

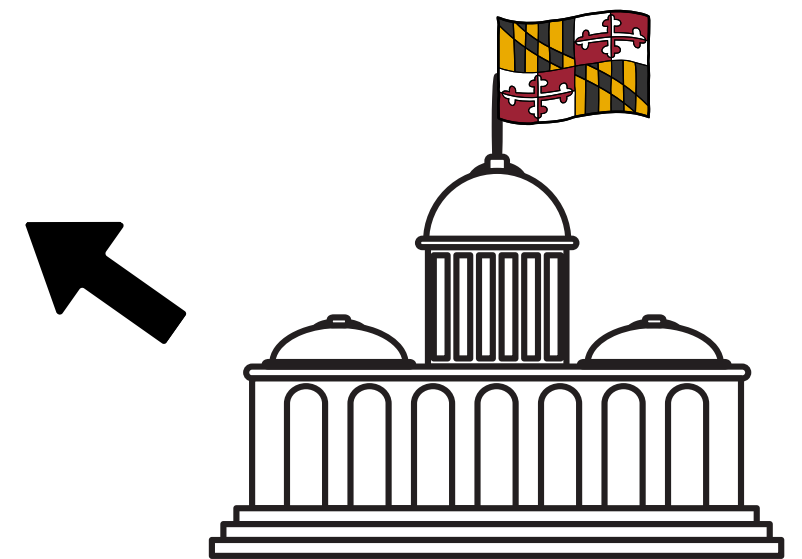
# The Federal Court System

## United States Supreme Court

- 1 Chief Justice and 8 Associate Justices
- Has both Original and Appellate Jurisdiction
- NOT required to accept all cases, 4 Justices must agree to hear a case and grant a writ of certiorari
- Typically accepts cases involving Constitutional matters or conflicting rulings from lower Circuit Courts



Highest Level - Final Appeal



State Supreme Court decisions can be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court if the case deals with a federal issue.

**APPEALS**  
Civil Case: Either party may appeal the verdict.  
Criminal Case: If the defendant is found guilty, they may appeal.

## United States Circuit Courts of Appeals (13)



Mid Level - First Appeal

- 12 Geographic Circuits and 1 Federal Circuit
- Appellate Jurisdiction
- The First Circuit is the smallest with 6 Judges and the Ninth Circuit is the largest with 29 Judges
- 3 Judges are randomly selected to form a panel for each appellate case.
- In special cases, an appeal can be reheard by an *En Banc* panel of all the Judges in a Circuit.

**APPEALS**  
Civil Case: Either party may appeal the verdict.  
Criminal Case: If the defendant is found guilty, they may appeal.

## United States District Courts (94)

- States have 1-4 Districts
- Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. have 1
- U.S. Territories have Territorial Courts
- Original Jurisdiction
- The number of judges per district varies widely and is determined by caseload. For Example: Wyoming has 1 district and 3 Judges while California has 4 districts and 61 Judges.
- District Judges can appoint Magistrate Judges to help with the caseload.



Lowest Level - Trial Courts



Produced by the Supreme Court Historical Society

[civics.supremecourthistory.org](http://civics.supremecourthistory.org)

