

# 2026 Dallas County Judicial Candidate Questionnaire

For Judicial candidates running for Dallas County positions, please complete the questionnaire below. Submit a completed electronic copy by Saturday, December 24, 2025, to be considered for endorsement in the 2026 Democratic Primary.

Email \*

Maxine4JP@gmail.com

Candidate Name \*

T. Maxine Woods-McMillan

## Candidate Questions

Please complete each question as it pertains to the office sought.

2. District/Office Sought \*

Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4 - Place 1

3. Pronouns \*

She/her

#### 4. Why are you running for this particular court seat? \*

This court is the site where most people meet the justice system "in real life". In most cases, they are not armed with high powered attorneys or the resources of time, legal sophistication, or a network that can "make a call". They have their truth and their practical reality.

I am running for this seat because it demands a judge who understands the letter of the law with intellectual rigor and the spirit of the law with humanity. This court deserves a judge who appreciates the realities litigants face because she has lived many of the circumstances that bring people into community courts, while also insisting on the same minimum standards of qualification required of every bench.

I bring both credentials and compassion, along with a professional skill set that enables me to communicate hard truths with dignity, translate complex law for diverse audiences, and lead with authority grounded in cultural competence.

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#### 5. Are there any little-known powers or responsibilities held by this office that you believe more people should be aware of?

There are quite a few, but two that I encounter in my current role as an employment attorney is that this court handles Class C misdemeanors as well as debt claims, matters many people mistakenly view as minor.

I am repeatedly explaining that "that little ticket" from a night out a year ago when things went a little crazy is now a criminal conviction on their record that is showing up in their background check, limiting some opportunities for academic support, jobs, and/or housing.

These cases require legal precision and compassionate judgment—treating consequences seriously while imposing penalties that are well-reasoned, thoughtful, and an effective deterrent. Likewise, few realize that debt claims allow corporate creditors to pursue obligations up to four years old and obtain judgments that can lead to bank garnishments.

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A. What is the most important aspect of being a judge in this specific court? \*

I chose to run for the bench in the community-based justice courts because this is where the law most directly shapes people's lives. These courts handle cases that many dismiss as "minor," yet their consequences—criminal records, lost homes, damaged credit, and financial instability—can follow someone for years.

I have seen firsthand how a single citation or an unexpected judgment can close doors for people who lack lawyers, resources, or who speak "the language of the law".

This court requires a judge who understands both the legal weight of these cases and the human realities behind them, and who can apply the law with precision and compassion—free from institutional entanglements or professional ties that advantage either side and undermine public confidence.

6. How would you describe your legal philosophy (if running for an appellate court) – please describe any views?

I am not running for an appellate court, but my judicial philosophy is grounded in equity, legal rigor, and pragmatic judgment. I do not subscribe to judicial activism, nor do I believe the judiciary should function as a substitute for the legislative branch.

At the same time, I believe that thoughtful consideration of diverse perspectives in applying existing law strengthens justice for all. I am committed to weighing the real-world consequences of judicial decisions on the people before the court. Sound judging requires independence from institutional bias, respect for due process, and disciplined discretion—leaving ego at the chamber door—while promoting accountability without losing sight of human impact.

My goal is to render decisions that are principled, consistent, and firmly rooted in both the rule of law and the lived realities of the communities the court serves.

7. How would you ensure that your court room is accessible to all for a fair hearing, regardless of access to legal counsel, background, income level, race, gender, sexual orientation?

Accessibility is not achieved by mere physical presence; it is denied the moment someone is made to feel “othered” in a public space with leadership silence. The first step is clarity—plain, direct communication of what our civic spaces stand for and what is expected within them. In the name of political correctness and fear of causing offense, we have too often avoided being explicit about foundational norms, to the detriment of public trust and meaningful participation. I will not do that. Verbally, and in writing, before any proceeding begins, I will ensure courtroom expectations and standards of conduct are clearly communicated, including how people are to be treated.

Beyond clarity, I am committed to ensuring that courtroom processes facilitate participation rather than obstruct it. That includes expanding access to qualified interpreters, accepting paper filings when appropriate, setting court hours that better reflect the realities of working people, and creating limited accommodations for litigants who lack access to child care

8. Have you ever been rated by a Bar Association? If so, what was the rating?

I have never been on the bench and so have never been rated by a Bar Association. I have no disciplinary complaints.

9. What is your primary concern about today's legal system in Texas?

The legal system is meant to deliver justice, correct wrongs, and affirm the obligations of our shared social contract. That confidence weakens when decisions appear hidden, processes unclear, or outcomes predetermined—particularly when access seems tied to money or influence. When standards are vague, leadership is not independent, or procedures feel punitive rather than principled, public trust erodes. My concern is the outcome of that - disengagement from the very system designed to serve the community, leaving disproportionate influence in the hands of a select few within a system intended to benefit all.

10. Please describe your previous experiences in public service.

State Bar of Texas - African American Lawyers Section Officer/Board Member  
Community Based Mediator  
Community Based Development & Relationship Coach  
Faith Community Leader - teaching, coaching, and leading worship services

11. Have you ever been professionally disciplined by a State Bar or a State Commission on Judicial Conduct?

NO

12. What does the rule of law mean to you? \*

I view the rule of law not as an abstract ideal but as a tool whose true power is defined by how it is applied. As a racially minoritized female from an immigrant community, I am acutely aware that many of us have been historically and systematically targeted through legal means—the law has often been a mechanism of subjugation. Yet the same legal framework holds the potential to protect, empower, and ensure accountability when exercised with integrity and independence. The rule of law is only as effective as its consistent, principled, and transparent application, and its promise is realized when it is actively used to safeguard every individual, regardless of background, from bias, abuse, or exclusion.

LGBT inclusivity in the courtroom

please answer all questions.

13. In recent years, members of the transgender community have faced discrimination in the courtroom by lawyers, judges and other court officials who refuse to use their preferred name or acknowledge their gender identity. How do you intend to keep your courtroom welcoming for parties whose name or gender identity do not conform to their government issued identification?

I intentionally use my middle name in all public facing communications because I ABHOR people addressing me in a way that prioritizes their comfort over my identity. I will not inflict that on others. While I must ensure the record is maintained for legal purposes, if there is any court in which a person should feel comfortable to be addressed as they would prefer so that they can get to the business at issue, it is the People's Court. That will be the standard if I am permitted to sit on this bench.

14. Given the order from the Texas Supreme Court allowing judges to refrain from performing a wedding ceremony based on a sincerely held religious belief, will you continue to officiate same-sex weddings in your capacity as a judge?

YES

All Candidates

All candidates running for county positions will need to answer the following questions.

17. Is there anything in your past or background that has not been covered by the previous questions that might – without careful explanation - cause our organization to reconsider or withdraw our endorsement of you? \*

No, but I am open to additional questions.

18. How would you showcase your endorsement by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas if received? \*  
Would you include the endorsement in your campaign media?

I would be proud and honored to showcase an endorsement from SDD and would proudly display it on my website and on social media.

19. How long have you been a current member of Stonewall Democrats of Dallas? If you are not a member, will you pledge to join before the endorsement screenings? If no, why not? \*

Yes, I will absolutely become a proud member

20. I'm seeking an endorsement from the Stonewall Democrats of Dallas for the 2026 primary election. (Please type name) \*

T. Maxine Woods-McMillan

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Google Forms