DFW PROBATE COURTS GUIDELINES

Version: August 9, 2026

Collin County

Each document must be filed as a Separate Lead Document but all in the same envelope. The clerk does not accept "attachments." You should have two separate lead documents: 1) Application ("Application" filing code) and 2) Will ("Will//Codicil" filing code). Collin County has gotten quite strict regarding file names: they simply do not accept file names with special characters like -!@#$%^*(_><), or any file names exceeding 24 characters, including spaces.

Hearings by Teleconference: Instructions for Collin County Probate hearings by Zoom are attached.

Dallas County

A Will needs to be filed as an *attachment* to the Application. You should have one main lead document: the Application ("Application" filing code), plus the Will as an attachment. If you want to add a cover letter, add it as a second lead document. Basic filing $360, Issue Citation $8, and Serve By Posting $20: total filing fee of $388 (plus payment service fees, totaling $399.21).

For determinations of heirship/intestate administrations, file the combined Application along with the standard probate filing fee of $360, except two separate $8 fees for Citation, $20 fee for Service by Posting, plus a $65 fee for Service by Publication, for a total of $461 (plus payment service fees). Once you get the case number, mail in a check for $600 for the ad litem deposit.

Hearings by Teleconference: all three courts have Zoom links on their web sites (https://www.dallascounty.org/government/courts/probate). When logging on via Zoom to the will prove-up docket, rename yourself as follows: Estate of [DECEDENT]; [CAUSE NO.]. Also remember to get to the hearing early, as they schedule by check in.

When proving up a will executed in another state, it is not enough to cite the foreign law re: wills in the Application. Instead, you must file exhibits in the matter with printouts of the applicable code sections regarding both the foreign requirements of a valid will and the self-proving statute, if applicable.

Probate Court 2 requires that the applicant post notice on any application for determination of heirship. This is in addition to the published citation that is published in a local newspaper. When an application for determination of heirship is combined with an application for an independent administration, the Clerk will usually post notice. The attorney should check, however, to ensure that the determination of heirship is referenced in this posted notice in addition to the administration request.

NOTE: The Dallas County probate courts now require that hearing documents be e-filed before you can get a hearing date, as attachments to a cover letter, along with the $2.00 judge's signature fee. Also remember to include the relevant Proof Addenda (1) as to a Disinterested Witness (if applicable) and/or (2) Qualifications of the Applicant, and file a copy of the death certificate, with the Social Security number redacted, as a separate lead document *(not an attachment)*, tagged as sensitive information.

When you get a hearing date, (1) if the case is assigned to an associate judge, be sure to file a Waiver of De Novo Hearing, and (2) if it is a Zoom hearing, file a Notice of Virtual Proceeding (forms available on each court's web site).

None of the Dallas County courts accept unsworn declarations in lieu of notarized forms.

When filing the Inventory, be sure to include an address for all accounts (bank, brokerage, investment), which may be a local branch or the headquarters.

Denton County

In filing an application for probate, once a case number is assigned, one must then file Denton County's form for Request and Issuance of Citation, and pay the fees for citation and service along with that form. Denton County has specific notice requirements under its Local Rules, and requires submission of a Certificate of Compliance and Hearing Request Checklist before granting a hearing date. There is also a General Information Form for the proposed personal representative.

Tarrant County

Each document must be filed as a Separate Lead Document but all in the same envelope (this includes proposed orders). For filing, you should have three separate lead documents: 1) Application ("Application" filing code), 2) Will ("Will//Codicil" filing code), and 3) The Tarrant County "Supplement Probate Case Information Sheet"("Application" filing code). Per Tarrant County Local Rules, all documents filed must have the filing attorney's information, which may be accomplished by adding a "filing submission acknowledgment" page. The Proof of Death and the Oath are signed in front of the clerk, not the judge. One must send in a request via e-mail to set a hearing: for Court 1, to probatecourt1@tarrantcountytx.gov, for Court 2, to egcastilleja@tarrantcountytx.gov. At the hearing, signings will be done electronically - although the judge will often sign copies of the Order.

Hearings by Teleconference: The clerk will send a Zoom link. Must send in the hearing documents at least 10 days prior to the hearing, all as separate lead documents.

Regarding filing the Inventory, Appraisement, and List of Claims, the Tarrant County Probate Court judges require that it be served on each beneficiary (by a TRCP 21a method) and that a Certificate of Service be attached to the Inventory.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ZOOM HEARINGS IN COLLIN COUNTY

Zoom is available for all computers, Android phones, and iPhones/iPads, and has worked very well for us so far. Please help us by working with your clients/witnesses on this as best you can.

You do *NOT* need to purchase a Zoom license – our license allows you to use the free version. I will host the "Meeting." I ask that you not join any earlier than about 15 minutes prior to your hearing – this will help prevent connection problems.

PLEASE NOTE: As instructed by the OCA, all hearings are open to the public to fulfill Texas Constitution's open courts requirement.

- This link should automatically connect you: https://zoom.us/j/9725483810
- If it does not, go to https://zoom.us, click "Join a Meeting" near the top right corner, and enter our "Meeting ID" when prompted: 972-548-3810. There is no password.
- If all else fails, you can also call in using the following phone numbers: (When prompted for'Meeting ID' enter 972-548-3810, if prompted for 'Participant ID' just enter '#'. Due to extremely high demand, these phone numbers may fail to connect or result in a busy signal:

  301-715-8592
  253-215-8782
  346-248-7799
  646-558-8656
  669-900-9128
  312-626-6799

Please E-MAIL all SIGNED court documents (proposed proof and oath signed, and orders) prior to the hearing to probate@co.collin.tx.us. All other documents will continue to be E-filed including requests for letters.

Thank you