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**ORIGIN & FUNCTIONS**


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The District Court of Maryland was created by constitutional amendment ratified in 1970 (Chapter 789, Acts of 1969; Const., Art. IV, secs. 41A through 41-I). The Court began operating in July 1971 as a court of record. With statewide jurisdiction, the Court functions in every county and Baltimore City. It replaced the theretofore existing justices of the peace, the county trial magistrates, the People's Courts in certain counties, the People's Court of Baltimore City, and the Municipal Court of Baltimore City.

The District Court has jurisdiction in both criminal (including motor vehicle) and civil areas. It has little equity jurisdiction and has jurisdiction over juvenile cases only in Montgomery County. The exclusive jurisdiction of the District Court generally includes all landlord/tenant cases; replevin actions; motor vehicle violations; criminal cases if the penalty is less than three years imprisonment or does not exceed a fine of \$2,500, or both; and civil cases involving amounts not exceeding \$2,500. It has concurrent jurisdiction with the circuit courts in civil cases over \$2,500 (but not exceeding \$10,000) and concurrent jurisdiction in misdemeanors and certain enumerated felonies. Since the District Court provides no juries, a person entitled to and electing a jury trial must proceed to the circuit court (Code 1957, Art. 27, secs. 586, 594D, 616 1/2, 643A; Code Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, secs. 1-601 through 1-608, 2-601 through 2-607, 4-101 through 4-405, 6-403, 7-301, 7-302, 9-201, 11-402, 11-701 through 11-703, 12-401 through 12-404; Code Family Law Article, secs. 4-501 through 4-510).

The District Court is divided into twelve geographical districts, each containing one or more political subdivisions, with at least one judge in each subdivision.

*District 1:* Baltimore City.

*District 2:* Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties.

*District 3:* Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties.

*District 4:* Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties.

*District 5:* Prince George's County.

*District 6:* Montgomery County.

*District 7:* Anne Arundel County.

*District 8:* Baltimore County.

*District 9:* Harford County.

*District 10:* Carroll and Howard counties

*District 11:* Frederick and Washington counties.

*District 12:* Allegany and Garrett counties.

The District Court of Maryland is administered centrally and is funded fully by the State. Presently, there are 97 judges on the Court, including the Chief Judge. The Chief Judge is the administrative head of the Court and appoints administrative judges for each of the twelve districts, subject to the approval of the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals. A chief clerk of the Court is appointed by the Chief Judge as are administrative clerks for each district, and district commissioners who issue arrest warrants and set bail or collateral.

District Court judges are appointed by the Governor to ten-year terms, subject to Senate confirmation. They do not stand for election. The Chief Judge is appointed by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.

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**ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGES  
COMMITTEE**


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*Chairperson:* Robert F. Sweeney, Chief Judge,  
District Court of Maryland  
(410) 974-2412

The Administrative Judges Committee of the District Court of Maryland was formed by the Chief Judge of the District Court of Maryland when the Court began in 1971. At that time, the Committee

included the Chief Judge, as chairperson, and the twelve district administrative judges. In 1978, the Chief Judge extended membership to add five trial judges of the District Court elected at large biennially by written ballot of the administrative and trial judges of the District Court.

Meeting quarterly, the Committee considers matters that affect the administration, operation, and maintenance of the District Court of Maryland.