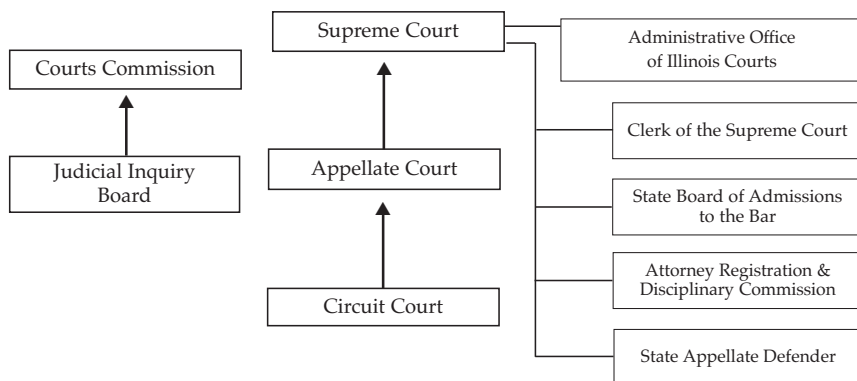


JUDICIAL BRANCH

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 lower 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 the Circuit Courts (trial courts of Illinois). Appellate Court judges are elected from the five judicial districts for 10-year terms.

The **Circuit Court** is comprised of circuit and associate judges. The state is divided into 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; associate judges are appointed by the circuit judges for four-year terms.

Candidates for judgeships are nominated at the primary election and elected at the general election. The names of judges seeking retention shall be submitted to the electors, separately and without party designation, on the sole question of whether each judge shall be retained in office for another term.

The **Illinois Courts Commission**, composed of one Supreme Court justice, two Appellate Court judges, two Circuit Court 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.