

The Death Penalty in Tarrant County

- Tarrant County, where juries have sentenced **78 people to death since 1974**, ranks third in use of the death penalty in Texas, behind only Harris and Dallas counties.
- A jury in Tarrant County sent one new individual to death row in 2025. **Tarrant County accounts for four of the last 10 death sentences imposed by juries in Texas.**
- On September 22, 2025, a jury sentenced Valerian O’Steen to death for killing Marissa Grimes in 2022. **He was the first white defendant in Tarrant County to go to trial with death on the table since 2011.**
- On May 1, 2025, a jury rejected the death penalty in the case of Lamont Cousins. Cousins was convicted of killing three people in 2020. **It is the second time since 2022 that a Tarrant County jury has rejected the death penalty.**
- **Eight of the nine** men sentenced to death in Tarrant County since 2012 are people of color.
- The State of Texas has executed **598 people** since 1982. This includes **47 people** who were convicted in Tarrant County. Cedric Ricks was executed on March 11, 2026. **Tarrant County has one scheduled execution: Edward Busby on May 14, 2026.**
- Since 1973, more than **200 individuals** – including 18 people in Texas – have been released from death rows nationwide due to evidence of their wrongful conviction. **Michael Toney** was wrongfully convicted in Tarrant County and released in 2009.
- **Seven individuals in Tarrant County** have been exonerated of serious crimes since 2001, largely on the basis of DNA evidence, official misconduct, and/or mistaken eyewitness identification.
- **18 people** sentenced to death in Tarrant County are no longer on death row; in most cases, their sentences were changed to life in prison or life in prison without parole or they died in custody of natural causes.
- Currently, there are 167 people on death row in Texas, including 7 women. Of this total population, **13 people were convicted in Tarrant County.**