



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Harris County Civil District Courts request five new courts to provide equal access to resolution

February 26, 2025 — The 24 Harris County Civil District Courts are dedicated to resolving civil disputes efficiently and fairly. These courts address a broad spectrum of issues like malpractice, damages, breach of contract, personal injury, and multi-district litigation. In Texas, district courts have original jurisdiction over civil matters in which a party is seeking equitable relief, injunctive relief, or where the amount in question is \$500 or more. This includes cases involving land titles, election contests, and other civil disputes.

A recent study commissioned by the [Texas Office of Court Administration](#) (OCA) revealed a critical shortage of district courts in Harris County. According to the [National Center for State Courts](#) (NCSC) [report](#) titled “*Measuring Current Judicial Workload in Texas*,” Harris County needs 42 additional judicial officers total, to manage its growing caseload effectively. In February 2025, the OCA determined from that report, a need for 25 additional civil courts, as each district court judge is currently handling the workload of 1.67 judges, or 67 percent over target efficiency — far exceeding the optimal level of 1.0. Of that recommended 25, the Harris County Civil District Courts are requesting five.

This heavy burden is negatively impacting the timely resolution of civil cases, despite the hard work and dedication of the Harris County Civil District Courts. Historical data from 2009 to 2024 show both record-high case filings and dispositions in the civil district courts. Judges are working tirelessly to keep up, but the sheer volume of new cases, compounded by the growing backlog from years where the amount of cases filed was larger than the amount disposed, has made it nearly impossible to reduce the mounting caseload.

“As Harris County’s population and business community grow and evolve, so do the number and complexity of civil cases,” said Judge Lauren Reeder, Administrative Judge for the Civil Courts and Presiding Judge of the 234th Harris County District Court. “Without additional courts and associated resources, delays in justice will continue, impacting not just businesses, but individuals waiting for resolution.”

Further, Harris County’s case-filing growth significantly outpaces other major Texas counties, with filings increasing at twice the rate of Dallas County and four to six times the rate of Bexar and Travis Counties, according to data provided by the OCA.

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	2023 Census Population Estimate	Judicial ¹ Officers	Added	Disposed	Active Pending 12/31/24	Avg. Active Pending Per Judicial Officer	Avg. Added Filings Per Judicial Officer	Judicial ² Officers Net Need
Harris	4,835,125	24.6	69,176	61,793	92,403	3,756	2,812	25.3
Dallas	2,606,358	13	26,277	25,219	21,619	1,663	2,021	17.05
Tarrant	2,182,947	10	18,735	16,614	18,010	1,801	1,873	11.49
Bexar	2,087,679	n/a	18,804	14,504	42,567	n/a	n/a	13.79
Collin	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.42

¹ Non-Harris County judicial officers were ascertained from the State of Texas Office of Court Administration website. The specific total of civil judicial officers for each county has been requested from OCA and this chart will be updated when those numbers become available.

² Analysis provided by OCA on February 12, 2025.



District Courts of Harris County

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While this surge highlights Harris County's role as a booming hub for business and innovation, it also underscores the pressing need for more judicial resources. Without immediate action, the age of civil cases will continue to rise, further delaying justice and straining court resources.

"The Houston Bar Association (HBA) is dedicated to providing access to justice and promoting the rule of law," said David Harrell, HBA President and avid supporter of the request for more resources. "It becomes difficult to deliver on that message in Harris County when the courts are prevented from providing essential judicial services. The proposal for nine additional courts promotes these goals, which are essential to the residents and commerce of Harris County."

By investing in this expansion, Harris County and the State of Texas will reaffirm its commitment to providing efficient, accessible, and fair judicial services for all. We urge the Commissioners' Court—convening Thursday, Feb. 27—to approve the resolution supporting this request, and the great State of Texas and our community to prioritize this initiative.

Let's lead with Harris County.

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