

**THE COUNTY INFORMATION PROJECT**  
*Texas Association of Counties*

**TEXAS COUNTIES WITH CIVIL SERVICE  
SYSTEMS**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

October 2007

**SUMMARY:**

The eligible population requirement for Texas Counties to institute a civil service system was recently changed during the 80th Legislative Session.<sup>1</sup> With the passage of HB 831, the bracket population requirement was lowered from 200,000 to 190,000, now making Webb County eligible for a county-wide civil service system. In 2006, Cameron County became the latest county to implement a civil service system for its employees. Eight other Texas counties that have established a civil service system under one or both of the systems authorized by Chapter 158 of the Local Government Code. Nine of the 21 eligible counties have county civil service systems for their county employees; while seven of those eligible counties have sheriff's department civil service systems. Five of the seven counties using the sheriff's department system also use the county system.

**BACKGROUND:**

As amended from the enactment of HB 831, the Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 158, Subchapter A, §158.002 authorizes the creation of a county civil service system in counties with populations of 190,000 or more. Subchapter B, §158.032 authorizes the creation of a sheriff's department civil service system in counties with populations of more than 500,000.

Section 158.007 authorizes a county with a population of more than 1,300,000<sup>2</sup> that also has a county civil service system (Subchapter A ) to dissolve or expand the system to cover certain employees and others not generally covered under a Subchapter A system. Section 158.039 authorizes a county to dissolve a sheriff's department civil service system (Subchapter B) after the system has been in effect for at least one year if twenty percent of the employees of the department petition the county judge to do so.

The Code Construction Act (Section 311.005, Government Code) defines "population" as the population according to the most recent federal decennial census. The most recent federal decennial census was conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000.

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<sup>1</sup> House Bill 831, Texas Session Law – 2007, Chapter 833.

<sup>2</sup> Population of 800,000, prior to amendment in 2001.

**ANALYSIS:**

*a. Eligible Counties -- 2000 Census.* According to the most recent federal decennial census, twenty-one counties have the authority to establish a county civil service system. Seven of those counties also qualify to use the sheriff's department civil service system. The remaining fourteen counties have the authority to establish a county civil service system only.

*b. Use of Chapter 158 Systems.* Of the twenty-one counties eligible to create civil service systems, eleven (52.4%) have established one. All seven (100%) of the counties that are eligible to establish a sheriff's department system have established that system. Only four (28.6%) of the remaining fourteen counties that are eligible to create county civil service, but not sheriff's department civil service, have established a county civil service system.

**Chapter 158 Counties**

No.	County	Population 2000	County System <sup>2</sup>	Sheriff's Dept. (Subchapter B) <sup>3</sup>
1.	Harris	3,400,578		X
2.	Dallas	2,218,899	X	X
3.	Tarrant	1,446,219	X	X
4.	Bexar	1,392,931	X	X
5.	Travis	812,280		X
6.	El Paso	679,622	X	X
7.	Hidalgo	569,463	X	X
8.	Collin	491,675		
9.	Denton	432,976	X	
10.	Fort Bend	354,452		
11.	Cameron	335,227	X	
12.	Nueces	313,645	X	
13.	Montgomery	293,768	X	
14.	Jefferson	252,051		
15.	Galveston	250,158		
16.	Williamson	249,967		
17.	Lubbock	242,628		
18.	Brazoria	241,767		
19.	Bell	237,974		
20.	McLennan	213,517		
21.	Webb	193,117		

X = System Established

**METHODOLOGY:**

A list of counties authorized to establish civil service systems was created using the statutory brackets and the 2000 U.S. Census populations of counties. A telephone survey was then conducted from August 17 to August 24, 2007 to determine which of the eligible counties had civil service systems. Counties with a population of more than 500,000 were asked whether they had the county civil service system, the sheriff's department civil service system, or both systems. Counties with populations of 190,000 to 500,000 were asked if they had the county-wide civil service system.

No inquiry was made relative to the utilization of the discontinuance or expansion authority provided to counties of more than 1,300,000 by Local Government Code §158.007. Nor was any inquiry made relative to the discontinuance authority provided by Local Government Code §158.039.

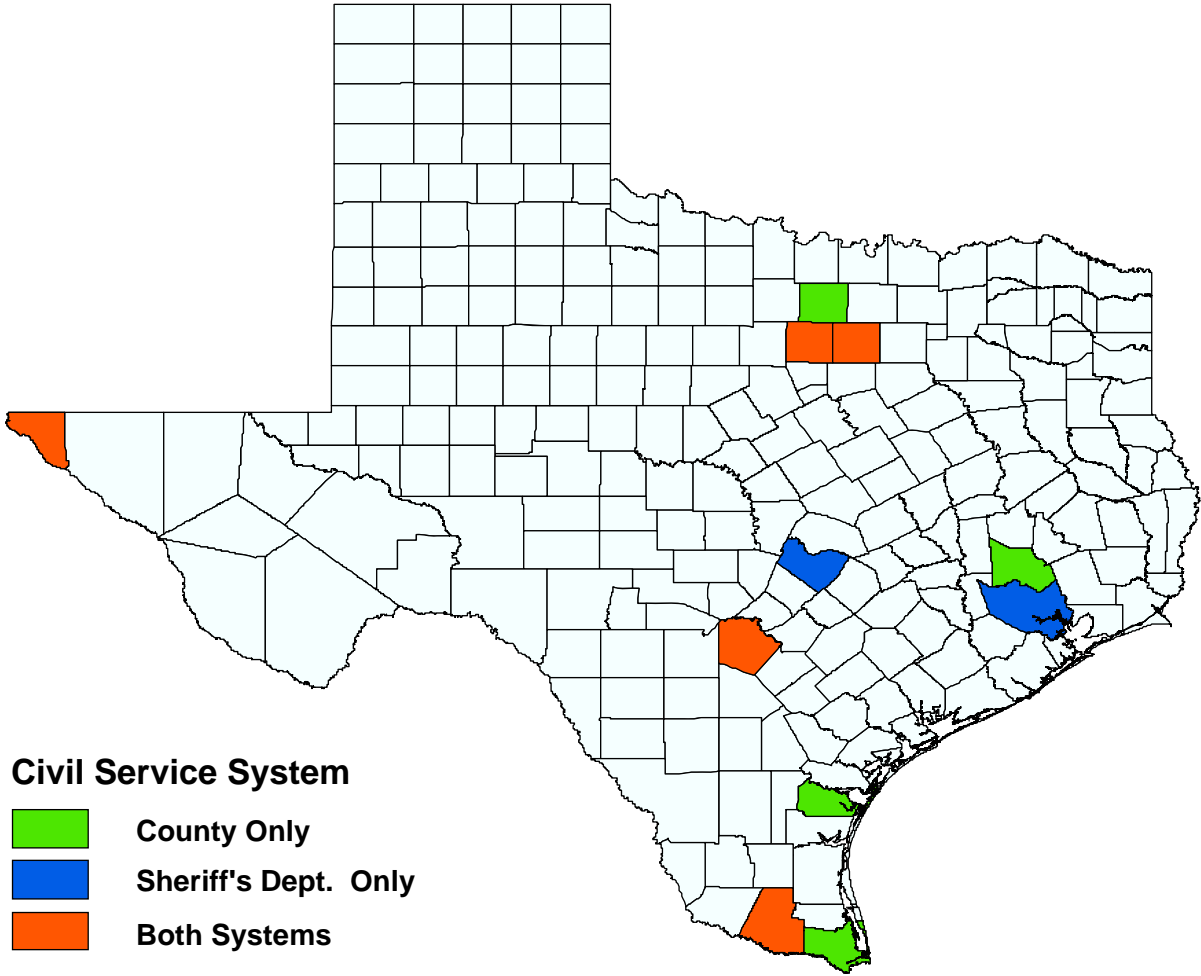
**DATA SOURCES AND LIMITATIONS:**

Population figures are from the April 2000 U.S. Census. Respondents to the telephone survey were from the Personnel/Human Resources Departments, the County Judge's office, or the County Auditor's Office of the respective counties. Although there is no reason to doubt the reliability of the responses to the telephone survey, it should be noted that the responses have not been verified by official documentation.

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# Counties with Civil Service Systems October 2007



Prepared by The County Information Project, Texas Association of Counties, October 1, 2007.  
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 158