Judicial Officers Needed	3.38 FTEs ¹

¹ An FTE is a full-time equivalent employee (40 hours a week).

Existing Judicial Officer Resources

For the purpose of assessing existing resources, OCA assigns different values based on the type of judicial officer. An elected/appointed Judge of the court is considered 1 FTE, and any other county-employed judicial officer is considered 0.75 FTE.

Judicial Officer Type	Number of FTEs
Elected/appointed Judge	1 FTE
County-employed associate judge, magistrate, master, referee	0.75 FTE
OCA child support or child protection associate judge ²	Based on filings

In the Lone Star County example, assume there are 2 Judges and an Associate Judge assisting 20 hours per week. The resulting value for judicial officers is 2.38 FTEs.

Lone Star County	Number of FTEs
2 Elected/appointed Judges	2 FTEs
1 half-time County-employed associate judge (Half-time = 0.5 FTE; multiply 0.5 by 0.75 FTE value for county-employed judicial officers; resulting figure is 0.38 FTE)	0.38 FTE
Total Existing Judicial Officers	2.38 FTEs

Workload per Judicial Officer

The Judicial Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC), which served as an advisory body for the 2023 Judicial Workload Study, adopted a rounding convention for counties showing a need for additional judicial officers that is based upon the Workload per Judicial Officer and puts judicial officers in counties of all sizes on equal footing. **Workload per Judicial Officer** is calculated by dividing the total judicial officer need in each county by the existing number of funded judicial positions.

Lone Star County	
Estimated Number of Judicial Officers Needed	3.38 FTEs
Existing Judicial Officer Resources	2.38 FTEs
Workload per Judicial Officer	1.42 FTEs

According to the standard adopted by the JNAC, when Workload per Judicial Officer is greater than **1.15 FTE**, there is a need for one or more additional judicial positions. The estimated number of

² OCA child support and child protection courts can serve multiple counties. Therefore, the FTE count is based on the filings for the county served.

judicial officer positions needed is based on the number of judicial officers that brings each county as close to the 1.15 threshold as possible, rounding to the nearest .5 FTE position.

The rounding convention using Workload per Judicial Officer was designed to provide empirical guidance as to which courts are under-resourced. It also provides a means to rank jurisdictions regarding their relative need. The higher the workload per judge, the greater the need for additional resources.

Counties that are near the threshold (e.g., courts with a workload per judge between 1.10 and 1.20) may benefit from a secondary analysis that examines additional contextual factors affecting the need for judicial officers. For example, some counties slightly above the workload per judicial officer threshold of 1.15 may feel they have sufficient resources to handle their workload efficiently and effectively, even though the rounding rule suggests the need for one or more additional judgeships. On the other hand, some counties that are slightly below the threshold may exhibit unique factors that impact their workload and may not be accounted for in the model. For example, counties bordering Mexico or other states may have additional work associated with their shared boundaries that create more complex elements to many of their cases. These extra factors should be considered when determining whether additional resources are needed.

The current Workload per Judicial Officer in Lone Star County is 1.42, indicating a need for additional judicial resources. Changing the Associate Judge to full-time would add another 0.38 FTE and result in a Workload per Judicial Officer of 1.23—still indicating a need for additional resources. Adding another court instead with its elected/appointed Judge adds a full-time FTE, resulting in a value of 1.00, indicating a full but not excessive workload. Depending on the county's circumstances such as rapid and sustained filings growth and population growth, and considering State and local budget cycles, the County may opt to do both, to provide room for that growth and mitigate potentially excessive workload in the near future.

Lone Star County	Current	+ 0.38 FTE	+ 1.0 FTE	+ 1.38 FTE
Estimated Need	3.38			
Existing Resources	2.38	2.75	3.38	3.75
Workload per Judicial Officer	1.42	1.23	1.00	0.90

Fiscal Year 2026 Judicial Workload Analyses Highlights

The judicial workload analysis assessed the FTE needs across two categories: single-county jurisdictions and multi-county jurisdictions. A court is generally considered to have an adequate number of judicial officers if the workload per officer is below 1.15 FTE.

Single County Jurisdictions

For the 20 counties with single-county jurisdictions—where all courts in the county serve only that county—12 counties were identified as needing additional FTE positions to handle the workload. These counties exhibited workload demands that exceeded current staffing capacities, indicating a need for increased judicial resources.

The remaining 8 counties were below the 1.15 FTE threshold and therefore were not identified as needing additional judicial staffing.

County	Current Workload per Judicial Officer	Recommended New Judges
Bexar	1.54	12
Brazoria	0.98	0
Brazos	0.75	0
Collin	1.48	5
Dallas	1.25	6
Denton	1.33	3
Ellis	1.01	0
Fort Bend	0.90	0
Galveston	1.20	1
Harris	1.67	41
Hidalgo	1.22	1
Jefferson	0.76	0
Kaufman	1.31	1
McLennan	0.97	0
Midland	0.63	0
Montgomery	1.38	3
Smith	1.01	0
Tarrant	1.42	10
Travis	1.38	6
Williamson	1.27	1

Single County Jurisdictions

	FILINGS								CLEARANCE RATE						JUDICIAL OFFICERS							
	County Population 2025	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Change FY 25-26	Change FY 22-26	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Avg	Estimated Need	District Judges	% State Funded Judicial Officers	County Employed Judicial Officers	OCA Employed Judicial Officers	Net Need	Current Workload per Judicial Officer	Last Court Created
County	2025	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	25-26	22-26	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Avg	Need	Judges	Officers	Officers	Officers	Need	Officer	Court
Bexar	2,160,088	55,195	55,938	57,148	60,952	63,538	4%	15%	91%	94%	86%	97%	97%	93%	52.27	27	82%	6.00	0.91	18.36	1.54	2010
Brazoria	419,080	9,715	9,903	10,256	10,136	10,522	4%	8%	91%	106%	98%	103%	94%	99%	8.28	6	73%	2.25	0.22	-0.19	0.98	2026
Brazos	249,088	5,236	6,450	5,934	6,060	6,673	10%	27%	99%	90%	109%	113%	100%	102%	4.16	4	76%	1.34	0.18	-1.36	0.75	2023
Collin	1,297,179	24,613	26,288	29,286	30,380	31,533	4%	28%	105%	92%	95%	103%	98%	98%	24.11	15	95%	0.75	0.52	7.84	1.48	2024
Dallas	2,661,397	93,269	95,323	83,433	77,737	89,497	15%	-4%	93%	97%	105%	118%	101%	102%	66.77	39	79%	11.25	3.02	13.50	1.25	2005
Denton	1,069,346	17,133	18,540	20,216	20,903	21,954	5%	28%	102%	102%	95%	102%	100%	100%	16.58	12	98%	0.23	0.19	4.16	1.33	2025
Ellis	240,867	5,285	6,031	5,961	6,157	6,480	5%	23%	78%	82%	113%	98%	101%	95%	4.97	4	85%	0.75	0.17	0.06	1.01	2025
Fort Bend	975,191	15,521	17,141	18,039	19,738	21,728	10%	40%	107%	100%	99%	101%	100%	101%	14.71	10	64%	5.81	0.49	-1.59	0.90	2025
Galveston	372,207	10,065	9,747	10,240	10,345	10,883	5%	8%	101%	106%	99%	113%	94%	102%	8.41	6	89%	0.75	0.27	1.39	1.20	2001
Harris	5,045,026	161,476	164,723	168,457	168,495	161,342	-4%	0%	100%	98%	97%	102%	100%	100%	145.46	72	86%	12.00	2.91	58.55	1.67	2026
Hidalgo	921,549	18,889	19,888	22,461	25,344	23,809	-6%	26%	87%	96%	88%	93%	109%	95%	16.72	13	100%	0.00	0.74	2.97	1.22	2022
Jefferson	254,321	7,938	8,147	8,798	7,447	8,428	13%	6%	112%	96%	94%	116%	98%	103%	7.09	8	88%	1.13	0.16	-2.19	0.76	1981
Kaufman	209,235	2,659	3,711	4,096	4,914	5,578	14%	110%	99%	87%	93%	87%	89%	90%	4.13	3	100%	0.00	0.14	0.99	1.31	2023
McLennan	272,020	7,847	7,509	7,474	8,287	8,158	-2%	4%	99%	128%	109%	98%	101%	107%	6.91	6	90%	0.75	0.40	-0.24	0.97	2022
Midland	187,855	5,445	6,362	5,875	5,108	5,578	9%	2%	105%	100%	98%	98%	100%	100%	3.80	5	88%	0.75	0.25	-2.20	0.63	2009
Montgomery	781,194	17,525	18,489	19,293	20,353	21,035	3%	20%	107%	99%	95%	97%	100%	100%	16.16	9	79%	2.40	0.31	4.45	1.38	2026
Smith	252,549	5,272	5,113	5,696	5,809	5,969	3%	13%	94%	102%	103%	104%	108%	92%	5.06	5	100%	0.00	0.00	0.06	1.01	2023
Tarrant	2,248,466	65,521	64,565	66,047	66,049	68,391	4%	4%	107%	108%	100%	105%	105%	105%	55.27	28	74%	9.90	0.89	16.48	1.42	2022
Travis	1,389,670	28,978	30,370	34,121	40,130	37,800	-6%	30%	91%	95%	94%	89%	106%	95%	37.86	21	78%	6.00	0.34	10.52	1.38	2021
Williamson	752,827	7,848	8,302	9,105	10,352	10,744	4%	37%	97%	100%	96%	108%	101%	101%	9.04	7	100%	0.00	0.11	1.93	1.27	2025

Multi-County Jurisdictions

The analysis for multi-county jurisdictions identifies the overall need for additional judicial officers at the cluster level. However, it does not account for the unequal distribution of workload across the individual counties. Some counties may have higher demands than others, but this disparity is not reflected in the overall net need of the cluster.

In the multi-county jurisdictions, 26 counties made up 8 clusters, where courts serve multiple counties. Two clusters exhibited workload demands that exceeded current staffing capacities, indicating a need for increased judicial resources.

Cluster	Current Workload per Judicial Officer	Recommended New Judges
Bell & Lampasas	1.10	0
Webb & Zapata	0.94	0
Nueces, Kenedy & Kleberg	1.09	0
Cameron & Willacy	1.19	1
Lubbock & Crosby	0.97	0
Johnson & Somervell	1.33	1
El Paso, Brewster, Culberson, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis & Presidio	1.00	0
Hays, Caldwell, Colorado ¹ , Comal, Gonzales, Guadalupe & Lavaca	0.95	0

¹ Colorado missing all reports for FY 2026. Estimated need based on FY 2025 filings.

Multi-County Jurisdictions

County	County Population 2025	FILINGS							CLEARANCE RATE							JUDICIAL OFFICERS						
		FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Change FY 25-26	Change FY 22-26	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Avg	Estimated Need	District Judges	% State Funded Judicial Officers	County Employed Judicial Officers	OCA Employed Judicial Officers	Net Need	Current Workload per Judicial Officer	Last Court Created
Bell	402,248	9,996	10,333	10,867	10,988	11,435	4%	14%	91%	94%	104%	98%	100%	98%	8.35	6	81%	1.50	0.59	0.26	1.10	2022
Lampasas	23,657	751	649	689	633	656	4%	-13%	95%	103%	105%	132%	89%	104%	0.52		100%	0.00	0.01	-0.49		Unknown
Total		10,747	10,982	11,556	11,621	12,091	4%	13%	91%	94%	104%	100%	99%	98%	8.88		81%	1.50	0.60	0.77		
Webb	281,224	5,103	5,124	5,954	6,992	6,786	-3%	33%	113%	104%	93%	91%	102%	100%	4.97	4	88%	0.56	0.25	0.15	0.94	2001
Zapata	13,753	364	369	343	346	388	12%	7%	83%	66%	100%	87%	114%	90%	0.29		57%	0.75	0.01	-1.47		1981
Total		5,467	5,493	6,297	7,338	7,174	-2%	31%	111%	102%	93%	91%	102%	99%	5.26		76%	1.31	0.27	-0.32		
Kenedy	319	218	470	465	295	171	-42%	-22%	42%	38%	55%	130%	113%	68%	0.10	8	100%	0.00	0.00	-0.90	1.09	Unknown
Kleberg	30,315	1,053	945	1,158	1,105	990	-10%	-6%	97%	123%	112%	95%	105%	106%	0.55		100%	0.00	0.00	-0.45		Unknown
Nueces	352,992	12,449	11,489	12,565	13,955	12,636	-9%	2%	97%	112%	114%	91%	102%	103%	8.77		97%	0.30	0.31	0.16		1983
Total		13,502	12,434	13,723	15,060	13,626	-10%	1%	97%	113%	114%	91%	102%	101%	9.42	9	97%	0.30	0.31	0.81	1.19	
Cameron	433,946	12,215	11,104	13,027	14,212	14,376	1%	17%	96%	107%	85%	111%	97%	99%	11.88		93%	0.75	0.77	1.36		2021
Willacy	19,971	775	849	832	967	971	0%	25%	112%	106%	91%	84%	86%	95%	0.72		100%	0.00	0.05	-0.32		1970
Total		12,990	11,953	13,859	15,179	15,347	1%	18%	97%	107%	85%	109%	97%	99%	12.60	6	93%	0.75	0.81	2.04	0.97	
Crosby	4,852	117	100	100	170	144	-15%	23%	87%	74%	130%	74%	122%	96%	0.12		100%	0.00	0.01	-0.89		Unknown
Lubbock	328,906	8,145	8,815	8,628	8,532	8,910	4%	9%	96%	102%	100%	112%	102%	102%	7.54		81%	1.50	0.37	-0.33		1989
Total		8,262	8,915	8,728	8,702	9,054	4%	10%	96%	102%	100%	111%	103%	102%	7.66	3	81%	1.50	0.38	-0.22	1.33	
Johnson	218,048	3,726	3,877	4,185	4,579	4,815	5%	29%	106%	109%	98%	105%	87%	100%	3.94		100%	0.00	0.10	0.84		2003
Somervell	10,261	271	287	245	278	309	11%	14%	91%	126%	119%	87%	108%	106%	0.23		100%	0.00	0.02	-1.79		1977
Total		3,997	4,164	4,430	4,857	5,124	5%	28%	105%	110%	100%	104%	88%	101%	4.17	18	100%	0.00	0.12	1.05	1.00	
Brewster	9,458	233	227	216	236	214	-22%	-21%	49%	81%	80%	78%	130%	83%	0.18		87%	0.15	0.00	-0.97		1995
Culberson	2,267	194	143	97	94	117	24%	-40%	37%	84%	33%	80%	82%	61%	0.08		100%	0.00	0.00	-1.92		1995
El Paso	877,858	18,794	23,353	23,725	24,440	23,926	-2%	27%	127%	91%	87%	105%	108%	103%	22.51	14	79%	4.58	0.25	0.69	0.95	2008
Hudspeth	3,433	69	59	270	246	188	-24%	172%	538%	266%	47%	89%	164%	142%	0.10		100%	0.00	0.00	-1.90		1995
Jeff Davis	1,711	53	40	48	56	44	-21%	-17%	111%	73%	148%	68%	82%	97%	0.03		100%	0.00	0.00	-0.97		1995
Presidio	5,433	98	81	93	106	144	36%	47%	78%	53%	75%	77%	67%	70%	0.12	14	100%	0.00	0.00	-0.88	0.95	1995
Total		19,441	23,903	24,449	25,178	24,633	-2%	27%	126%	91%	87%	104%	108%	102%	23.02		79%	4.73	0.26	0.04		
Caldwell	55,150	1,005	1,033	1,043	1,271	1,329	5%	32%	92%	91%	70%	81%	112%	90%	1.30	14	100%	0.00	0.08	-1.77	0.95	2004
Colorado ¹	21,439	541	573	715	570		-20%	5%	73%	81%	72%	161%		95%	0.46		100%	0.00	0.02	-0.56		2026
Comal	209,166	2,934	3,539	4,079	4,059	4,139	2%	41%	93%	74%	105%	118%	83%	95%	3.35		100%	0.00	0.06	-2.70		2026
Gonzales	20,159	594	741	580	636	577	-9%	-3%	91%	96%	94%	104%	181%	112%	0.43	14	100%	0.00	0.01	-1.59	0.95	Unknown
Guadalupe ²	201,111	3,291	3,510	3,833	4,395	4,337	-1%	32%	82%	91%	88%	117%	100%	97%	3.36		100%	0.00	0.12	0.23		2021
Hays	304,390	5,368	5,514	5,355	5,703	6,355	11%	18%	82%	91%	101%	90%	148%	104%	5.25		89%	0.75	0.23	-1.73		2022
Lavaca	20,651	389	396	409	530	459	-13%	18%	85%	94%	103%	95%	91%	93%	0.40	14	100%	0.00	0.01	-1.61	0.95	2026
Total		14,122	15,306	16,014	17,164	17,196	0%	22%	85%	87%	95%	106%	117%	99%	14.55		95%	0.75	0.53	-0.73		

1. Colorado missing all reports for FY 2026. Estimated need based on FY 2025 filings.

2. An unknown number of civil cases are handled by the Guadalupe county courts at law but are reported under the district courts. The county courts at law also handle most of the juvenile cases but the cases were reported under the district courts until May 2026.



Texas Office of Court Administration

Data & Research Division