

North Carolina's Judicial Branch

What article in the NC Constitution sets up the state judicial branch? **Article IV**

North Carolina Supreme Court

Who serves on this court?

Seven justices- one is chief justice

Explain how are they chosen and what is their term?

Elected for six year terms

Explain the types of cases do they hear?

Majority must agree in decisions

Cases being appealed from lower courts- not decided will go to appeals court

Appeals for all death sentences

Interpret the state's constitutions and laws

****Final decision unless involves the U.S. Constitution, supervise other state courts**

North Carolina Court of Appeals

How many judges make up this court?

15 appeals court judges- hear cases in groups of three called panels- at least two of the three must agree to make a decision

Explain how are they chosen and what is their term?

Elected statewide for eight year terms

Explain the types of cases do they hear?

Hear the majority of cases appealed from the state's trial courts

North Carolina Superior Courts

Describe the cases that are heard in Superior Court.

Civil cases involving more than \$25,000 and felonies

Misdemeanor appeals from district

Take longer than district court cases

North Carolina District Courts

Describe the cases that are heard in District Court.

Juvenile law, divorce and family law, mental hospital commitments, traffic violations, civil cases below \$25,000, misdemeanors, initial hearing for felonies

<p>Explain the role of the judges in this court (how they are chosen and their terms, jobs, etc.): Voters in each district elect judges for eight year terms Travel through entire district hearing cases in the counties within the district- rotate every six months **Governor appoints 15 special superior judges to serve as needed</p> <p>What is the jury like in Superior Court? Jury of 12 in criminal cases Usually waived for civil cases</p> <p>How many divisions and districts are there? There are eight judicial divisions</p>	<p>Explain the role of the judges in this court (how they are chosen and their terms, jobs, etc.): Elected to four year terms, must live in the district they are elected to serve</p> <p>What is the jury like in District Court? No jury- decided by a judge</p> <p>How many divisions and districts are there? Court districts- 41 districts County seat of each county</p>
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Explain the role of the following court officials in the NC Court System?

- **Clerk of Court:** **Elected by voters in each county- Duties include establishing the validity of wills and conducting the sale of property to pay an owner's debts (foreclosure)**
- **Magistrate:** **Appointed by resident superior court judge with greatest seniority and supervised by chief district court judge- Issue search warrants and arrest warrants**
- **District Attorney:** **Elected by voters in court districts- represents the state in all criminal cases in district and superior courts- also represents that state in juvenile delinquency proceedings in district court**
- **Public Defender:** **Full time employee responsible to represent extremely low-income or indigent (poor) persons accused of a crime- Lawyers provided for those accused of a crime who are unable to pay for their own defense**