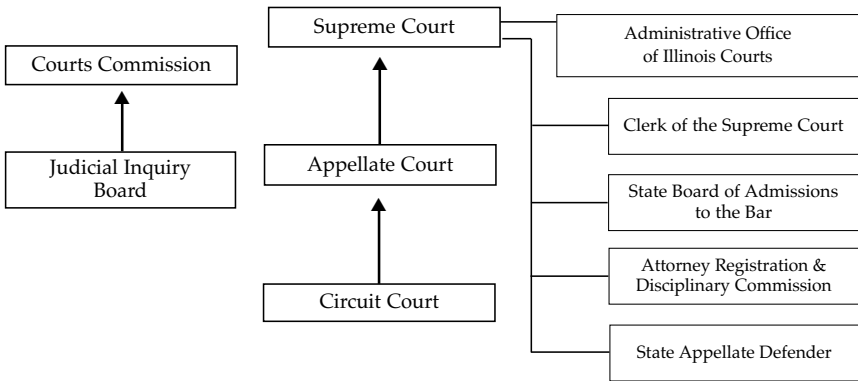


JUDICIAL BRANCH

Judicial Organization



The **Illinois Supreme Court**, the highest tribunal in the state, has general administrative and supervisory authority over all courts in Illinois. The Supreme Court hears appeals from the Appellate and Circuit Courts and may exercise original jurisdiction in cases relating to revenue, mandamus, prohibition or habeas corpus. The Supreme Court has seven justices elected from five judicial districts for 10-year terms.

The **Appellate Court** hears appeals from administrative agencies and the Circuit Court (trial courts of Illinois). Appellate judges are elected from the five judicial districts for 10-year terms.

The **Circuit Court** is composed of circuit and associate judges. There are 24 judicial circuits in Illinois, each having one chief judge elected by the circuit judges. The chief judge has general administrative authority in the circuit subject to the overall administrative authority of the Supreme Court. Circuit judges may hear any case assigned to them by the chief judge. Associate judges may not preside over felony cases unless authorized by the Supreme Court. Circuit judges are elected for six-year terms, and they appoint associate judges who serve four-year terms.

Candidates for elective judgeships are nominated at the primary election and elected at the general election. Any judge previously elected, at the expiration of his or her term, may have his or her name submitted to the voters on a special judicial ballot, without party designation and an opposing candidate, on the sole question of whether the judge shall be retained in office for another term.

The **Illinois Courts Commission**, composed of one Supreme Court justice, two appellate judges, two circuit judges and two citizens, has the authority to remove from office or discipline judges for willful misconduct in office or persistent failure to perform duties, or other conduct that brings the judicial office into disrepute. The commission also may suspend or retire any member of the judiciary who is physically or mentally unable to perform his or her duties.

A **Judicial Inquiry Board** has the authority to conduct investigations, receive or initiate complaints concerning any member of the judiciary and file complaints with the Courts Commission.