

# Federal/State Court Systems

## United States Supreme Court

- 9 justices
- the president appoints justices for life with the advice and consent of the Senate
- Court decides which cases to hear
- final authority in all matters regarding the U.S. Constitution and federal law

## FEDERAL

## STATE

### United States Circuit Court of Appeals

- 13 circuits (12 regional circuits, 1 federal circuit) with varying numbers of judges (179 judgeships)
- the president appoints judges for life with the advice and consent of the Senate
- Court hears all appeals brought before it
- Wisconsin is part of the Seventh Circuit, located in Chicago

### Wisconsin Supreme Court

- 7 justices
- justices elected to 10-year terms in non-partisan elections
- Court decides which cases to hear (reviews approximately 800 petitions annually and hears approximately 65 cases each session, from September through June)
- appellate court with final authority on matters

### Wisconsin Court of Appeals

- 16 judges divided into four geographic districts (3 to 5 judges per district; districts located in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Wausau and Madison)
- elected to six-year terms in non-partisan elections
- Court hears all appeals brought before it
- appellate jurisdiction
- Wisconsin's error-correcting courts

### Federal District Courts

- 94 districts throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, two special trial courts with nationwide jurisdiction (U.S. Court of International Trade and U.S. Court of Federal Claims), and U.S. Bankruptcy Courts (686 judgeships)
- the president appoints judges for life with the advice and consent of the Senate
- trial courts with original jurisdiction in all cases involving federal law
- Wisconsin has two district courts, the Eastern District located in Milwaukee and the Western District located in Madison

### Wisconsin Circuit Courts

- 257 judges (number of judges per circuit depends on caseload)
- elected to six-year terms in non-partisan elections
- court commissioners (legally trained officers of the court) may handle certain administrative and pre-trial matters that come before the circuit courts
- generally, each county is a circuit, except for six counties which are combined to form three circuits (Menominee/Shawano, Buffalo/Pepin, Florence/Forest)
- trial courts have original jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases

### Wisconsin Tribal Courts

- 11 tribal courts
- Jurisdiction between tribal and state courts is complicated and sometimes concurrent. Generally, tribal courts have jurisdiction over civil matters and matters of tribal law involving tribal members or taking place on tribal land. State courts have jurisdiction over criminal matters.

### Wisconsin Municipal Courts

- 229 judges in 227 municipal courts (not all communities choose to have a municipal court)
- elected to two- to four-year terms, as determined by the municipality, in non-partisan elections
- exclusive jurisdiction over ordinance violations