



CITY OF HOUSTON MUNICIPAL COURTS DEPARTMENT



Request for Council Action To Increase the Number of Municipal Courts

Presented by:
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City of Houston Public Safety Committee
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Historical Overview

Number of Judicial Positions

CITY OF HOUSTON ORDINANCE, CHAPTER 16-2

CHARTER OF 1903: ONE COURT

1983: **ORD. NO. 83-1403 INCREASED NUMBER OF COURTS TO 10**

1987: **ORD. NO. 87-2000 INCREASED NUMBER OF COURTS TO 12**

1992: **ORD. NO. 92-1502 INCREASED NUMBER OF COURTS TO 15**

1994: **ORD. NO. 94-1337 INCREASED NUMBER OF COURTS TO 17**

1998: **ORD. NO. 98-289 INCREASED NUMBER OF COURTS TO 18**

2000: **ORD. NO. 2000-325 INCREASED NUMBER OF COURTS TO 20**

2013: **PROPOSED ORDINANCE TO INCREASE NUMBER OF COURTS TO 30**

Related Ordinance Language

Sec. 16-2. Courts created; jurisdiction.

- (a) There are hereby created 20 municipal courts of record of the city to be designated as municipal courts of record numbers 1 through 20.
- (b) The municipal courts of record shall have the full extent of jurisdiction provided in any manner by general law for municipal courts including, but not limited to, jurisdiction over criminal cases arising from city ordinance violations within the territorial limits of the city and to the extent provided by state law jurisdiction for violations of city ordinances arising outside of the territorial limits of the city. The municipal courts of record shall have concurrent jurisdiction with a justice court in any precinct in which the city is located in criminal cases that arise within the territorial limits of the city and are punishable by fine only. The municipal courts of record may also issue writs, warrants and other process as authorized by the general laws of the state.



Current Court Roster (1 of 2)

Court 1: Lubbock/Day/Night/Weekends: **Jury (Day), Bench Trials/Arrestment (Night), Arrestment (Weekends)**

Court 2: Lubbock/Day/Weekends: **Jury (Day), Arrestment/Annex (Weekends)**

Court 3: Lubbock/Day/Night: **Jury (Day), Bench Trials/Arrestment (Night)**

Court 4: Lubbock/Day: **Arrestment/Bench Trials (Court 15 -Night)**

Court 5: Lubbock/Day: **Jury Trials (Court 9-Night)**

Court 6: Lubbock/Day: **Jury Trials (Court 10-Night)**

Court 7: Lubbock/Day: **Annex Court (Court 17-Night)**

Court 8: Lubbock/Day/Weekends: **Jail Dockets/Blood Search Warrants Day/Weekend (Court 16-Night)**

Court 9: Lubbock/Night: **Arrestment/Bench Trials (Court 5-Day)**

Court 10: Lubbock/Night: **Arrestment/Bench Trials (Court 6-Day)**



Current Court Roster (2 of 2)



- Court 11: Lubbock/Day: **Jury Trials**
- Court 12: Lubbock/Day & Night: **Jury (Day), Arraignment/Juvenile/Bench Trials (Night)**
- Court 13: Mykawa/Day/Night/Weekends: **Jail Dockets**
- Court 14: Mykawa/Day: **Arraignment/Bench Trials/Annex**
- Court 15: Lubbock/Night: **Arraignment/Bench Trials (Court 4-Day)**
- Court 16: Lubbock/Night: **Jail Dockets/Blood Search Warrants (Court 8-Day)**
- Court 17: Lubbock/Night: **Annex Court (Court 7-Day)**
- Court 18: Westside/Day: **Jury (2x/wk)/Arraignment/Bench Trials/Annex**
- Court 19: Westside/Night : **Arraignment/Bench Trials/Annex**
- Court 20: North Command/Day: **Jury (1x/wk)/Arraignment/Bench Trials/Annex**
(NEW COURT TBD) Lubbock/Day: Jury trials



Historical Overview: Number of Judicial Positions

CITY OF HOUSTON ORDINANCE, CHAPTER 16-4 (increases subject to Master Classification Change)

CHARTER OF 1903: ONE JUDGE

1983: ORD. NO. 83-1403 INCREASED NUMBER OF JUDGES TO 11

1987: ORD. NO. 87-2000 INCREASED NUMBER OF JUDGES TO 12

1990: ORD. NO. 90-1292 INCREASED NUMBER OF JUDGES TO 20

2013: ORD. NO. 2013-765 INCREASED NUMBER OF JUDGES TO 30

Related Ordinance Language

Sec. 16-4. Numbers of judges.

The numbers of municipal judges, both full-time and substitute, shall be as established from time to time in the master classification ordinance. For the sake of control of their terms, the judges may be assigned position numbers. However, all municipal judges, both full-time and substitute, shall be subject to assignment to serve from time to time in any of the municipal courts of record by the presiding judge, as provided by the general laws of the state.

The Municipal Courts Department received approval for a FY14 Capital Improvement Project for the building of a new jury assembly room in the area vacated by HITS, and the re-purposing of the current jury assembly as a courtroom.



THE PROPOSED EXPANSION WOULD:

- Maximize current infrastructure
- Improve court efficiencies
- Reduce Officer time spent in Court
- More certain trial dates for defendants
- Increase case resolution



Justification



- **Council recently approved an increase in the number of Municipal Court Judges from 20 to 30 as part of changes to the Master Classification in anticipation of the planned expansion.**
- **Increasing the number of authorized Courts to 30 would allow for future Court expansion, including the new Justice complex that is currently in the planning stage.**
- **Planned expansion is directly in line with the Mayor's five priorities:**
 - ❖ **Fiscal Responsibility**
 - ❖ **Infrastructure**
 - ❖ **Quality of Life**
 - ❖ **Public Safety**
 - ❖ **Jobs and Sustainable Development**



Questions?