Research Guide: Federal and California Court Structure
Law Library for San Bernardino County

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“The Supreme Court is the highest court in the federal Judiciary... The United States Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice of the United States and eight associate justices.”
Source: uscourts.gov

“Within limits set by Congress and the Constitution, the district courts have jurisdiction to hear nearly all categories of federal cases, including both civil and criminal.”
Source: uscourts.gov

Flow Chart
Federal Court Structure

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

U.S. COURTS OF APPEAL
12 Regional Circuit Courts of Appeals
1 U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

TRIAL COURTS

U.S. District Courts
94 Judicial Districts
U.S. Bankruptcy Courts

U.S. Court of International Trade

U.S. Court of Federal Claims

Federal Courts and Other Entities Outside the Judicial Branch
Military Courts (Trial and Appellate)
Court of Veteran's Appeals
U.S. Tax Court
Federal administrative agencies and boards

“A court of appeals hears appeals from the district courts located within its circuit, as well as appeals from decisions of federal administrative agencies... Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has nationwide jurisdiction to hear appeals in specialized cases...”
Source: uscourts.gov

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California Court Structure

**SUPREME COURT**
1 Chief Justice and 6 Associate Justices

**COURTS OF APPEAL**
6 Districts

- First District
  San Francisco
  5 Divisions

- Second District
  Los Angeles, Ventura
  8 Divisions

- Third District
  Sacramento

- Fourth District
  San Diego, Riverside, Santa Ana
  3 Divisions

- Fifth District
  Fresno

- Sixth District
  San Jose

**TRIAL COURTS**

- Superior Court
  Civil: Over $25,000
  Criminal: Original jurisdiction in all causes except those given by statute to other trial courts.
  Appeals: Court of Appeals or Supreme Court

- Superior Court
  Limited Civil
  Civil: $25,000 or less
  Small Claims: $10,000 or less*
  Criminal: Misdemeanors
  Appeals: Appellate Department of Supreme Court

*California Courts - Small Claims Basics

**Works Cited**


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