

# The U.S. Court of Appeals

## What Is It?

The **U.S. Court of Appeals** is a very important part of the court system. It's one step **below the Supreme Court** and is sometimes called the "**Appellate Court.**"

There are **13 Courts of Appeals** in the United States. Each one covers a group of states, called a **circuit**. For example, the **Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals** includes the states of **Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin**.

## What Does It Do?

The Court of Appeals doesn't hold regular trials. Instead, it reviews cases that have already been decided by a **district court** (the trial court).

If someone thinks the district court made a mistake, they can **appeal**, which means they ask the Court of Appeals to look at the case again.

Judges in the Court of Appeals:

- **Don't use juries**
- **Don't hear new evidence**
- **Read written arguments and listen to lawyers explain their sides**

Then, they decide whether the lower court's decision should be:

- **Upheld** (kept the same)
- **Reversed** (changed)
- **Sent back** to the lower court for another trial

## Who Works There?

Each Court of Appeals has a group of **judges**, usually about **6 to 30** judges, depending on the size of the circuit.

Cases are usually decided by **three judges** working together. These judges are **appointed by the President** and **approved by the Senate**.

## Why Is It Important?

The Court of Appeals is important because it helps make sure that **laws are applied fairly** across the country. It also helps the Supreme Court by handling most appeals, since the Supreme Court can only take a small number of cases each year.