

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

- 51 judges (number of judges per circuit depends on caseload) – *effective 5/31/16*
- Judges elected to six-year terms by the General Assembly
- There are 16 circuits, plus 16 at-large circuit court judges
- Trial courts have original jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases

South Carolina Family Court

- 57 judges – *effective 5/31/16*
- 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
- There are 16 circuits, plus 6 at-large family court judges.

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