

COURT STRUCTURE OF TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 1, 2005

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
(432 Courts -- 432 Judges)

(432 Districts Containing One or More Counties)

-- Jurisdiction --

- Original jurisdiction in civil actions over \$200 or \$500¹, divorce, title to land, contested elections.
- Original jurisdiction in felony criminal matters.
- Juvenile matters.
- 12 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
(487 Courts -- 487 Judges)

<p>Constitutional County Courts (254) (One Court in Each County)</p> <p>-- Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original jurisdiction in civil actions between \$200 and \$5,000. • Probate (contested matters may be transferred 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. 	<p>County Courts at Law (216) (Established in 84 Counties)</p> <p>-- Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All civil, criminal, original and appellate actions prescribed by law for constitutional county courts. • In addition, jurisdiction over civil matters up to \$100,000 (some courts may have higher maximum jurisdiction amount). 	<p>Statutory Probate Courts (17) (Established in 10 Counties)</p> <p>-- Jurisdiction --</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited primarily to probate matters.
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County Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

Justice Courts²
(826 Courts -- 826 Judges)

(Established in Precincts Within Each County)

-- Jurisdiction --

- Civil actions of not more than \$5,000.
- Small claims.
- Criminal misdemeanors punishable by fine only (no confinement).
- Magistrate functions.

Municipal Courts³
(908 Cities -- 1,378 Judges)

-- Jurisdiction --

- Criminal misdemeanors punishable by fine only (no confinement).
- Exclusive original jurisdiction over municipal ordinance criminal cases.⁴
- Limited civil jurisdiction in cases involving dangerous dogs.
- Magistrate functions.

Local Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

¹ The dollar amount is currently unclear.
² 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.
³ Some municipal courts are courts of record -- appeals from those courts are taken on the record to the county-level courts.
⁴ 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.