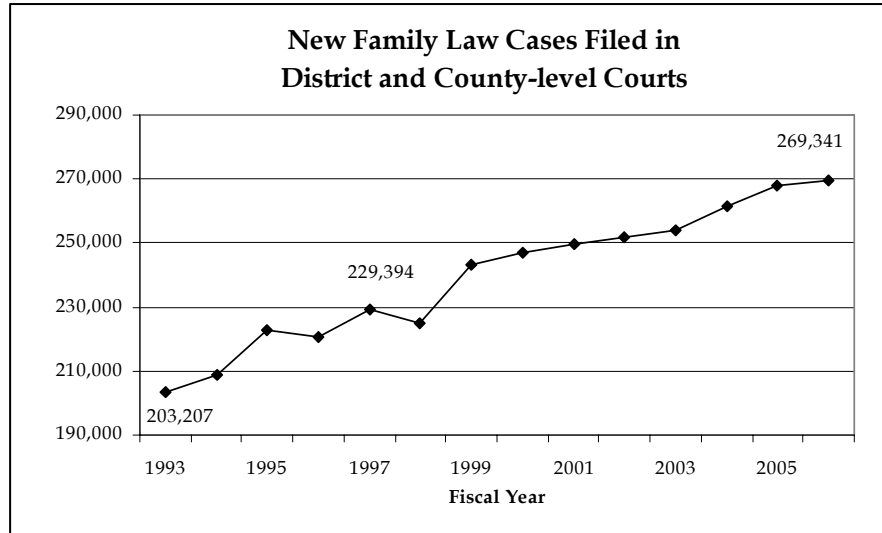


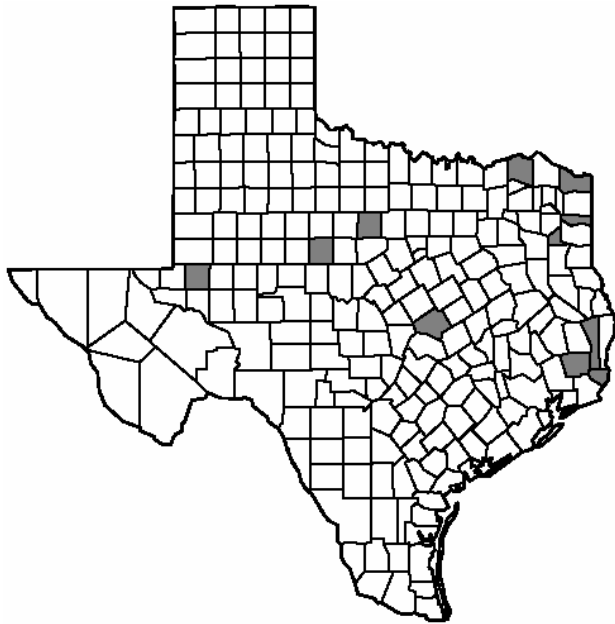
## New Family Law Cases Filed in Texas District and County-level Courts Fiscal Years 1997 to 2006

Statewide, Texas district and county-level courts experienced a small increase in the number of new family law cases filed each year over the past decade (an average of 1.8 percent per year) and over the past five years (an average of 1.7 percent per year).



Over the past decade, the statewide average number of new family law cases filed per 1,000 population was 11.6 cases. Per capita filing rates ranged from a low of 2.5 cases in Glasscock County to a high of 17.7 cases in Bell County. The majority of the top ten counties with the highest family law filing rates per capita were located in East Texas (see map).

### Counties with Highest Rates of New Family Law Cases Filed per Year per 1,000 Population Fiscal Years 1997 to 2006



County	Counties with Highest Rates of New Family Law Cases Filed per Year per 1,000 Population Fiscal Years 1997 to 2006
Bell	17.7
Orange	16.0
Lamar	15.8
Ector	15.7
Taylor	15.4
Jasper	15.2
Bowie	15.0
Gregg	14.9
Hardin	14.9
Marion	14.9
Stephens	14.8

Of the 20 most populous counties in Texas, Williamson County experienced the largest increase in family law filings with an average increase of 6.0 percent per year over the past decade. Collin and Denton counties also had similar increases with average increases of 5.9 and 5.8 percent per year, respectively. These three counties, however, had average per capita filing rates lower than all but two of the other 17 counties.

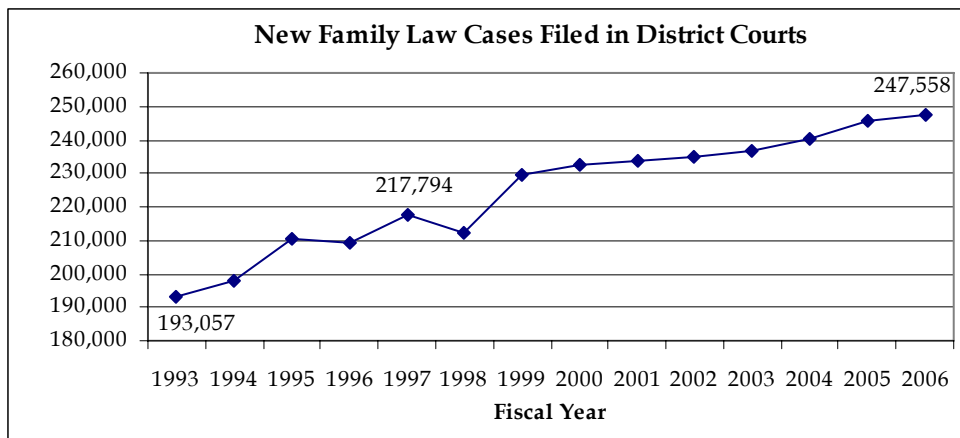
Jefferson County had the largest decrease with an average decrease of 4.0 percent per year.

The number of new family law cases filed in the 20 most populous counties ranged from more than 7 in McLennan County to nearly 18 filings per capita per year in Bell County.

### *Family Law Cases in the District Courts*

Most new family law cases were filed in district courts; in fiscal year 2006, approximately 92 percent were filed at the district court level. The number of new family law cases filed in district courts statewide increased an average of 1.5 percent per year since 1997 and 1.3 percent per year since 2002. In fiscal year 2006, the number of new family law cases filed reached the highest level ever.

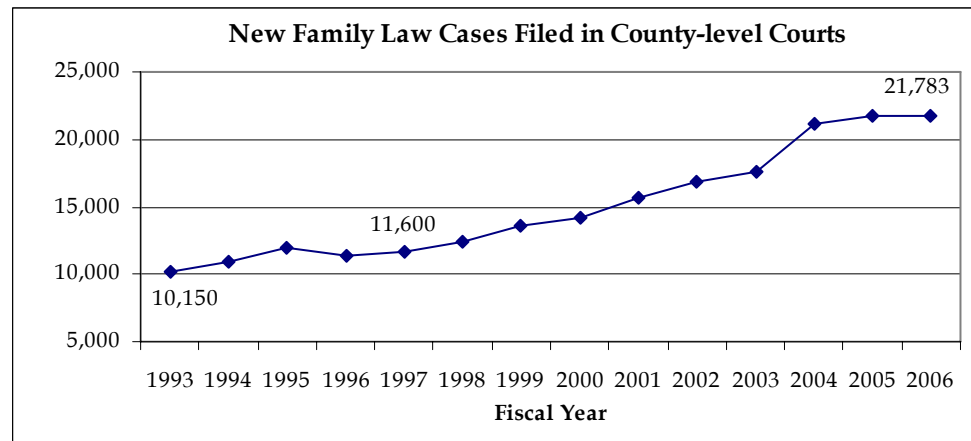
County	Average Annual Percentage Change	Average Number of Cases Filed per 1,000 Population per Year
Williamson	6.0%	8.8
Collin	5.9%	7.8
Denton	5.8%	8.4
Hidalgo	5.2%	8.7
Harris	4.5%	14.2
Galveston	4.3%	11.5
Montgomery	3.8%	10.8
El Paso	3.4%	11.6
Bell	3.1%	17.7
Fort Bend	3.0%	9.0
Brazoria	2.2%	10.2
Cameron	1.4%	10.8
Tarrant	1.3%	10.9
Bexar	1.1%	13.7
Nueces	1.0%	14.1
Lubbock	0.6%	13.4
Dallas	0.5%	9.7
Travis	0.2%	9.7
McLennan	-0.4%	7.2
Jefferson	-4.0%	12.8



## Family Law Cases in the County-level Courts

The number of new family law cases filed in the county-level courts increased an average of 7.4 percent per year since 1997 and 6.9 percent per year since 2002. In 2006, new filings decreased 0.1 percent, the first decrease in new family law case filings since 1996.

In 2004, the caseload of new family law cases grew by 20 percent in the county-level courts. Since 1994, 16 counties shifted some of their family law case workloads from



the district to the county-level courts, which had never previously handled these matters. Galveston County, for instance, transferred 586 cases in fiscal year 2004 (September 2003) that were pending in the district courts to the county-level courts. Another 1,657 new cases were filed in the county-level courts during that same year.

### Counties in Which Family Law Cases were Transferred from District Courts to County-level Courts

County	Number of Pending Cases Transferred	Fiscal Year	Number of New Cases Filed that Year
Orange	230	1994	381
Henderson	538	1995	171
Montgomery	932	1997	914
Hood	3	1998	35
Smith	389	1998	1,061
Nacogdoches	318	1999	266
Medina	92	2000	258
Williamson	943	2001	1,199
Bowie	6	2001	417
Polk	842	2002	207
Lamar	120	2002	153
Aransas	3	2002	18
Galveston	586	2004	1,657
Burnet	254	2004	372
Moore	189	2004	171
Potter	143	2004	140
Rockwall	9	2005	189