



## COUNTY CONSTABLE

- Serves as a licensed peace officer and performs various law enforcement functions, including issuing traffic citations.
- Serves warrants and civil papers such as subpoenas and temporary restraining orders.
- Serves as bailiff for Justice of the Peace Court.



## COUNTY ATTORNEY

- Represents the state in prosecuting misdemeanor criminal cases.
- Works with law enforcement officers in the investigation of criminal cases.
- Provides legal advice to the Commissioners Court and to other elected officials.
- Brings civil enforcement actions on behalf of the state or county.



## DISTRICT ATTORNEY

- Represents the state in prosecuting felony criminal cases.
- Works with law enforcement officers in the investigation of criminal cases.
- Presents cases to the grand jury.
- Represents victims of violence in protective orders and represents the state in removing children from abusive households.

*Some counties do not have both a County Attorney and a District Attorney. These counties have either a Criminal District Attorney or a combination County and District Attorney. In these counties, one office performs the functions of both the County Attorney and the District Attorney.*



## COUNTY AUDITOR

- Appointed by the district judge(s).
- Prepares and administers accounting records for all county funds.
- Audits the records and accounts of the various county departments.
- Verifies the validity and legality of all county disbursements.
- Forecasts financial data for budgetary formulation purposes.
- Serves as budget officer in counties with more than 225,000 residents. (Counties with more than 125,000 residents may opt for an appointed budget officer.)

### FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COUNTY:

Contact your County Judge's office. Also, see [www.county.org/countywebsites](http://www.county.org/countywebsites) for links to Texas county government websites.

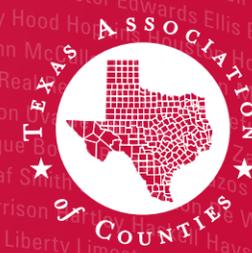
TEXAS ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES

# TEXAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT

EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND WORKING FOR YOU



*How county government serves you and your community.*



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# TEXAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT

EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND WORKING FOR YOU



*How county government serves you and your community.*

**T**exas' 254 counties serve their local residents as the functional arm of state government and cost-effectively provide many important services, including:

- roads and transportation infrastructure;
- law enforcement and jails;
- operation of the state court system;
- recording of deeds and vital records;
- elections and voter registration;
- emergency management and homeland security;
- registration of motor vehicles; and
- basic healthcare services for indigent residents.

As the government closest to the people, counties are also the most efficient form of government.

The Texas Constitution spells out the structure of county government and makes counties functional agents of the state. Unlike cities, which have broad authority to enact local ordinances, counties are limited to actions that are specifically authorized in the Texas Constitution and statutes. The constitution also established a strong system of checks and balances in county government by creating several elected county offices.

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Texas county government leadership is composed of locally elected (and one appointed) officials who provide hands-on service to make government work for the people of Texas.

### COMMISSIONERS COURT

The Commissioners Court conducts the general business of the county and consists of the County Judge and four Commissioners. The Court:

- Adopts the county's budget and tax rate.
- Approves all budgeted purchases of the county.
- Fills vacancies in elective and appointive offices.
- Sets all salaries and benefits.
- Has exclusive authority to authorize contracts.
- Provides and maintains all county buildings and facilities.



### COUNTY JUDGE

- Presiding officer of the Commissioners Court.
- Represents the county in many administrative functions.
- Serves as budget officer in counties with fewer than 225,000 residents.
- Most have broad judicial duties, such as presiding over misdemeanor criminal and small civil cases, probate matters and appeals from the Justice of the Peace Court.
- Serves as head of emergency management and homeland security.



### COUNTY COMMISSIONER

- As member of the Commissioners Court, exercises broad policy-making authority.
- Represents one of four precincts within the county.
- Typically responsible for building and maintaining county roads and bridges within their precinct.



### COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR-COLLECTOR

- Calculates the effective property tax rate for the county.
- Collects property taxes.
- Provides motor vehicle licensing and registration.
- Collects various other fees for the state and county.
- Registers voters.
- May contract to collect taxes for cities, schools and other local taxing entities.



### COUNTY CLERK

- Serves as clerk and custodian of records for the Commissioners Court, Constitutional County Court and Statutory County Courts.
- Acts as a recorder and custodian of important public records, including all bonds, deeds, birth and death certificates, assumed names and livestock brands, ensuring that records are maintained in a secure, archival manner.
- Issues marriage licenses.
- Serves as chief elections officer in most counties.



### DISTRICT CLERK

- Serves as clerk and custodian of all records for the District Courts.
- Indexes and secures all court records, collects filing fees, and handles funds held in litigation and money awarded to minors.
- Coordinates the jury panel selection process.
- Receives and disburses child support payments.
- Processes passport applications.
- Manages court registry funds.

*In Texas counties with a population of fewer than 8,000 (unless there has been a special election) the County Clerk also serves as the District Clerk and assumes all constitutional and statutory duties of both positions.*



### COUNTY TREASURER

- Receives and deposits all county revenues.
- Acts as chief liaison between the county and depository banks.
- Prepares the payroll.
- Disburses funds upon the order of the Commissioners Court.
- Records receipts and expenditures and reconciles bank statements.
- May be designated as the county's investment officer and required to submit regular reports on county finance to the members of the Commissioners Court.
- May also act as the county's human resources officer, employee benefits coordinator, risk manager and insurance coordinator.
- May have some audit responsibilities in counties with no Auditor.



### COUNTY SHERIFF

- Serves as a licensed peace officer and is responsible for enforcing the criminal laws of the state.
- Manages and operates the county jail.
- Provides security for the courts.
- Serves warrants and civil papers.
- Regulates bail bondsmen in counties with no bail bond board.
- May serve as the Tax Assessor-Collector in counties with fewer than 8,000 residents.



### JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

- Hears traffic and other Class C misdemeanor cases punishable by fine only.
- Hears civil cases with up to \$10,000 in controversy.
- Hears landlord and tenant disputes.
- Hears truancy cases.
- Performs magistrate duties.
- Conducts inquests.