South Carolina Court System

South Carolina Supreme Court

- 5 justices
- Justices elected to 10-year terms by General Assembly
- Court has to hear appeals in 7 classes of cases and has discretion in others
- Appellate Court with final authority on matters regarding the South Carolina Constitution & state law

South Carolina Court of Appeals

- 9 judges divided into panels of 3
- Judges elected to six-year terms by General Assembly
- Court reviews appeals brought before it not reserved to the Supreme Court
- Appellate jurisdiction
- South Carolina's error-correcting court

South Carolina Circuit Courts

- 47 judges (number of judges per circuit depends on caseload)
- There are 34 resident judges and 13 at-large judges
- Judges elected to six-year terms by the General Assembly
- There are 16 circuits, plus 13 at-large circuit court judges
- Trial courts have original jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases

South Carolina Family Court

- Court established as sole forum for the hearing of all cases concerning marriage, divorce, legal separation, custody, visitation rights, termination of parental rights, adoption, support, alimony, division of marital property, and change of name
- Court also generally has exclusive jurisdiction over minors under the age of seventeen alleged to have violated any state law or municipal ordinance; serious criminal charges may be transferred to the Circuit Court

South Carolina Municipal Courts

- More than 200 judges in over 200 municipalities (not all municipalities choose to have a municipal court)
- All municipal judges are required to complete a training program or pass certification or recertification examinations, or both, within one year of taking office
- Exclusive jurisdiction over ordinance violations
- Each municipal judge must pass a recertification examination within eight years after passing the initial certification examination and at least once every eight years thereafter

MENTAL/SUBSTANCE ABUSE COMMITMENTS COMMITTEE ON CHARACTER AND FITNESS MINOR SETTLEMENTS (UNDER \$10,000) BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS BOARD OF MAGISTRATE AND MUNICIPAL JUDGES CERTIFICATION GUARDIANSHIPS/CONSERVATORSHIPS JOINT COMMISSION ON ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT COMMISSION ON CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION & SPECIALIZATION COMMISSION ON LAWYER CONDUCT OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL REFERRALS FROM CIRCUIT COURT BOARD OF ARBITRATOR AND MEDIATOR CERTIFICATION ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES BOARD OF LAW EXAMINERS Master-In-Equity PROBATE COURT JURISDICTION OVER APPEALS NOT WITHIN EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OF THE SUPREME COURT EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OVER CERTAIN APPEALS GENERAL SESSIONS (CRIMINAL) STATE GRAND JURIES & ABORTIONS FOR MINORS) (GENERALLY UP TO 30 DAYS AND/OR \$500) CERTIORARI TO REVIEW POST-CONVICTION RELIEF CASES PUBLIC BONDED INDEBTEDNESS, CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES TO STATUTES AND ORDINANCES, ELECTIONS, ORDERS LIMITING INVESTIGATIONS OF DEATH PENALTY, PUBLIC UTILITY RATES CIRCUIT COURT GENERAL JURISDICTION CERTIORARI TO REVIEW DECISIONS MUNICIPAL COURTS OF THE COURT OF APPEALS COURT OF APPEALS MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES ORIGINAL JURISDICTION SUPREME COURT TRAFFIC OFFENSES COMMOM PLEAS (CIVIL) (GENERALLY UP TO 30 DAYS ANDIOR \$500) DEFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE OF FINANCE & PERSONNEL OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL MAGISTRATE COURTS DOMESTIC & JUVENILE CASES **EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION** CHIEF JUSTICE FAMILY COURT CIVIL TO \$7,500.00

SOUTH CAROLINA JUDICIAL SYSTEM