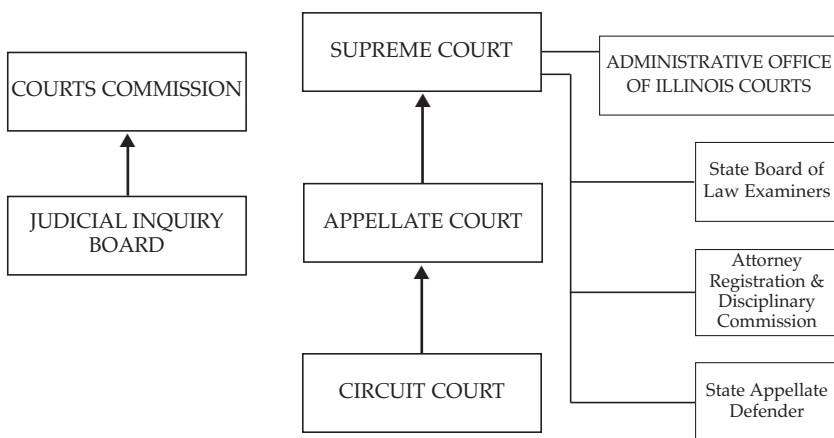


JUDICIAL BRANCH



The **Supreme Court**, highest tribunal in Illinois, has general administrative and supervisory authority over all courts in the state. The Supreme Court hears appeals from the Circuit and Appellate Courts and may exercise original jurisdiction in cases relating to revenue, mandamus, prohibition or habeas corpus.

The **Appellate Court** hears appeals from administrative agencies and the Circuit Courts (the unified trial courts of Illinois). The **Circuit Court** is comprised of circuit and associate judges. There are 22 judicial circuits in Illinois; each has one chief judge elected by the circuit judges. The chief judge has general administrative authority in the circuit, subject to the overall administrative authority of the Supreme Court. Circuit judges may hear any case assigned to them by the chief judge. Associate judges may not preside over felony cases unless authorized by the Supreme Court. Circuit judges are elected for six-year terms and appoint associate judges, in accordance with Supreme Court rules, who serve four-year terms.

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

The **Illinois Courts Commission** — composed of one Supreme Court justice, two Appellate Court judges, two Circuit Court judges and two citizens — has the authority, after notice and public hearing, to discipline judges for willful misconduct in office, persistent failure to perform duties, or other conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice or that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or to suspend with or without pay, or retire any member of the judiciary who is physically or mentally unable to perform his or her duties.

A **Judicial Inquiry Board**, created by the 1970 Illinois Constitution, has the authority to conduct investigations, receive or initiate complaints concerning any member of the judiciary, and file complaints with the Courts Commission.