

Federal and California Court Systems Compared

The U.S. Constitution provides for three levels at which court cases can be heard in both the federal and state governments. Federal judges are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. They hold office for life. California State court judges are selected by appointment for a given number of years and by election.

Courts of Last Resort	
<p>U.S. Supreme Court A party may ask the U.S. Supreme Court to review a decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals.</p>	<p>California State Supreme Court A party may ask the State Supreme Court to review a decision of the District Courts of Appeal.</p>
Appellate Courts	
<p>U.S. Courts of Appeal Parties dissatisfied with a decision may appeal to one of nine Circuit Courts of Appeal. (Californians file appeals with the ninth circuit.)</p>	<p>State Courts of Appeal Parties dissatisfied with a decision may appeal to one of six District Courts of Appeal.</p>
Trial Courts	
<p>U.S. District Courts The Constitution gives Congress the authority to create the federal courts. There are 94 federal trial courts. (California has four federal courts: the Northern, Eastern, Central, and Southern districts.)</p>	<p>Superior Courts of California The California Constitution establishes the state courts. There are 58 Superior Courts in California, one in every county.</p>

