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.

Civil Appeals

Criminal Appeals

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.

Death Sentences

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.

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.

County-Level Courts

Statutory County Courts

Selection: Partisan, county-wide election. Vacancies between elections filled by appointment by county commissioners.

Number: 1 judge per court.

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.

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.