

THE JOURNAL RECORD

Gavel to Gavel: Time to prepare for Oklahoma business courts

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Oklahoma will launch specialized [Business Courts](#) on January 1, 2026, a move designed to streamline complex [commercial litigation](#) and make the state more attractive for corporate investment. Championed by Governor Stitt, the new courts aim to provide faster and more predictable resolution of business disputes and to encourage companies to incorporate in Oklahoma.

The Business Courts will have jurisdiction over a broad range of commercial matters, including corporate governance, [shareholder disputes](#), [trade secrets](#), business torts, professional malpractice, fraud, [breach of contract](#), and commercial real estate cases. Additionally, cases involving complex facts—such as numerous motions, expert witnesses, or highly technical evidence—may qualify. However, claims must involve at least \$500,000 in damages to be eligible.

Importantly, the legislature carved out clear limits to this jurisdiction. Business Courts will not hear personal injury, probate, guardianship, consumer protection, residential landlord/tenant, family [law](#), or foreclosure cases. Claims under statutes such as the Deceptive Trade Practices Act and the Governmental Tort Claims Act are also excluded if brought by individual plaintiffs.

To improve efficiency, each Business Court judge will have a law clerk, which is an unusual resource in Oklahoma's state trial courts. Non-jury trials must be completed within 12 months, unless extended by the parties or the judge finds extraordinary cause.

The structure of the courts mirrors some elements of the federal system. Any party may remove a qualifying case from the Business Court, then the ultimate decision on whether to retain or remand will rest with the Business Court judge. These early decisions will be instrumental in defining the scope and procedures of the new system.

Key implementation details remain. The Chief Justice of the [Oklahoma Supreme Court](#) will secure courtrooms and office space in [Oklahoma City](#) and [Tulsa](#). The Supreme Court will issue procedural rules and provide for electronic filing. The Governor must appoint two Business Court judges by September 1, 2025, with advice and consent from the Senate. Those judges will develop local rules tailored to their courts.

All that assumes the recently filed constitutional challenge to the Business Courts does not derail or delay the effort. [\[1\]](#) If, as planned, the first cases arrive in 2026, expect the Business Courts to begin shaping their own procedures and jurisdictional boundaries. For businesses and counsel alike, now is the time to prepare.

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[\[1\]](#) *White et al v. Stitt et al.*, Case No. MA-123222 (filed June 26, 2025).

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