

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.
- **Tarrant County accounts for four of the last 11 death sentences imposed by juries in Texas (three in 2024 and one in 2025).**
- 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 was the second time since 2022 that a Tarrant County jury 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 **600 people** since 1982. Of these, **48 people** were convicted in Tarrant County, including Cedric Ricks, who was executed on March 11, 2026, and Edward Busby, who was executed 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 165 people on death row in Texas, including 7 women. Of this total population, **12 people were convicted in Tarrant County.**

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