

## Court Notes

1. New District and County Courts must be specifically created by the legislature.
2. When the legislature approves new courts, they are created effective at a specific date. If multiple courts are created, they are typically staggered over two fiscal years.
3. As long as a Judge has not been appointed or duly elected, a newly created County Court at Law can be staffed and funded at a time to be determined by the Commissioners Court. For example, if a new County Court at Law is created effective September 1, 2015, the Commissioners Court could wait until the election results are canvassed in November 2016 to provide the budget for operations.
4. The Commissioners Court must provide a budget for a new District Court at the time the Governor makes the appointment to fill the vacancy. In the past, the Governor has been willing to delay making appointments to meet County budget requirements.
5. Although there is no fiscal impact to the State for a new County Court at Law Judge, the State pays the majority of the salary and benefits costs for District Judges.
6. County Court at Law vacancies are filled by a majority vote of Commissioners Court. The Court is under no time limit to make an appointment.
7. District Court vacancies are filled by the Governor. The Governor is under no time limit to make an appointment.
8. There are 6 unassigned standard courtrooms. None of the 6 courtrooms have technology installed or office furniture.
9. In addition to the 6 unassigned courtrooms, there are 2 smaller auxiliary hearing rooms and 1 large ceremonial larger gallery courtroom.
10. Collin County currently has 6 County Courts at Law, 1 Probate, and 9 District Courts.
11. The 429<sup>th</sup> was the last District Court created effective January 1, 2009.
12. County Court at Law No. 6 was created effective January 1, 2005.
13. All District Courts and County Courts at Law in Collin County have general jurisdiction over their respective jurisdictions. The 417<sup>th</sup> District Court does have the additional requirement to give "preference to juvenile matters". Since 2007, one district court has voluntarily recused hearing criminal cases to avoid any perceived conflicts of interest.

14. The first year startup cost of \$1.34 million includes the purchase and installation of technology in a courtroom, furniture for the chambers and new employees, and employee salaries and benefits.

15. The ongoing cost to operate a new County Court at Law, after the first year, (in FY15 dollars) is approximately \$940,000.

16. The addition of each new County Court at Law results in 12 new employees.

<b><u>Personnel</u></b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><u>County Court at Law Court</u></b>				
Judge	\$158,303.79	\$36,502.52	\$194,806.31	
Court Coordinator	\$42,524.00	\$17,676.72	\$60,200.72	Grade 511, Min Starting Salary
Bailiff	\$44,399.00	\$17,981.60	\$62,380.60	Grade 554, Min Starting Salary
Court Reporter	\$96,214.00	\$26,406.72	\$122,620.72	add funds if "instant reporting certification"
<b><u>District Attorney</u></b>				
Chief Misdemeanor Prosecutor	\$67,543.00	\$21,744.81	\$89,287.81	Grade 583, Min Starting Salary
Misdemeanor Prosecutor	\$57,740.00	\$20,150.84	\$77,890.84	Grade 581, Min Starting Salary
Misdemeanor Prosecutor	\$57,740.00	\$20,150.84	\$77,890.84	Grade 581, Min Starting Salary
Misdemeanor Investigator	\$51,231.00	\$19,092.48	\$70,323.48	Grade 556, Min Starting Salary
Legal Secretary II	\$35,732.00	\$16,572.34	\$52,304.34	Grade 534, Min Starting Salary
<b><u>County Court at Law Clerk</u></b>				
Clerk II / Civil Family	\$32,966.00	\$16,122.59	\$49,088.59	Grade 533, Min Starting Salary
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Criminal Clerk II	\$32,966.00	\$16,122.59	\$49,088.59	Grade 533, Min Starting Salary
			\$905,882.85	