

## District Attorney

The office of district attorney was first provided for in the Constitution of 1836. According to an 1840 law, the district attorney was to be appointed for a two-year term by the president of the Republic of Texas with the advice and consent of the Senate. The office was continued by the Constitution of 1845 and was made elective by law in 1850; the constitutions of 1866 and 1874 likewise continued the office. A constitutional amendment in 1954 extended the term of office to four years.

The district attorney is primarily an attorney for the state and attends the state district court, although not exclusively. He or she may represent various state agencies when the attorney general does not, and he may assist in the enforcement of state agency regulations as well as the conduct of state officials (for example, the Public Integrity Unit in Travis County). In some counties, the duties of the district attorney are centered primarily on prosecution of felony criminal offenses; in others, the district attorney may be responsible for civil suits concerning the state, as well as misdemeanor offenses. The district attorney also has an advisory function in regard to county and state officials.

SOURCES: *Guide to Texas Laws for County Officials* (Austin: Texas Association of Counties) and *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/index.html>)  
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