



AJS American Judicature Society
promoting the effective administration of justice

Methods of Judicial Selection

Selection of Judges

Alabama

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	9
Court of Criminal Appeals:	5
Court of Civil Appeals:	5
Circuit Court:	144

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Criminal Appeals:	--
Court of Civil Appeals:	--
Circuit Court:	41

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Criminal Appeals:	statewide
Court of Civil Appeals:	statewide
Circuit Court:	circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	partisan election
Court of Criminal Appeals:	partisan election
Court of Civil Appeals:	partisan election
Circuit Court:	partisan election

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	6 yrs
Court of Civil Appeals:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Criminal Appeals:	reelection
Court of Civil Appeals:	reelection
Circuit Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	6 yrs
Court of Civil Appeals:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment
Court of Criminal Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment

Court of Civil Appeals: gubernatorial appointment
Circuit Court: gubernatorial appointment*

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next general election after 1 yr in office
Court of Criminal Appeals: next general election after 1 yr in office
Court of Civil Appeals: next general election after 1 yr in office
Circuit Court: next general election after 1 yr in office

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: popular election
Court of Criminal Appeals: peer vote
Court of Civil Appeals: seniority
Circuit Court: peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals: indefinite
Court of Civil Appeals: indefinite
Circuit Court: 3 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court: licensed to practice law 10 yrs; 1 yr resident; maximum age of 70
Court of Criminal Appeals: licensed to practice law 10 yrs; 1 yr resident; maximum age of 70
Court of Civil Appeals: licensed to practice law 10 yrs; 1 yr resident; maximum age of 70
Circuit Court: licensed to practice law 5 yrs; 1 yr resident of circuit; maximum age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Amendment 328 of the [Alabama Constitution](#).

*In Baldwin, Jefferson, Lauderdale, Madison, Mobile, Shelby, Talladega, and Tuscaloosa Counties, gubernatorial appointments are made from lists of candidates submitted by judicial nominating commissions.

Alaska

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 5
Court of Appeals: 3
Superior Court: 40

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --
Court of Appeals: --
Superior Court: 4

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
Court of Appeals: statewide
Superior Court: district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

Length of Term

Supreme Court: at least 3 yrs

Court of Appeals: at least 3 yrs
Superior Court: at least 3 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: retention election
Court of Appeals: retention election
Superior Court: retention election

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
Court of Appeals: 8 yrs
Superior Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: first general election more than 3 yrs after appointment
Court of Appeals: first general election more than 3 yrs after appointment
Superior Court: first general election more than 3 yrs after appointment

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote
Court of Appeals: chief justice appoints
Superior Court: chief justice appoints

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 3 yrs
Court of Appeals: 2 yrs
Superior Court: 1 yr

Qualifications

Supreme Court: U.S. citizen; state resident 5 yrs; licensed to practice in state; 8 yrs active legal practice; mandatory retirement at 70
Court of Appeals: U.S. citizen; state resident 5 yrs; licensed to practice in state; 8 yrs active legal practice; mandatory retirement at 70
Superior Court: U.S. citizen; state resident 5 yrs; licensed to practice in state; 5 yrs active legal practice; mandatory retirement at 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article 4](#) of the Alaska Constitution.

Note: The court of appeals hears only criminal appeals.

Arizona

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 5
Court of Appeals: 22
Superior Court: 174

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --
Court of Appeals: 2 divisions
Superior Court: 15 counties

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	division*
Superior Court:	county

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Superior Court:	partisan primary; nonpartisan general election/gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission**

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	at least 2 yrs
Court of Appeals:	at least 2 yrs
Superior Court:	4 yrs/at least 2 yrs**

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Court of Appeals:	retention election
Superior Court:	reelection/retention election**

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Superior Court:	4 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment/gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission**

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election after 2 yrs in office
Court of Appeals:	next general election after 2 yrs in office
Superior Court:	next general election/next general election after 2 yrs in office**

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
Court of Appeals:	peer vote
Superior Court:	supreme court appoints

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	5 yrs
Court of Appeals:	1 yr
Superior Court:	remainder of 4 yr term

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	state resident and licensed in state 10 yrs; mandatory retirement at 70
Court of Appeals:	30 yrs of age; state resident and licensed in state 5 yrs; local resident 1 yr; mandatory retirement at 70
Superior Court:	30 yrs of age; state resident and licensed in state 5 yrs; local resident 1 yr; mandatory retirement at 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article 6](#) of the Arizona Constitution.

*Court of appeals judges who reside in Maricopa and Pima Counties stand for retention in those counties. Court of appeals judges who reside in counties other than Maricopa and Pima stand for retention in all of the other counties

within their division.

**The Arizona Constitution provides for merit selection and retention of judges in counties with populations of 250,000 or greater. Currently, this includes Maricopa and Pima Counties. Counties whose populations are less than 250,000 may adopt merit selection through ballot initiative.

Arkansas

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	12
Circuit Court:	122

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	1
Court of Appeals:	7
Circuit Court:	23

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	district
Circuit Court:	circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals:	nonpartisan election*
Circuit Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
Circuit Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election at least 4 mos after vacancy occurred
Court of Appeals:	next general election at least 4 mos after vacancy occurred
Circuit Court:	next general election at least 4 mos after vacancy occurred

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	popular election
Court of Appeals:	chief justice appoints

Circuit Court: supreme court appoints

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 8 yrs
 Court of Appeals: 4 yrs
 Circuit Court: no set term

Qualifications

Supreme Court: 30 yrs of age; of good moral character; learned in the law; U.S. citizen; state resident > 2 yrs; 8 yrs practice of law
 Court of Appeals: 30 yrs of age; of good moral character; learned in the law; U.S. citizen; state resident > 2 yrs ; 8 yrs practice of law
 Circuit Court: 28 yrs of age; of good moral character; learned in the law; U.S. citizen; state resident > 2 yrs; 6 yrs practice of law

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Amendment 80](#) of the Arkansas Constitution.

*Judicial candidates run in a nonpartisan primary election. If no candidate receives a majority of the vote, there is a runoff in the general election.

California

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 7
 Court of Appeals: 102
 Superior Court: 1535

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --
 Court of Appeals: 6
 Superior Court: 58*

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
 Court of Appeals: district
 Superior Court: county

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment; **confirmation by commission on judicial appointments***
 Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment; **confirmation by commission on judicial appointments***
 Superior Court: nonpartisan election****

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 12 yrs
 Court of Appeals: 12 yrs
 Superior Court: 6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: retention election
 Court of Appeals: retention election
 Superior Court: reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 12 yrs
 Court of Appeals: 12yrs
 Superior Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment; **confirmation by commission on judicial appointments***
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment; **confirmation by commission on judicial appointments***
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment**

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next gubernatorial election
Court of Appeals:	next gubernatorial election
Superior Court:	next general election

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment; **confirmation by commission on judicial appointments***
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment; **confirmation by commission on judicial appointments***
Superior Court:	peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	12 yrs
Court of Appeals:	12 yrs
Superior Court:	1 or 2 yrs, depending on county

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	10 yrs practice of law in state or service as judge of court of record
Court of Appeals:	10 yrs practice of law in state or service as judge of court of record
Superior Court:	10 yrs practice of law in state or service as judge of court of record

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VI](#) of the California Constitution.

*In 1998, voters approved Proposition 220, a constitutional amendment that allowed the judges in each county to merge their superior and municipal courts into a single superior court. By early 2001, all of the state's 58 counties had voted to unify their courts.

**Since 1979, the legislature has required that the [State Bar of California's commission on judicial nominees evaluation](#) (informally known as the Jenny Commission) review the qualifications and fitness of prospective judicial appointees through an extensive investigation. The commission, which consists of both public members and attorneys, rates candidates as exceptionally well qualified, well qualified, qualified, or not qualified. The governor is not bound by the commission's recommendations.

***The commission on judicial appointments consists of three members: the chief justice, the attorney general, and the senior presiding justice of the court of appeal of the affected appellate district. When a supreme court appointee is being considered, the third member of the commission is the senior presiding justice of the state's courts of appeal. The commission holds one or more public hearings to review the appointee's qualifications and may confirm or veto the appointment by majority vote.

****If no candidate receives a majority of the vote in the primary election, there is a general-election runoff between the top two candidates. If an incumbent judge is unopposed, s/he is automatically reelected; the judge's name does not appear on the ballot. The [constitution](#) provides that electors in each county may, by majority vote, opt for the selection of superior court judges by the method used for appellate court judges. To date, no counties have adopted an appointive process.

Colorado

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	22
District Court:	164

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	1
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Court of Appeals: 1
District Court: 22

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
Court of Appeals: statewide
District Court: county

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

Length of Term

Supreme Court: at least 2 yrs
Court of Appeals: at least 2 yrs
District Court: at least 2 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: retention election
Court of Appeals: retention election
District Court: retention election

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
Court of Appeals: 8 yrs
District Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next general election after 2 yrs in office
Court of Appeals: next general election after 2 yrs in office
District Court: next general election after 2 yrs in office

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote
Court of Appeals: chief justice appoints
District Court: chief justice appoints

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: indefinite
Court of Appeals: indefinite
District Court: indefinite

Qualifications

Supreme Court: qualified elector in state; licensed to practice law in state 5 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 72
Court of Appeals: qualified elector in state; licensed to practice law in state 5 yrs. mandatory retirement age of 72
District Court: qualified elector in district; licensed to practice law in state 5 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 72

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VI](#) of the Colorado Constitution.

Connecticut

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Appellate Court:	9
Superior Court:	170

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Appellate Court:	--
Superior Court:	--

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Appellate Court:	statewide
Superior Court:	statewide

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial nomination from judicial selection commission; legislative appointment
Appellate Court:	gubernatorial nomination from judicial selection commission; legislative appointment
Superior Court:	gubernatorial nomination from judicial selection commission; legislative appointment

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Appellate Court:	8 yrs
Superior Court:	8 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	governor renominates; legislature reappoints
Appellate Court:	governor renominates; legislature reappoints
Superior Court:	governor renominates; legislature reappoints

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Appellate Court:	8 yrs
Superior Court:	8 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial nomination from judicial selection commission; legislative appointment*
Appellate Court:	gubernatorial nomination from judicial selection commission; legislative appointment
Superior Court:	gubernatorial nomination from judicial selection commission; legislative appointment

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Appellate Court:	8 yrs
Superior Court:	8 yrs

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial nomination from judicial selection commission; legislative appointment*
Appellate Court:	chief justice
Superior Court:	chief court administrator

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	8 yrs*
Appellate Court:	N/A

Superior Court: at pleasure of chief court administrator

Qualifications

Supreme Court: state resident; licensed to practice in state; mandatory retirement at 70
 Appellate Court: state resident; licensed to practice in state; mandatory retirement at 70
 Superior Court: state resident; licensed to practice in state; mandatory retirement at 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article 5](#) and [Amendment Article XX](#) of the Connecticut Constitution.

*The governor may nominate an associate justice of the supreme court to be chief justice without the involvement of the judicial selection commission. Chief justices appointed in this way serve an initial term equal to the remainder of their term as associate justice.

Delaware

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 5
 Superior Court: 20
 Court of Chancery: 1 Chancellor; 4 vice-chancellors

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --
 Superior Court: --
 Court of Chancery: --

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
 Superior Court: statewide
 Court of Chancery: statewide

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*
 Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*
 Court of Chancery: gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 12 yrs
 Superior Court: 12 yrs
 Court of Chancery: 12 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: gubernatorial reappointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*
 Superior Court: gubernatorial reappointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*
 Court of Chancery: gubernatorial reappointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 12 yrs
 Superior Court: 12 yrs
 Court of Chancery: 12 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*
 Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*
 Court of Chancery: gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	12 yrs
Superior Court:	12 yrs
Court of Chancery:	12 yrs

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*
Court of Chancery:	gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission with senate consent*

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	12 yrs
Superior Court:	12 yrs
Court of Chancery:	12 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	state resident; "learned in the law"; state bar member
Superior Court:	state resident; law degree; "learned in the law"; state bar member
Court of Chancery:	state resident; law degree; "learned in the law"; state bar member

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article IV](#) of the Delaware Constitution and [Executive Order No. 4](#).

*The Delaware Constitution stipulates that no more than a bare majority of judges of each court may be members of the same political party.

District of Columbia

Number of Judgeships

Court of Appeals:	9
Superior Court:	63

Number of Districts/Circuits

Court of Appeals:	--
Superior Court:	--

Geographic Basis for Selection

Court of Appeals:	--
Superior Court:	--

Method of Selection (full term)

Court of Appeals:	presidential appointment from judicial nomination commission, with senate confirmation
Superior Court:	presidential appointment from judicial nomination commission, with senate confirmation

Length of Term

Court of Appeals:	15 yrs
Superior Court:	15 yrs

Method of Retention

Court of Appeals:	reappointment
Superior Court:	reappointment

Length of Subsequent Terms

Court of Appeals:	15 yrs
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Superior Court: 15 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Court of Appeals: presidential appointment from judicial nomination commission
 Superior Court: presidential appointment from judicial nomination commission, with senate confirmation

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Court of Appeals: --
 Superior Court: --

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Court of Appeals: designated by the judicial nomination commission
 Superior Court: designated by the judicial nomination commission

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Court of Appeals: 4 yrs
 Superior Court: 4 yrs

Qualifications

Court of Appeals: U.S. citizen; D.C. resident > 90 days prior to appointment; 5 yrs as active member of D.C. bar, professor at D.C. law school, or attorney employed by U.S. or D.C. government; mandatory retirement at 74
 Superior Court: U.S. citizen; D.C. resident > 90 days prior to appointment; 5 yrs as active member of D.C. bar, professor at D.C. law school, or attorney employed by U.S. or D.C. government; mandatory retirement at 74

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by D.C. Code [1-204.31](#) and [1-204.33](#).

Note: The superior court consists of a family court and civil, criminal, probate, and tax divisions.

Federal

N/A

Florida

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 7
 District Courts of Appeal: 60
 Circuit Court: 597

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --
 District Courts of Appeal: 5
 Circuit Court: 20

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
 District Courts of Appeal: district
 Circuit Court: circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
 District Courts of Appeal: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
 Circuit Court: nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	at least 1 yr
District Courts of Appeal:	at least 1 yr
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
District Courts of Appeal:	retention election
Circuit Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
District Courts of Appeal:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Courts of Appeal:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election more than 1 yr after appointment
District Courts of Appeal:	next general election more than 1 yr after appointment
Circuit Court:	next general election more than 1 yr after appointment

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
District Courts of Appeal:	peer vote
Circuit Court:	peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	2 yrs
District Courts of Appeal:	2 yrs
Circuit Court:	2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	qualified elector; state resident; admitted to practice law in state 10 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70
District Courts of Appeal:	qualified elector; state resident; admitted to practice law in state 10 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70
Circuit Court:	qualified elector; circuit resident; admitted to practice law in state 5 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the Florida Constitution and [Title V](#), Section 43.291.

*If two or more candidates qualify for the ballot, they compete in the first primary election. If no candidate receives a majority of the vote, the top two candidates run in the general election. The voters in each circuit may exercise a local option for merit selection and retention of circuit court judges. A circuit may initiate the local option by filing with the secretary of state a petition signed by a number of voters equal to at least 10% of the votes cast in the circuit in the most recent presidential election. The measure must then be approved by a majority of circuit voters.

Georgia

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
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Court of Appeals:	12
Superior Court:	202

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	--
Superior Court:	49

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
Superior Court:	county

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals:	nonpartisan election*
Superior Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Superior Court:	4 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
Superior Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Superior Court:	4 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election held more than 6 months after appointment; serve remainder of unexpired term
Court of Appeals:	next general election held more than 6 months after appointment; serve remainder
Superior Court:	next general election held more than 6 months after appointment; serve remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
Court of Appeals:	peer vote**
Superior Court:	varies by circuit

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	4 yrs
Court of Appeals:	2 yrs
Superior Court:	varies by circuit

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	state resident; admitted to practice law 7 yrs
Court of Appeals:	state resident; admitted to practice law 7 yrs
Superior Court:	state resident 3 yrs; circuit resident; admitted to practice law 7 yrs; minimum age of 30

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VI](#) of the Georgia Constitution.

*If no candidate wins a plurality of the vote in the primary election, there is a runoff in the general election.

**The chief judge is usually the most senior judge who has not yet held the position.

Hawaii

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Intermediate Court of Appeals:	6
Circuit Court:	33

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Intermediate Court of Appeals:	--
Circuit Court:	4

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Intermediate Court of Appeals:	statewide
Circuit Court:	island

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Intermediate Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Intermediate Court of Appeals:	10 yrs
Circuit Court:	10 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	nominating commission retains
Intermediate Court of Appeals:	nominating commission retains
Circuit Court:	nominating commission retains

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Intermediate Court of Appeals:	10 yrs
Circuit Court:	10 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
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Intermediate Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Circuit Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
Intermediate Court of Appeals: 10 yrs
Circuit Court: 10 yrs

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Intermediate Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Circuit Court: chief justice appoints administrative judge in each circuit

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
Intermediate Court of Appeals: 10 yrs
Circuit Court: chief justice determines

Qualifications

Supreme Court: state and U.S. resident and citizen; 10 yrs state practice; mandatory retirement at 70
Intermediate Court of Appeals: state and U.S. resident and citizen; 10 yrs state practice; mandatory retirement at 70
Circuit Court: state and U.S. resident and citizen; 10 yrs state practice; mandatory retirement at 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VI](#) of the Hawaii Constitution.

Idaho

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 5
Court of Appeals: 3
District Court: 40

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: 0
Court of Appeals: 0
District Court: 7

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
Court of Appeals: statewide
District Court: district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals: nonpartisan election*
District Court: nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
District Court: 4 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: reelection
Court of Appeals: reelection
District Court: reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
District Court: 4 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Court of Appeals: hold office for remainder of unexpired term
District Court: hold office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote
Court of Appeals: chief justice
District Court: peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 4 yrs
Court of Appeals: 2 yrs
District Court: 3 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court: 30 yrs of age; U.S. citizen; state resident 2 yrs; 10 yrs practice of law in ID
Court of Appeals: 30 yrs of age; U.S. citizen; state resident 2 yrs; 10 yrs practice of law in ID
District Court: 30 yrs of age; U.S. citizen; state resident 2 yrs; resident of judicial district 1 yr; 10 yrs practice of law

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the Idaho Constitution and [Sec. 1-2404](#) of the Idaho Code.

*If no candidate in the primary election wins a majority of the vote, the top two vote getters compete in a runoff election in the general election.

Illinois

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 7
Appellate Court: 42
Circuit Court: 513*

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: 5
Appellate Court: 5
Circuit Court: 22

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: district**

Appellate Court: district***
 Circuit Court: circuit/county****

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: partisan election
 Appellate Court: partisan election
 Circuit Court: partisan election

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
 Appellate Court: 10 yrs
 Circuit Court: 6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: retention election*****
 Appellate Court: retention election*****
 Circuit Court: retention election*****

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
 Appellate Court: 10 yrs
 Circuit Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: supreme court appointment
 Appellate Court: supreme court appointment
 Circuit Court: supreme court appointment

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next general election more than 60 days after appointment
 Appellate Court: next general election more than 60 days after appointment
 Circuit Court: next general election more than 60 days after appointment

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote
 Appellate Court: peer vote
 Circuit Court: peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 3 yrs
 Appellate Court: 1 yr
 Circuit Court: indefinite

Qualifications

Supreme Court: U.S. citizen; district resident; licensed to practice law in state
 Appellate Court: U.S. citizen; district resident; licensed to practice law in state
 Circuit Court: U.S. citizen; circuit/county resident; licensed to practice law in state

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VI](#) of the Illinois Constitution.

*Circuit courts are also served by 391 associate judges who are appointed by circuit judges for four-year terms.

**Three justices are elected at large from the first district (Cook County) and one from each of the other four districts.

***Eighteen judges are elected from the first district (Cook County) and six from each of the other four districts. Additional judges may be assigned on a temporary basis by the supreme court.

****Circuit judges are elected on a circuit-wide basis or from the county where they reside. In Cook County, circuit

judges are elected from the entire county or as resident judges from one of the fifteen subcircuits within the county.

**** Judges must receive at least 60% affirmative votes to be retained.

Indiana

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Court of Appeals:	15
Circuit Court:	102
Superior Court:	196

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	5*
Circuit Court:	90
Superior Court:	71

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	district
Circuit Court:	county
Superior Court:	county

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Circuit Court:	partisan election**
Superior Court:	partisan election***

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	at least 2 yrs
Court of Appeals:	at least 2 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs
Superior Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Court of Appeals:	retention election
Circuit Court:	reelection
Superior Court:	reelection***

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Court of Appeals:	10 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs
Superior Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from judicial nominating commission
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment***

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election after 2 yrs in office
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Court of Appeals:	next general election after 2 yrs in office
Circuit Court:	next general election
Superior Court:	next general election

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	judicial nominating commission selects
Court of Appeals:	peer vote
Circuit Court:	varies by circuit
Superior Court:	varies by county

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	5 yrs
Court of Appeals:	3 yrs
Circuit Court:	varies by circuit
Superior Court:	varies by county

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	U.S. citizen; state resident; admitted to state practice 10 yrs or served as judge of trial court 5 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 75
Court of Appeals:	U.S. citizen; state resident; admitted to state practice 10 yrs or served as judge of trial court 5 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 75
Circuit Court:	circuit resident; admitted to practice law in state****
Superior Court:	circuit resident; admitted to practice law in state****

Selection and retention methods and term lengths for appellate judges are prescribed by [Article 7](#) of the Indiana Constitution. For trial judges, see [Title 33](#) of the Indiana Code.

*There are three geographic districts and two statewide at-large districts.

**Elections for circuit court judges in Vanderburgh County are nonpartisan.

***In Lake and St. Joseph Counties, superior court judges are appointed by the governor from lists of names submitted by local nominating commissions (except judges of the county division of the Lake County superior court, who are elected). Judges stand for retention in the first general election held more than two years after their appointment. Superior court judges in Allen County run without party designation in the general election, and vacancies are filled by the governor from a list of names submitted by the Allen County judicial nominating commission.

****Some counties impose additional qualifications.

Iowa

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	9
District Court:	116

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	-
Court of Appeals:	-
District Court:	14 elective / 8 administrative

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	at least 1 yr
Court of Appeals:	at least 1 yr
District Court:	at least 1 yr

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Court of Appeals:	retention election
District Court:	retention election

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election after 1 yr in office
Court of Appeals:	next general election after 1 yr in office
District Court:	next general election after 1 yr in office

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
Court of Appeals:	peer vote
District Court:	supreme court selects

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	2 yrs
District Court:	2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	licensed in state and member of Iowa bar; resident of state; maximum age of 72
Court of Appeals:	licensed in state and member of Iowa bar; resident of state; maximum age of 72
District Court:	licensed in state and member of Iowa bar; resident of district; maximum age of 72

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the Iowa Constitution and Chapter 46 of the [Iowa Code](#).

Note: The Unified Trial Court Act of 1973 established a unified trial court, the district court. The act abolished more than 500 justice of the peace courts, 899 mayor's courts, 14 municipal courts, and 34 police courts. In addition to district court judges, the unified district court includes district associate judges, associate juvenile judges, associate probate judges, and judicial magistrates who exercise varying degrees of limited jurisdiction. For example, district associate judges hear serious misdemeanor cases of \$10,000 or less, associate juvenile judges are limited to juvenile court matters, associate probate judges are limited to probate matters, and judicial magistrates hear simple misdemeanor cases of \$4,000 or less within their county of residence. Currently, there are 116 district court judges, 67 district associate judges, and 133 magistrates.

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	12
District Court:	167*

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	--
District Court:	31

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission (17 districts); partisan election (14 districts)

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	1 yr
Court of Appeals:	1 yr
District Court:	1 yr; 4 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Court of Appeals:	retention election
District Court:	retention election; reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	4 yrs
District Court:	4 yrs; 4 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission; gubernatorial appointment

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election after at least 1 yr in office
Court of Appeals:	next general election after at least 1 yr in office
District Court:	next general election after at least 1 yr in office; next general election

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	seniority
Court of Appeals:	supreme court
District Court:	supreme court

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	indefinite
Court of Appeals:	indefinite
District Court:	2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	30-70 yrs old; 10 yrs active and continuous practice of law in state
Court of Appeals:	30-70 yrs old; 10 yrs active and continuous practice of law in state
District Court:	state and district resident; maximum age is 70; member in good standing of state bar > 5 years

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article 3](#) of the Kansas Constitution and Chapter 20 of the [Kansas Statutes](#).

*There are also 79 district magistrate judges who preside over the early stages of criminal cases, hear limited civil actions, and handle all juvenile cases. They are not required to be attorneys.

Kentucky**Number of Judgeships**

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	14
Circuit Court:	146

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	7
Circuit Court:	57

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	district
Court of Appeals:	district
Circuit Court:	circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals:	nonpartisan election*
Circuit Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	8 yrs
Circuit Court:	8 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
Circuit Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	8 yrs
Circuit Court:	8 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	**
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Court of Appeals:	**
Circuit Court:	**

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
Court of Appeals:	peer vote
Circuit Court:	peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	4 yrs
Court of Appeals:	4 yrs
Circuit Court:	2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	U.S. citizen; district resident 2 yrs; licensed to practice law 8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	U.S. citizen; district resident 2 yrs; licensed to practice law 8 yrs
Circuit Court:	U.S. citizen; circuit resident 2 yrs; licensed to practice law 8 yrs

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Sections [117](#), [118](#), and [119](#) of the Kentucky Constitution.

*The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the primary election compete in the general election.

**If the unexpired term ends at the next annual election, the appointment is for the remainder of the unexpired term. If the unexpired term does not end at the next annual election and that election is more than 3 months away, judges are appointed until the next election. If there are less than 3 months until the next annual election, the appointment is until the second succeeding annual election. Elections are for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Louisiana

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	53
District Court:	217

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	5*
District Court:	41

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	district
Court of Appeals:	circuit/district*
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	partisan election**
Court of Appeals:	partisan election**
District Court:	partisan election**

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Court of Appeals:	10 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
District Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Court of Appeals:	10 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	special election***
Court of Appeals:	special election***
District Court:	special election***

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	expiration of unexpired term
Court of Appeals:	expiration of unexpired term
District Court:	expiration of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	seniority
Court of Appeals:	seniority
District Court:	peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	duration of service
Court of Appeals:	duration of service
District Court:	varies by court

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	10 yrs state practice; 1 yr district resident; maximum age of 70
Court of Appeals:	10 yrs state practice; 1 yr district/circuit resident; maximum age of 70
District Court:	8 yrs state practice; 1 yr district resident; maximum age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the Louisiana Constitution.

*Louisiana is divided into five circuits, and each circuit is divided into districts. Judges are elected from districts or at large within their circuits.

**Louisiana uses a blanket primary, in which all candidates appear with party labels on the primary ballot. The top two vote getters compete in the general election.

***Vacancies are filled within one year by special election called by the governor. In the interim, vacancies are filled by supreme court appointment. Appointees may not run in the special election.

Maine

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Judicial Court:	7
Superior Court:	17

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Judicial Court:	--
Superior Court:	--

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Judicial Court:	statewide
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Superior Court: statewide

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Judicial Court: gubernatorial appointment with senate confirmation*
Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment with senate confirmation*

Length of Term

Supreme Judicial Court: 7 yrs
Superior Court: 7 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Judicial Court: gubernatorial reappointment with senate confirmation*
Superior Court: gubernatorial reappointment with senate confirmation*

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Judicial Court: 7 yrs
Superior Court: 7 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Judicial Court: gubernatorial appointment with senate confirmation*
Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment with senate confirmation*

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Judicial Court: 7 yrs
Superior Court: 7 yrs

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Judicial Court: gubernatorial appointment
Superior Court: chief justice

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Judicial Court: 7 yrs
Superior Court: at pleasure of Chief Justice

Qualifications

Supreme Judicial Court: "learned in the law"
Superior Court: "learned in the law"

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Articles V and VI of the [Maine Constitution](#).

*Governor Baldacci established by executive order a fourteen-member [judicial selection committee](#) to "advise [him] about matters related to judicial appointments and recommend candidates to fill vacancies." Members include a representative from the attorney general's office and practicing attorneys. When a judicial vacancy occurs, the governor nominates a candidate to fill the vacancy. The [legislature's](#) joint standing committee on the judiciary recommends by majority vote that the nominee be confirmed or denied. The committee's recommendation is reviewed by the senate and becomes final unless two thirds of the senate votes to override the recommendation.

Maryland

Number of Judgeships

Court of Appeals: 7
Court of Special Appeals: 13
Circuit Court: 153

Number of Districts/Circuits

Court of Appeals: --

Court of Special Appeals: --
Circuit Court: --

Geographic Basis for Selection

Court of Appeals: circuit
Court of Special Appeals: circuit
Circuit Court: county/city

Method of Selection (full term)

Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Court of Special Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Circuit Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission and/or nonpartisan election

Length of Term

Court of Appeals: at least one year
Court of Special Appeals: at least one year
Circuit Court: at least one year

Method of Retention

Court of Appeals: retention election
Court of Special Appeals: retention election
Circuit Court: nonpartisan election*

Length of Subsequent Terms

Court of Appeals: 10 years
Court of Special Appeals: 10 years
Circuit Court: 15 years

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Court of Special Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Circuit Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Court of Appeals: first general election at least one year after vacancy
Court of Special Appeals: first general election at least one year after vacancy
Circuit Court: first general election at least one year after vacancy

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Court of Appeals: designated by governor
Court of Special Appeals: designated by governor
Circuit Court: seniority

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Court of Appeals: indefinite
Court of Special Appeals: indefinite
Circuit Court: N/A

Qualifications

Court of Appeals: U.S. and state citizen; registered to vote in state elections; state resident 5 yrs; circuit resident 6 mos; 30 yrs of age; state bar member; mandatory retirement age of 70
Court of Special Appeals: U.S. and state citizen; registered to vote in state elections; state resident 5 yrs; circuit resident 6 mos; 30 yrs of age; state bar member; mandatory retirement age of 70
Circuit Court: U.S. and state citizen; registered to vote in state elections; state resident 5 yrs; circuit resident 6 mos; 30 yrs of age; state bar member; mandatory retirement age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article IV](#) of the Maryland Constitution and [Executive Order 01.01.2007.08](#).

*The names of incumbent judges and challengers appear without party affiliation on both the Republican and Democratic primary ballots. The top votegetters in each primary compete in the general election. Ballots do not denote incumbents.

Massachusetts

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Judicial Court:	7
Appeals Court:	25
Superior Court:	82

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Judicial Court:	--
Appeals Court:	--
Superior Court:	--

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Judicial Court:	statewide
Appeals Court:	statewide
Superior Court:	statewide

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Judicial Court:	gubernatorial appointment with approval of governor's council*
Appeals Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with approval of governor's council*
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with approval of governor's council*

Length of Term

Supreme Judicial Court:	to age 70
Appeals Court:	to age 70
Superior Court:	to age 70

Method of Retention

Supreme Judicial Court:	N/A
Appeals Court:	N/A
Superior Court:	N/A

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Judicial Court:	N/A
Appeals Court:	N/A
Superior Court:	N/A

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Judicial Court:	gubernatorial appointment with governor's council approval*
Appeals Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with governor's council approval*
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with governor's council approval*

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Judicial Court:	N/A
Appeals Court:	N/A
Superior Court:	N/A

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Judicial Court:	gubernatorial appointment with governor's council approval*
Appeals Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with governor's council approval*
Superior Court:	selected by chief justice for administration and management

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Judicial Court:	to age 70
Appeals Court:	to age 70
Superior Court:	5 years

Qualifications

Supreme Judicial Court:	mandatory retirement age of 70
Appeals Court:	U.S. citizen; state resident; state bar member in good standing; 13 yrs legal experience and training**; mandatory retirement age of 70
Superior Court:	U.S. citizen; state resident; state bar member in good standing; 10 yrs legal experience and training**; mandatory retirement age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Part II, Chapters II and III of the [Massachusetts Constitution](#) and [Executive Order 500](#).

*The nominating commission screens applicants for the supreme judicial court at the governor's discretion. The governor's council, also referred to as the executive council, is a constitutionally authorized body that advises the governor on Massachusetts affairs. The eight-member council is elected annually by the general court, Massachusetts' legislature.

**These qualifications are prescribed in [Executive Order 500](#).

Michigan

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	28
Circuit Court:	221

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	4
Circuit Court:	57

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	district
Circuit Court:	circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	partisan nomination; nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals:	nonpartisan election*
Circuit Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
Circuit Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment**
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment**
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment**

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election; serve remainder of unexpired term
Court of Appeals:	next general election; serve remainder of unexpired term
Circuit Court:	next general election; serve remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
Court of Appeals:	supreme court appointment
Circuit Court:	supreme court appointment

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	2 yrs
Court of Appeals:	2 yrs
Circuit Court:	2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	qualified elector; licensed to practice law in state; 5 yrs practice of law; less than 70 yrs of age
Court of Appeals:	qualified elector of district; licesed to practice law in state; 5 yrs practice of law; less than 70 yrs of age
Circuit Court:	qualified elector of circuit; licensed to practice law in state; 5 yrs practice of law; less than 70 yrs of age

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article VI of the [Michigan Constitution](#).

*Candidates for open seats on the supreme court or who want to challenge incumbent justices must be nominated at party conventions or by nominating petition. Incumbent justices may file an affidavit of candidacy, asking to be placed on the ballot. Candidates for other courts are nominated in nonpartisan primary elections or by nominating petition. Incumbent judges may file an affidavit of candidacy. Candidates appear without party affiliation on the general election ballot, with incumbent judges designated as such.

**The [standing committee on judicial qualifications](#) of the [State Bar of Michigan](#) interviews, evaluates, and rates candidates for appointment to judicial vacancies as requested by the governor and submits a confidential report to the governor.

Minnesota

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	16
District Court:	289

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	-
Court of Appeals:	--
District Court:	10

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals:	nonpartisan election*
District Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
District Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election more than 1 yr after appointment
Court of Appeals:	next general election more than 1 yr after appointment
District Court:	next general election more than 1 yr after appointment

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment
District Court:	peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	3 yrs
District Court:	2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	"learned in the law;" mandatory retirement at 70
Court of Appeals:	"learned in the law;" mandatory retirement at 70
District Court:	"learned in the law;" mandatory retirement at 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VI](#) of the Minnesota Constitution.

*The two candidates receiving the most votes in the primary election are placed on the ballot for the general election.

visited 6/18/2010

Mississippi

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	9
Court of Appeals:	10
Circuit Court:	51

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	3
Court of Appeals:	5
Circuit Court:	22

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	district
Court of Appeals:	district
Circuit Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals:	nonpartisan election*
Circuit Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	8 yrs
Circuit Court:	4 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
Circuit Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	8 yrs
Circuit Court:	4 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	**
Court of Appeals:	**
Circuit Court:	next general election held more than 9 mos after vacancy occurs

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	seniority
Court of Appeals:	chief justice appoints
Circuit Court:	seniority

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	duration of service
Court of Appeals:	4 yrs

Circuit Court: duration of service

Qualifications

Supreme Court: practicing attorney 5 yrs; minimum age of 30; state citizen 5 yrs
 Court of Appeals: practicing attorney 5 yrs; minimum age of 30; state citizen 5 yrs
 Circuit Court: practicing attorney 5 yrs; minimum age of 26; state citizen 5 yrs; district resident

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article 6 of the [Mississippi Constitution](#) and [Section 9-4-5](#) of the Mississippi Code.

*Judicial candidates run in the general election. If no candidate receives a majority of the vote, a runoff election between the top two candidates is held.

**According to a law passed in 2002, an appointee serves out the remainder of the unexpired term if four years or less remain on the term. If more than four years remain, the appointee runs in the next general election held more than nine months after the vacancy occurs and then serves the remainder of the term.

Missouri

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 7
 Court of Appeals: 32
 Circuit Court: 141**
 Circuit Court (Kansas City, -
 Springfield, St. Louis)*:

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: 1
 Court of Appeals: 3
 Circuit Court: 45
 Circuit Court (Kansas City, -
 Springfield, St. Louis)*:

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
 Court of Appeals: district
 Circuit Court: circuit
 Circuit Court (Kansas City, "
 Springfield, St. Louis)*:

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
 Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
 Circuit Court: partisan election
 Circuit Court (Kansas City, gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
 Springfield, St. Louis)*:

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 1-3 yrs
 Court of Appeals: 1-3 yrs
 Circuit Court: 6 yrs
 Circuit Court (Kansas City, "
 Springfield, St. Louis)*:

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: retention election
 Court of Appeals: retention election

Circuit Court: reelection
Circuit Court (Kansas City, Springfield, St. Louis)*: retention election

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 12 yrs
Court of Appeals: 12 yrs
Circuit Court: 6 yrs
Circuit Court (Kansas City, Springfield, St. Louis)*: "

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Circuit Court: gubernatorial appointment
Circuit Court (Kansas City, Springfield, St. Louis)*: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next general election after 1 yr in office
Court of Appeals: next general election after 1 yr in office
Circuit Court: next general election
Circuit Court (Kansas City, Springfield, St. Louis)*: next general election after 1 yr in office

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: rotation with peer vote***
Court of Appeals: rotation with peer vote
Circuit Court: elected by circuit and associate judges from among circuit judges
Circuit Court (Kansas City, Springfield, St. Louis)*: "

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 2 yrs
Court of Appeals: 2 yrs
Circuit Court: 2 yrs
Circuit Court (Kansas City, Springfield, St. Louis)*: "

Qualifications

Supreme Court: U.S. citizen 15 yrs; qualified state voter 9 yrs; licensed to practice in state; minimum age of 30; mandatory retirement age of 70
Court of Appeals: U.S. citizen 15 yrs; district resident; qualified state voter 9 yrs; licensed to practice in state; minimum age of 30; mandatory retirement age of 70
Circuit Court: U.S. citizen 10 yrs; qualified state voter 3 yrs; circuit resident 1 yr; licensed to practice in state; minimum age of 30; mandatory retirement age of 70
Circuit Court (Kansas City, Springfield, St. Louis)*: "

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the Missouri Constitution.

*The constitution establishes a merit selection process for circuit and associate circuit judges in the city of St. Louis and in Jackson County (Kansas City). The constitution also provides that, in other circuits, merit selection may be adopted with the approval of a majority of circuit voters. The question is submitted to the voters of a judicial circuit at the next general election upon the filing of a petition signed by 10% of the voters of each county in the circuit who voted in the last gubernatorial election. The question may not be submitted to voters more often than every four years. Merit selection has been adopted in this way in Clay, Platte, St. Louis, and Greene Counties. In circuits that have already moved to merit selection, it may be discontinued through the same process.

**The circuit court consists of six divisions: a circuit division, an associate division, a probate division, a municipal division, a juvenile division, and a family court division. The circuit division exercises jurisdiction over all civil and criminal cases and is served by 135 circuit judges. The remaining divisions are served by circuit judges in conjunction with 175 associate circuit judges, 331 municipal judges, and various commissioners. Associate circuit judges are appointed in the same manner as circuit judges and serve four-year terms. Municipal judges are elected or appointed according to city ordinance or charter and serve terms of at least two years. Commissioners are appointed by circuit judges, usually to four-year terms.

***By tradition, the court elects the most senior justice who has not yet held the position.

Montana

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
District Court:	43

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
District Court:	22

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election*
District Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
District Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	hold office for remainder of unexpired term
District Court:	hold office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election
District Court:	seniority/rotation

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
District Court:	duration of service/1 yr

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	U.S. citizen; state resident 2 yrs; admitted to practice law in Montana for at least 5 years prior to date of appointment/election
District Court:	U.S. citizen; state resident 2 yrs; district resident; admitted to practice law in Montana for at least 5 yrs prior to date of appointment

*The two candidates receiving the most votes in the primary election run in the general election. If an incumbent judge is unopposed, voters are asked whether the judge should be retained in office.

Nebraska

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	6
District Court:	55

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	6
Court of Appeals:	6
District Court:	12

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide (chief justice); district (associate justices)
Court of Appeals:	district
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	at least 3 yrs
Court of Appeals:	at least 3 yrs
District Court:	at least 3 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Court of Appeals:	retention election
District Court:	retention election

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election after 3 yrs in office
Court of Appeals:	next general election after 3 yrs in office
District Court:	next general election after 3 yrs in office

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals: peer vote with supreme court approval
District Court: peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: duration of service
Court of Appeals: 2 yrs
District Court: 1 yr

Qualifications

Supreme Court: U.S. citizen; > 3 yrs state resident; district resident; minimum age of 30; > 5 yrs state practice; state bar member
Court of Appeals: U.S. citizen; state resident; minimum age of 30; > 5 yrs state practice; state bar member
District Court: U.S. citizen; district resident; minimum age of 30; > 5 yrs state practice; state bar member

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the Nebraska Constitution and [Section 24-1101](#) of the Nebraska Revised Statutes.

Nevada

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 7
District Court: 72

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: ---
District Court: 9

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
District Court: district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: nonpartisan election
District Court: nonpartisan election

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
District Court: 6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: reelection
District Court: reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
District Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election; serve for remainder of unexpired term
District Court:	next general election; serve for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	rotates by seniority
District Court:	peer vote*

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	2 yrs
District Court:	2 yrs*

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	qualified elector; 2 yrs state resident; minimum age of 25; licensed and admitted to practice law in NV; 15 yrs licensed attorney, at least 2 in NV
District Court:	qualified elector; 2 yrs state resident; district resident; minimum age of 25; licensed and admitted to practice law in NV; 10 yrs licensed attorney, at least 2 in NV

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article 6](#) of the Nevada Constitution.

*A chief judge is required in districts with a population of 100,000 or more, and in such districts, chief judges are chosen by peer vote. In other districts, a chief judge may be selected as needed.

New Hampshire

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Superior Court:	22

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Superior Court:	--

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Superior Court:	statewide

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial nomination from selection commission recommendation; appointment by the executive council*
Superior Court:	gubernatorial nomination from selection commission recommendation; appointment by the executive council*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	to age 70
Superior Court:	to age 70

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	N/A
Superior Court:	N/A

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	N/A
Superior Court:	N/A

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial nomination from selection commission recommendation; appointment by the executive council*

Superior Court: gubernatorial nomination from selection commission recommendation; appointment by the executive council*

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: N/A

Superior Court: N/A

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: gubernatorial nomination from selection commission recommendation; appointment by the executive council*

Superior Court: gubernatorial nomination from selection commission recommendation; appointment by the executive council*

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 5 yrs or to age 70

Superior Court: to age 70

Qualifications

Supreme Court: mandatory retirement age of 70

Superior Court: mandatory retirement age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Articles [46](#) and [73](#) of the New Hampshire Constitution and [Executive Order 2005-2](#).

*The executive council is a constitutionally authorized, five-member body charged with advising the governor. Council members are chosen every two years in partisan elections.

New Jersey

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 7

Appellate Division, Superior Court: 34

Superior Court: 371

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --

Appellate Division, Superior Court: --

Superior Court: 15 vicinages*

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide

Appellate Division, Superior Court: **

Superior Court: county

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment with senate confirmation

Appellate Division, Superior Court: **

Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment with senate confirmation***

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	7 yrs
Appellate Division, Superior Court:	**
Superior Court:	7 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial reappointment with senate confirmation
Appellate Division, Superior Court:	**
Superior Court:	gubernatorial reappointment with senate confirmation

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	until age 70
Appellate Division, Superior Court:	**
Superior Court:	until age 70

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial reappointment with senate confirmation
Appellate Division, Superior Court:	**
Superior Court:	gubernatorial reappointment with senate confirmation

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	7 yrs
Appellate Division, Superior Court:	**
Superior Court:	7 yrs

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment with senate confirmation
Appellate Division, Superior Court:	designated by chief justice
Superior Court:	designated by chief justice

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	duration of service
Appellate Division, Superior Court:	indefinite
Superior Court:	indefinite

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	admitted to state practice for 10 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70
Appellate Division, Superior Court:	**
Superior Court:	admitted to state practice for 10 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article VI, Section VI of the [New Jersey Constitution](#).

*Vicinage is from the Latin *vicinus* and means vicinity or neighborhood. In New Jersey, there are 15 vicinages and 21 counties. A vicinage consists of one county in more populous areas and two or three counties in less populous areas.

**The chief justice of the supreme court assigns superior court judges to the appellate division. Such assignments are for fixed terms.

***According to [Executive Order #32](#), Governor Christie utilizes a judicial advisory panel in screening potential nominees for superior court judgeships. The judicial advisory panel is composed of up to seven members, at least five of whom must be retired judges and no more than two of whom may be non-lawyers or non-practicing lawyers. Panel

members serve five-year terms.

According to a [compact](#) with the governor, the judicial and prosecutorial appointments committee of the [New Jersey State Bar Association](#) conducts a confidential review of potential candidates for appointment and reappointment to the courts and rates them as "qualified" or "not qualified." In most counties, senators allow county bar associations to be involved in identifying and screening potential judicial candidates.

New Mexico

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Court of Appeals:	10
District Court:	84

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	--
District Court:	13

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	partisan election*
Court of Appeals:	partisan election*
District Court:	partisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	remainder of unexpired term*
Court of Appeals:	remainder of unexpired term*
District Court:	remainder of unexpired term*

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election**
Court of Appeals:	retention election**
District Court:	retention election**

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	8 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election*
Court of Appeals:	next general election*
District Court:	next general election*

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote***
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Court of Appeals: peer vote
District Court: varies by district

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 2 yrs
Court of Appeals: 2 yrs
District Court: varies by district

Qualifications

Supreme Court: minimum age of 35; 10 yrs legal practice; state resident 3 yrs
Court of Appeals: minimum age of 35; 10 yrs legal practice; state resident 3 yrs
District Court: minimum age of 35; 6 yrs legal practice; state resident 3 yrs; district resident

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article VI of the [New Mexico Constitution](#).

*All judicial vacancies are filled by the governor from a list of candidates recommended by a judicial nominating commission. The appointee must then compete in a partisan election at the next general election to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

**Judges must receive at least 57% in affirmative votes to be retained.

***By tradition, the court elects the most senior justice who has not yet held the position.

New York

Number of Judgeships

Court of Appeals: 7
Appellate Division, Supreme Court: 60
Supreme Court: 324
County Court: 125

Number of Districts/Circuits

Court of Appeals: --
Appellate Division, Supreme Court: 4 departments
Supreme Court: 12 districts
County Court: 57 counties outside NYC

Geographic Basis for Selection

Court of Appeals: statewide
Appellate Division, Supreme Court: statewide*
Supreme Court: district
County Court: county

Method of Selection (full term)

Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate consent
Appellate Division, Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission**
Supreme Court: partisan election***
County Court: partisan election

Length of Term

Court of Appeals: 14 yrs
Appellate Division, Supreme Court: 5 yrs or through end of supreme court term, whichever is shorter

Supreme Court: 14 yrs
 County Court: 10 yrs

Method of Retention

Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate consent
 Appellate Division, gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission**
 Supreme Court:
 Supreme Court: reelection
 County Court: reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Court of Appeals: 14 yrs
 Appellate Division, 5 yrs
 Supreme Court:
 Supreme Court: 14 yrs
 County Court: 10 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate consent
 Appellate Division, gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission**
 Supreme Court:
 Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate consent
 County Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate consent

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Court of Appeals: 14 yrs
 Appellate Division, serve 5 yrs or through end of supreme court term, whichever is shorter
 Supreme Court:
 Supreme Court: next general election more than 3 months after vacancy
 County Court: next general election more than 3 months after vacancy

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate consent
 Appellate Division, gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
 Supreme Court:
 Supreme Court: ****
 County Court: ****

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Court of Appeals: 14 yrs
 Appellate Division, serves through end of supreme court term
 Supreme Court:
 Supreme Court: ****
 County Court: ****

Qualifications

Court of Appeals: state resident; state practice > 10 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70
 Appellate Division, state resident; state practice > 10 yrs; minimum age of 18; mandatory retirement age of 70
 Supreme Court:
 Supreme Court: state resident; state practice > 10 yrs; minimum age of 18; mandatory retirement age of 70
 County Court: state resident; county resident; state practice > 5 yrs; minimum age of 18; mandatory retirement age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article VI of the [New York Constitution](#) and by [Executive Order No. 4](#).

*The presiding justice of each appellate division must be a resident of the department.

**Justices of the appellate division are chosen from all justices elected to the supreme court.

***Candidates are chosen at partisan nominating conventions.

****The chief administrative judge of New York appoints one deputy chief administrative judge to supervise the trial courts of New York City and one to supervise trial courts outside New York City. Administrative judges are also assigned in each judicial district and in each of the major New York City courts.

North Carolina

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	15
Superior Court:	95

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	--
Superior Court:	65*

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
Superior Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election**
Court of Appeals:	nonpartisan election**
Superior Court:	nonpartisan election**

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	8 yrs
Superior Court:	8 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
Superior Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	8 yrs
Superior Court:	8 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election more than 60 days after vacancy occurred
Court of Appeals:	next general election more than 60 days after vacancy occurred
Superior Court:	next general election more than 60 days after vacancy occurred; serve remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election
Court of Appeals:	chief justice appoints
Superior Court:	seniority

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	indefinite
Superior Court:	indefinite

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	licensed to practice law in state; mandatory retirement age of 72
Court of Appeals:	licensed to practice law in state; mandatory retirement age of 72
Superior Court:	licensed to practice law in state; mandatory retirement age of 72

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article IV](#) of the North Carolina Constitution.

*The superior court is also divided into eight divisions. Every six months, superior court judges rotate among the districts within their division.

**If there are more than two candidates for a position, a nonpartisan primary election is held. The top two vote getters in the primary compete in the general election.

North Dakota

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Court of Appeals:	*
District Court:	42

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	---
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	7

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election**
Court of Appeals:	chosen from among active and retired district judges, retired supreme court justices, and attorneys
District Court:	nonpartisan election**

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Court of Appeals:	up to 1 yr
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission***
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission***

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election after 2 yrs in office; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	next general election after 2 yrs in office; hold office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	selected by judges of supreme court and district courts
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	elected by judges in each district

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	5 yrs
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	3 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	U.S. and state citizen; licensed attorney
Court of Appeals:	---
District Court:	U.S. and state citizen; licensed attorney

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article VI of the [North Dakota Constitution](#).

*Cases assigned to the court of appeals by the supreme court are heard by three-judge panels.

**The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the primary election run in the general election, provided that each candidate receives at least as many votes as the number of signatures required to be placed on the primary ballot.

***In the alternative, the governor may call a special election to fill the vacancy

Ohio

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	68
Court of Common Pleas:	391

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	12
Court of Common Pleas:	88

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	appellate district
Court of Common Pleas:	county

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	partisan primary; nonpartisan general election
Court of Appeals:	partisan primary; nonpartisan general election
Court of Common Pleas:	partisan primary; nonpartisan general election

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Court of Common Pleas:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
Court of Common Pleas:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Court of Common Pleas:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment*
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment*
Court of Common Pleas:	gubernatorial appointment*

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	at the first general election held more than 40 days after the vacancy occurs; hold office for remainder of unexpired term**
Court of Appeals:	at the first general election held more than 40 days after the vacancy occurs; hold office for remainder of unexpired term**
Court of Common Pleas:	at the first general election held more than 40 days after the vacancy occurs; hold office for remainder of unexpired term**

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	popular election
Court of Appeals:	peer vote
Court of Common Pleas:	peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	1 yr
Court of Common Pleas:	1 yr

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	6 yrs practice of law; maximum age of 70
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs practice of law; resident of district; maximum age of 70
Court of Common Pleas:	6 yrs practice of law; resident of county; maximum age of 70

Selection and retention methods and judicial term lengths are prescribed in [Article 6](#) of the Ohio Constitution.

*In 2007, Governor Strickland created a [judicial appointments recommendation panel](#) to evaluate the qualifications of applicants for judicial vacancies and make non-binding recommendations for appointment.

**When the unexpired term ends within one year immediately following the next general election, the appointment is for the unexpired term.

Oklahoma

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	9
Court of Criminal Appeals:	5
Court of Civil Appeals:	12
District Court:	75*

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	9
Court of Criminal Appeals:	5
Court of Civil Appeals:	6
District Court:	26

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	district
Court of Criminal Appeals:	district
Court of Civil Appeals:	district
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission
Court of Criminal Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission
Court of Civil Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment through nominating commission
District Court:	nonpartisan election**

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	at least 1 yr
Court of Criminal Appeals:	at least 1 yr
Court of Civil Appeals:	at least 1 yr
District Court:	4 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Court of Criminal Appeals:	retention election
Court of Civil Appeals:	retention election
District Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	6 yrs
Court of Civil Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	4 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Criminal Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Civil Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Court of Criminal Appeals:	next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Court of Civil Appeals:	next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
District Court:	next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
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Court of Criminal Appeals:	peer vote
Court of Civil Appeals:	peer vote
District Court:	peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	2 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	2 yrs
Court of Civil Appeals:	1 yr
District Court:	1 yr

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	30 yrs of age; qualified elector in district > 1 yr; licensed to practice or judge of court of record > 5 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	30 yrs of age; qualified elector in district > 1 yr; licensed to practice or judge of court of record > 5 yrs
Court of Civil Appeals:	qualified elector in district > 1 yr; licensed to practice or judge of court of record > 4 yrs
District Court:	qualified elector in district > 1 yr; licensed to practice or judge of court of record > 4 yrs

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Articles 7 and 7B of the [Oklahoma Constitution](#) and Title 20, [Section 30-18](#) of the Oklahoma Statutes.

*Number does not include district associate judges and special judges.

**A nonpartisan primary is held if more than two candidates file for a district court judgeship. If a candidate wins a majority of votes in the primary, the candidate is elected and does not run in the general election.

Oregon

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	10
Circuit Court:	173

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	--
Circuit Court:	27

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
Circuit Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals:	nonpartisan election*
Circuit Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: reelection
Court of Appeals: reelection
Circuit Court: reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
Circuit Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment
Circuit Court: gubernatorial appointment

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next general election more than 60 days after appointment
Court of Appeals: next general election more than 60 days after appointment
Circuit Court: next general election more than 60 days after appointment

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote
Court of Appeals: chief justice appoints
Circuit Court: chief justice appoints

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
Court of Appeals: 2 yrs
Circuit Court: 2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court: U.S. citizen; state resident 3 yrs; state bar member; mandatory retirement age of 75
Court of Appeals: elector of county of residence; state bar member; mandatory retirement age of 75
Circuit Court: U.S. citizen; state resident 3 yrs; circuit resident 1 yr; state bar member; mandatory retirement age of 75

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VII](#) (Amended) of the Oregon Constitution.

*The two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes in the primary election compete in the general election.

Pennsylvania

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 7
Superior Court: 15
Commonwealth Court: 9
Court of Common Pleas: 439

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: 1
Superior Court: 1
Commonwealth Court: 1
Court of Common Pleas: 60

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
Superior Court: statewide

Commonwealth Court: statewide
 Court of Common Pleas: district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: partisan election*
 Superior Court: partisan election*
 Commonwealth Court: partisan election*
 Court of Common Pleas: partisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
 Superior Court: 10 yrs
 Commonwealth Court: 10 yrs
 Court of Common Pleas: 10 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: retention election
 Superior Court: retention election
 Commonwealth Court: retention election
 Court of Common Pleas: retention election

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
 Superior Court: 10 yrs
 Commonwealth Court: 10 yrs
 Court of Common Pleas: 10 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment with two-thirds senate approval
 Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment with two-thirds senate approval
 Commonwealth Court: gubernatorial appointment with two-thirds senate approval
 Court of Common Pleas: gubernatorial appointment with two-thirds senate approval

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next municipal election more than 10 mos after vacancy occurs or upon expiration of term**
 Superior Court: next municipal election more than 10 mos after vacancy occurs or upon expiration of term**
 Commonwealth Court: next municipal election more than 10 mos after vacancy occurs or upon expiration of term**
 Court of Common Pleas: next municipal election more than 10 mos after vacancy occurs or upon expiration of term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: seniority
 Superior Court: peer vote
 Commonwealth Court: peer vote
 Court of Common Pleas: seniority or peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: duration of term
 Superior Court: 5 yrs
 Commonwealth Court: 5 yrs
 Court of Common Pleas: 5 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	1 yr state resident; maximum age of 70; state bar member
Superior Court:	1 yr state resident; maximum age of 70; state bar member
Commonwealth Court:	1 yr state resident; maximum age of 70; state bar member
Court of Common Pleas:	1 yr district resident; maximum age of 70; state bar member

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

*If more than one open seat is being filled, all of the candidates run at large and the top vote getters fill the open seats.

**By tradition, interim appointees to the appellate courts do not stand for election.

Rhode Island

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Superior Court:	22

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	1
Superior Court:	1

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statwide
Superior Court:	statewide

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with house and senate confirmation
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	life
Superior Court:	life

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	N/A
Superior Court:	N/A

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	N/A
Superior Court:	N/A

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with house and senate confirmation
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	N/A
Superior Court:	N/A

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with house and senate confirmation
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: life
Superior Court: life

Qualifications

Supreme Court: attorney; licensed in state; state bar member in good standing
Superior Court: attorney; licensed in state; state bar member in good standing

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article X](#) of the Rhode Island Constitution.

South Carolina

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 5
Court of Appeals: 9
Circuit Court: 46

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --
Court of Appeals: --
Circuit Court: 16

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
Court of Appeals: statewide
Circuit Court: circuit & at-large

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: legislative election
Court of Appeals: legislative election
Circuit Court: legislative election

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
Circuit Court: 6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: legislative reelection
Court of Appeals: legislative reelection
Circuit Court: legislative reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
Circuit Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: legislative election*
Court of Appeals: legislative election*
Circuit Court: legislative election*

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: upon completion of unexpired term
Court of Appeals: upon completion of unexpired term
Circuit Court: upon completion of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	legislative election
Court of Appeals:	legislative election
Circuit Court:	designation by chief justice of the supreme court

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
Circuit Court:	6 months

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	U.S. citizen; 32-72 yrs of age; state resident 5 yrs; licensed attorney 8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	U.S. citizen; 32-72 yrs old; state resident 5 yrs; licensed attorney 8 yrs
Circuit Court:	U.S. citizen; 32-72 yrs of age; state resident 5 yrs; licensed attorney 8 yrs

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the South Carolina Constitution.

*If the length of the unexpired term is less than one year, the governor may fill the vacancy.

South Dakota

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Circuit Court:	39

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	5
Circuit Court:	7

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	district appointment; statewide retention
Circuit Court:	circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Circuit Court:	nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	at least 3 yrs
Circuit Court:	8 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Circuit Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Circuit Court:	8 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election after 3 yrs in office
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Circuit Court: hold office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote
Circuit Court: chief justice appoints

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 4 yrs
Circuit Court: at pleasure of chief justice

Qualifications

Supreme Court: U.S. citizen; state resident; voting resident within district; licensed to practice law in state; mandatory retirement age of 70
Circuit Court: U.S. citizen; state resident; voting resident within circuit; licensed to practice law in state; mandatory retirement age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article V](#) of the South Dakota Constitution.

*If more than two candidates file for a judicial position, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the primary election run in the general election. If no more than two candidates file for a judicial position, no primary election is held for the position.

Tennessee

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 5
Court of Appeals: 12
Court of Criminal Appeals: 12
Chancery Court: 35
Criminal Court: 33
Circuit Court: 85
Probate Court: 2

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: 1
Court of Appeals: 1
Court of Criminal Appeals: 1
Chancery Court: 27
Criminal Court: 13
Circuit Court: 31
Probate Court: 1

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
Court of Appeals: statewide
Court of Criminal Appeals: statewide
Chancery Court: district
Criminal Court: district
Circuit Court: district
Probate Court: district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Criminal Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Chancery Court: partisan election*

Criminal Court:	partisan election*
Circuit Court:	partisan election*
Probate Court:	partisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	until next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred
Court of Appeals:	until next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred
Court of Criminal Appeals:	until next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred
Chancery Court:	8 yrs
Criminal Court:	8 yrs
Circuit Court:	8 yrs
Probate Court:	8 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Court of Appeals:	retention election
Court of Criminal Appeals:	retention election
Chancery Court:	reelection
Criminal Court:	reelection
Circuit Court:	reelection
Probate Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	8 yrs
Court of Appeals:	8 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	8 yrs
Chancery Court:	8 yrs
Criminal Court:	8 yrs
Circuit Court:	8 yrs
Probate Court:	8 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Court of Criminal Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Chancery Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Criminal Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Circuit Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Probate Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Court of Appeals:	next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Court of Criminal Appeals:	next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Chancery Court:	next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Criminal Court:	next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Circuit Court:	next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Probate Court:	next general election at least 30 days after vacancy occurred; hold office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
Court of Appeals:	peer vote
Court of Criminal Appeals:	peer vote
Chancery Court:	a presiding judge is selected in each judicial district
Criminal Court:	a presiding judge is selected in each judicial district
Circuit Court:	a presiding judge is selected in each judicial district
Probate Court:	--

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	4 yrs
Court of Appeals:	1 yr
Court of Criminal Appeals:	1 yr
Chancery Court:	1 yr
Criminal Court:	1 yr
Circuit Court:	1 yr
Probate Court:	--

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	authorized to practice law in state; minimum age of 35; state resident 5 yrs
Court of Appeals:	authorized to practice law in state; minimum age of 30; state resident 5 yrs and district resident 1 yr
Court of Criminal Appeals:	authorized to practice law in state; minimum age of 30; state resident 5 yrs and district resident 1 yr
Chancery Court:	authorized to practice law in state; minimum age of 30; state resident 5 yrs and district resident 1 yr
Criminal Court:	authorized to practice law in state; minimum age of 30; state resident 5 yrs and district resident 1 yr
Circuit Court:	authorized to practice law in state; minimum age of 30; state resident 5 yrs and district resident 1 yr
Probate Court:	authorized to practice law in state; minimum age of 30; state resident 5 yrs and district resident 1 yr

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VI](#) of the Tennessee Constitution and Title 17, Chapter 4 of the [Tennessee Code](#).

*Per statute, each county legislative body has the discretion to require elections to be conducted in a nonpartisan manner.

Texas

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	9
Court of Criminal Appeals:	9
Court of Appeals:	80
District Court:	433

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Criminal Appeals:	--
Court of Appeals:	14
District Court:	432

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Criminal Appeals:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	district
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	partisan election
Court of Criminal Appeals:	partisan election
Court of Appeals:	partisan election
District Court:	partisan election

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	4 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	reelection
Court of Criminal Appeals:	reelection
Court of Appeals:	reelection
District Court:	reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	4 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment with senate approval
Court of Criminal Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment with senate approval
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment with senate approval
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment with senate approval

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Court of Criminal Appeals:	next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Court of Appeals:	next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
District Court:	next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	popular election
Court of Criminal Appeals:	popular election
Court of Appeals:	popular election
District Court:	--

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Court of Criminal Appeals:	6 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	--

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	U.S. citizen; state resident; licensed in state; between 35 yrs and 74 yrs of age; 10 yrs practicing lawyer and/or judge*
Court of Criminal Appeals:	U.S. citizen; state resident; licensed in state; between 35 yrs and 74 yrs of age; 10 yrs practicing lawyer and/or judge*
Court of Appeals:	U.S. citizen; state resident; licensed in state; between 35 yrs and 74 yrs of age; 10 yrs practicing lawyer and/or judge*

District Court: U.S. citizen; state resident; licensed in state; between 25 yrs and 74 yrs of age; 4 yrs practicing lawyer and/or state judge; resident of judicial district 2 yrs*

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article 5](#) of the Texas Constitution.

*In 2007, Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing judges who reached mandatory retirement age to finish their term of office.

Utah

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Court of Appeals:	7
District Court:	70

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	--
District Court:	8

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
District Court:	district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	at least 3 yrs
Court of Appeals:	at least 3 yrs
District Court:	at least 3 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	retention election
Court of Appeals:	retention election
District Court:	retention election

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	10 yrs
Court of Appeals:	6 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Court of Appeals:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	first general election more than 3 yrs after appointment
Court of Appeals:	first general election more than 3 yrs after appointment
District Court:	first general election more than 3 yrs after appointment

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	peer vote
Court of Appeals:	peer vote
District Court:	peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	4 yrs
Court of Appeals:	2 yrs
District Court:	2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	U.S. citizen; state resident 5 yrs; 30 yrs of age; admitted to practice law in state; mandatory retirement at 75
Court of Appeals:	U.S. citizen; state resident 3 yrs; 25 yrs of age; admitted to practice law in state; mandatory retirement at 75
District Court:	U.S. citizen; state resident 3 yrs; 25 yrs of age; admitted to practice law in state; mandatory retirement at 75

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VIII](#) of the Utah Constiution.

Vermont

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	5
Superior Court:	12*
District Court:	17*

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Superior Court:	14
District Court:	14

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Superior Court:	statewide
District Court:	statewide

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

Length of Term

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Superior Court:	6 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court:	vote of general assembly
Superior Court:	vote of general assembly
District Court:	vote of general assembly

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Superior Court:	6 yrs
District Court:	6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Superior Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
District Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court:	expiration of unexpired term
Superior Court:	expiration of unexpired term
District Court:	expiration of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission with senate confirmation
Superior Court:	administrative judge for trial courts appointed by supreme court
District Court:	administrative judge for trial courts appointed by supreme court

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court:	6 yrs
Superior Court:	appointed to 4 yr term but may be removed by supreme court
District Court:	appointed to 4 yr term but may be removed by supreme court

Qualifications

Supreme Court:	attorney who has practiced law or served as judge in state for more than 5 of the last 10 yrs; mandatory retirement at 70
Superior Court:	attorney who has practiced law or served as judge in state for more than 5 of the last 10 yrs; mandatory retirement at 70
District Court:	attorney who has practiced law or served as judge in state for more than 5 of last 10 yrs; mandatory retirement at 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Chapter 2, [Sections 32, 33, and 34](#) of the Vermont Constitution.

Each county is also served by two assistant judges, who are chosen in partisan elections and serve four- year terms. Assistant judges have limited power and are not required to be attorneys.

*Superior Court and District Court judges also serve as Family Court judges.

Virginia

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court:	7
Court of Appeals:	11
Circuit Court:	157

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court:	--
Court of Appeals:	--
Circuit Court:	31

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court:	statewide
Court of Appeals:	statewide
Circuit Court:	circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court:	legislative election
Court of Appeals:	legislative election

Circuit Court: legislative election

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 12 yrs

Court of Appeals: 8 yrs

Circuit Court: 8 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: reelection by legislature*

Court of Appeals: reelection by legislature*

Circuit Court: reelection by legislature*

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 12 yrs

Court of Appeals: 8 yrs

Circuit Court: 8 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: legislative election**

Court of Appeals: legislative election**

Circuit Court: legislative election**

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: **

Court of Appeals: **

Circuit Court: **

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote

Court of Appeals: peer vote

Circuit Court: peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 4 yrs

Court of Appeals: 4 yrs

Circuit Court: 2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court: state resident; state bar member 5 yrs; maximum age of 70

Court of Appeals: state resident; state bar member 5 yrs; maximum age of 70

Circuit Court: state and circuit resident; state bar member 5 yrs; maximum age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VI, Section 7](#) of the Virginia Constitution.

*The courts of justice committees of the house of delegates and the senate interview candidates who seek reelection. Then the full house and senate vote.

**When the general assembly is in session, vacancies are filled through legislative election. When the legislature is not in session, the governor fills vacancies through appointment. Appointees must then be elected at the next legislative session.

Washington

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 9

Court of Appeals: 22

Superior Court: 186

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: -
 Court of Appeals: 9
 Superior Court: 30

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide*
 Court of Appeals: district
 Superior Court: county

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: nonpartisan election**
 Court of Appeals: nonpartisan election**
 Superior Court: nonpartisan election**

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
 Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
 Superior Court: 4 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: reelection
 Court of Appeals: reelection
 Superior Court: reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 6 yrs
 Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
 Superior Court: 4 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment
 Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment
 Superior Court: gubernatorial appointment

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next general election; successor holds office for remainder of unexpired term
 Court of Appeals: next general election; successor holds office for remainder of unexpired term
 Superior Court: next general election; successor holds office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote
 Court of Appeals: peer vote
 Superior Court: peer vote***

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 4 yrs
 Court of Appeals: 1 yr
 Superior Court: at least 1 yr***

Qualifications

Supreme Court: licensed to practice in state; retirement age is 75
 Court of Appeals: 5 yrs practice in state; resident of district at least 1 yr
 Superior Court: licensed to practice in state; retirement age is 75

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article IV of the [Washington Constitution](#) and [Chapter 2.06](#) of the Revised Code of Washington.

*Currently, the supreme court has no justices from eastern Washington, while six of the justices are from the Seattle-Tacoma area. Various proposals have been made in the legislature for geographically based election schemes.

**Judicial candidates run in a primary election. If no candidate receives a majority of the vote, the names of the top two vote getters are placed on the general election ballot.

***Each superior court district may establish local rules for the appointment and term of the chief judge. However, the chief judge must be selected by a vote of his/her peers and the term must be at least one year.

West Virginia

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court of Appeals: 5
Circuit Court: 66

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court of Appeals: --
Circuit Court: 31

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court of Appeals: statewide
Circuit Court: circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court of Appeals: partisan election
Circuit Court: partisan election

Length of Term

Supreme Court of Appeals: 12 yrs
Circuit Court: 8 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court of Appeals: reelection
Circuit Court: reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court of Appeals: partisan election
Circuit Court: partisan election

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
Circuit Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court of Appeals: next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term
Circuit Court: next general election; hold office for remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court of Appeals: peer vote
Circuit Court: peer vote

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court of Appeals: 1 yr
Circuit Court: varies by circuit

Qualifications

Supreme Court of Appeals: state citizen 5 yrs; minimum age of 30; 10 yrs practice of law
Circuit Court: state citizen 5 yrs; circuit resident; minimum age of 30; 5 yrs practice of law

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by [Article VIII](#) of the West Virginia Constitution.

Wisconsin

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 7
Court of Appeals: 16
Circuit Court: 241

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --
Court of Appeals: 4
Circuit Court: 69

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
Court of Appeals: district
Circuit Court: circuit

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: nonpartisan election*
Court of Appeals: nonpartisan election*
Circuit Court: nonpartisan election*

Length of Term

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
Circuit Court: 6 yrs

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: reelection
Court of Appeals: reelection
Circuit Court: reelection

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 10 yrs
Court of Appeals: 6 yrs
Circuit Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment**
Court of Appeals: gubernatorial appointment**
Circuit Court: gubernatorial appointment**

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next spring in which no other justice is to be elected (if the vacancy occurs between Dec. 1 and the spring election, appointees stand for election in the next spring election)***
Court of Appeals: next spring election in which no other judge from that district is to be elected (if the vacancy occurs between Dec. 1 and the spring election, appointees stand for election in the next spring)***

Circuit Court: next spring election (if the vacancy occurs between Dec. 1 and the spring election, appointees stand for election in the next spring election)***

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: seniority
Court of Appeals: supreme court appoints
Circuit Court: supreme court appoints

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: indefinite
Court of Appeals: 3 yrs
Circuit Court: 2 yrs

Qualifications

Supreme Court: qualified elector of the state; licensed to practice law in state 5 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70
Court of Appeals: qualified elector of the state; licensed to practice law in state 5 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70
Circuit Court: qualified elector of circuit; licensed to practice law in state 5 yrs; mandatory retirement age of 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article VII of the [Wisconsin Constitution](#).

*If there are more than two candidates for a judicial position, a nonpartisan primary election is held. The top two vote getters in the primary compete in the general election.

**Governor Doyle established by executive order an [advisory council on judicial selection](#) to screen applicants for interim judicial vacancies and recommend qualified candidates. The committee is composed of nine attorneys appointed by the governor. The governor is not bound by the council's recommendations.

***If the vacancy occurs between December 1 and the spring election, appointees stand for election in the next spring election.

Wyoming

Number of Judgeships

Supreme Court: 5
District Court: 22

Number of Districts/Circuits

Supreme Court: --
District Court: 9

Geographic Basis for Selection

Supreme Court: statewide
District Court: district

Method of Selection (full term)

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission
District Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

Length of Term

Supreme Court: at least one year
District Court: at least 1 yr

Method of Retention

Supreme Court: retention election

District Court: retention election

Length of Subsequent Terms

Supreme Court: 8 yrs

District Court: 6 yrs

Method of Filling Interim Vacancies

Supreme Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

District Court: gubernatorial appointment from nominating commission

When Interim Judges Stand for Election/Appointment

Supreme Court: next general election 1 yr after appointment; if retained, serve remainder of unexpired term

District Court: next general election 1 yr after appointment; if retained, serve remainder of unexpired term

Selection of Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: peer vote

District Court: --

Term of Office for Chief Judge/Justice

Supreme Court: 4 yrs

District Court: --

Qualifications

Supreme Court: U.S. citizen; state resident 3 yrs; 9 yrs legal experience; minimum age of 30; mandatory retirement at 70

District Court: U.S. citizen; state resident 2 yrs; minimum age of 28; mandatory retirement at 70

Selection and retention methods and term lengths are prescribed by Article 5 of the [Wyoming Constitution](#).

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