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## **PREFACE**

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The TMCEC Bench Book is a reference guide for Texas municipal judges serving as both trial court judges and magistrates. This 16th edition, titled the *TMCEC 2026 Bench Book*, incorporates important statutory changes from the 89th Regular Legislature as well as the 89th Legislature's Second Special Session.

We have done our best to provide procedural guidance reflecting the law as it stands at the time of publication, while noting where statutory changes will take effect in the months and years ahead.

This book frequently references *The Recorder* and the *TMCEC 2026 Forms Book*. Both resources are available on TMCEC's website at [www.tmcec.com](http://www.tmcec.com).

TMCEC's publications and educational offerings are made possible through the collaborative efforts of the TMCEC staff: Ryan Kellus Turner, Regan Metteauer, Ned Minevitz, Madison Mondragon, Leandra Quick, Elaine Riot, Elizabeth De La Garza, Deadra Stark, Matthew Kelling, Cameron Coburn, Tayler Adams, Brandi Valentine, Adrienne Schroeder, Crystal Ferguson, Dina Powell, and Antaris Jackson.

Significant gratitude is owed to the countless calls TMCEC receives on the toll-free legal line. These inquiries often prompt thoughtful discussion, debate, and revision, ultimately leading to stronger publications. We are also indebted to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center's Board of Directors, and our constituents for their continued support of TMCEC.

The TMCEC Bench Book has grown over the years through the contributions of many individuals. This Bench Book is a perpetual work in progress, and we welcome continued comments and suggestions. The original version was published in 1996, and each subsequent edition has benefited from the insight and experience of municipal judges and court support personnel across Texas.

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January 2026

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