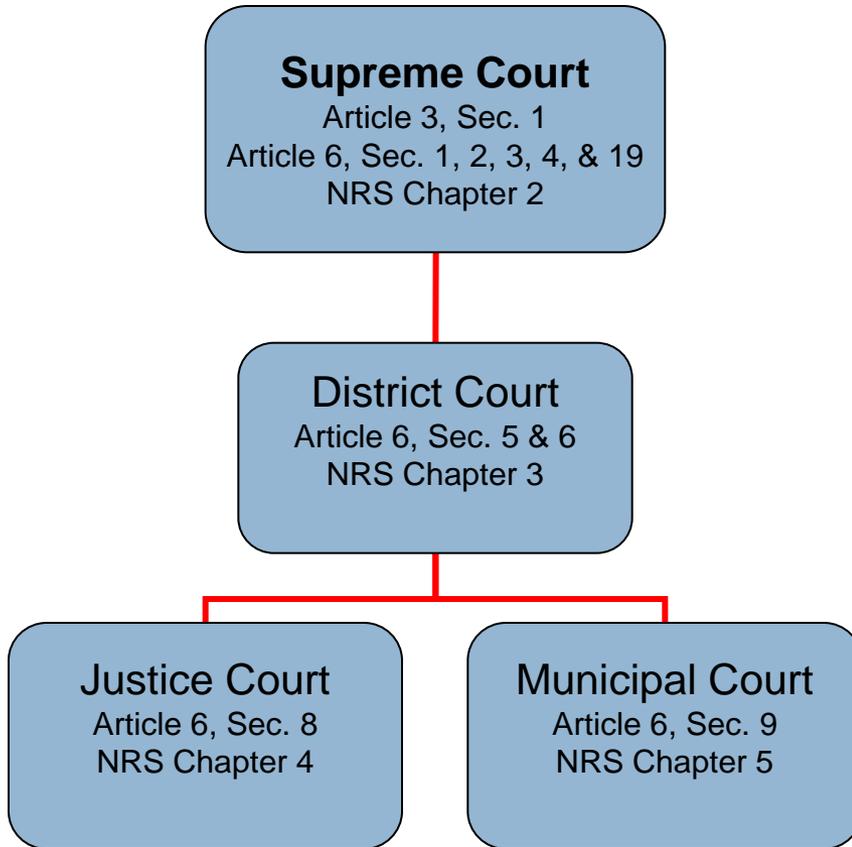




Nevada's Judicial Branch: An Overview

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January 19, 2011

Judicial Branch Organization



The Constitution provides for the establishment of the Judicial Branch. The Judicial Branch resolves both public and private disputes by applying laws established through the legislative process and based upon prior state Supreme Court decisions.

Supreme Court

(7 Justices)

- **The Supreme Court** is the State's highest court and ultimate judicial authority. Its decisions become the law of the land. The Justices rule on appeals from the trial courts (District Courts), determining if legal errors were committed in court cases or whether verdicts and judgments were fair and correct. The Justices sit in panels of three for most cases, or as the full court (*en banc* panel) to decide the most significant legal issues.
- More than 2,000 cases per year are filed with the Supreme Court, primarily appeals from District Court trials, judgments, or orders.

Supreme Court of Nevada

- The Supreme Court is the administrative head of Nevada's legal system. The Justices oversee the courts and issue rules governing everything from court procedure to the ethical and professional conduct of judges and attorneys.
- The Supreme Court can also create commissions and committees to study the judicial system and recommend changes and improvements.

Commissions and Committees Created by the Supreme Court

- **Article 6 Commission**, comprised of private citizens, judges, and attorneys. Its long-term goal is to look at matters affecting the Judiciary and recommend improvements. Recently the Commission has addressed judicial discipline, campaign contributions, and specialty courts.
- **Court Improvement Program for the Protection and Permanency of Dependent Children**, better known as the CIP Select Committee, develops annual strategic plans to guide meaningful change throughout the child welfare court system.
- **Commission on the Preservation, Access, and Sealing of Court Records**, exams the way court records and evidence are stored, retained, and ultimately destroyed.
- **Access to Justice Commission**, evaluates a broad spectrum of issues associated with providing civil legal services to persons of limited means in Nevada. Efforts include the Video-Conferencing Project to facilitate remote court appearances, creation of the Civil Law Self-Help Center in Las Vegas, and the Las Vegas Senior Citizens Law Project.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court includes:

- **Clerk of the Court**, who is responsible for all Supreme Court files and documents. The Clerk of the Court manages the Court's caseload and dockets, coordinates public hearings, and releases the Court's decisions.
- **Administrative Office of the Courts**, (AOC) which performs all administrative functions for the Supreme Court and provides support services to the trial courts in areas such as training and technology. In 2009, the AOC was also tasked by the Legislature with administering the Foreclosure Mediation Program.
- **Nevada Law Library**, which houses law books and other documents at the Supreme Court. The Library is used by the Court's law clerks, attorneys, and the public.

District Court

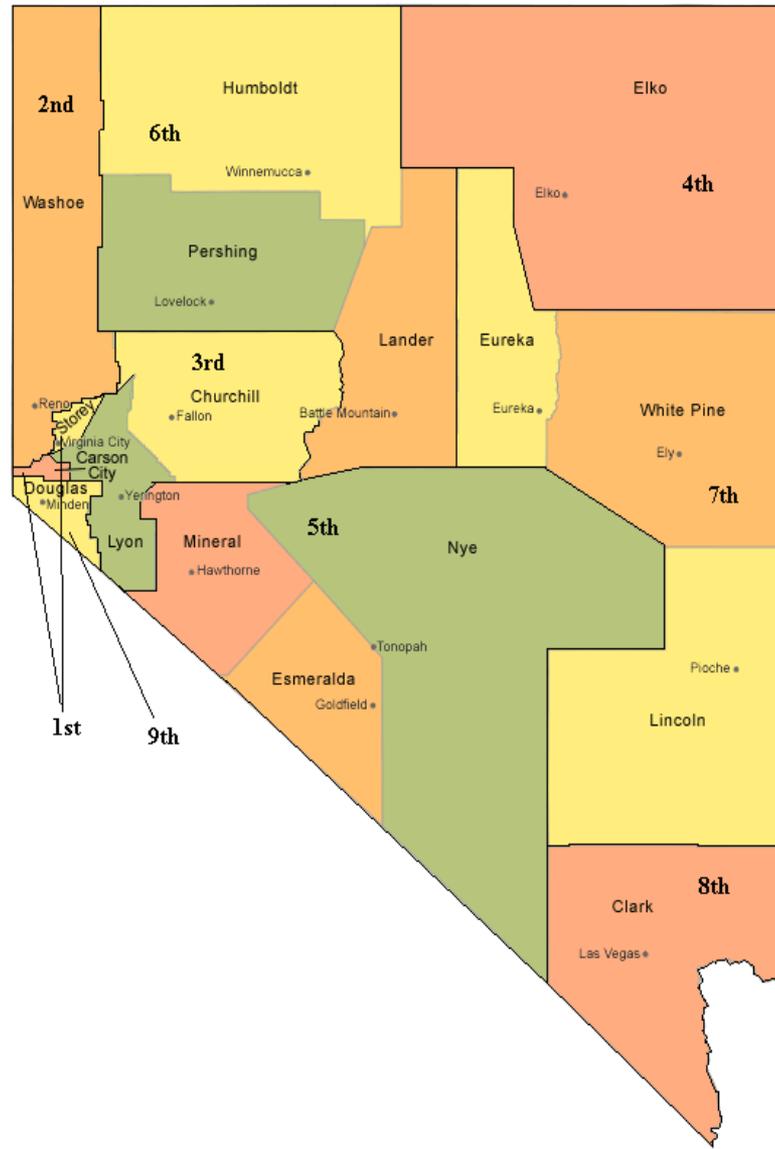
(82 Judges)

- **District Courts** are trial courts of general jurisdiction, meaning they hear criminal, civil, family, and juvenile cases.
 - Criminal cases include felony and gross-misdemeanor matters.
 - Civil cases include disputes over \$10,000.
 - Family and Juvenile cases are defined by the parties involved in the action or proceedings.

District Courts

- Nevada's 9 Judicial Districts encompass all 17 counties, each of which maintains a District Court and provides court staff. Five of the Districts cover multiple counties and the Judges in these districts regularly travel within these counties to hear cases.
- The Second (Washoe County) and Eighth (Clark County) District Courts are the busiest in the State, with the highest caseloads, greatest numbers of judges, and widest variety specialized court programs.

Nevada's District Courts



Justice Courts

(63 Justices)

- **Justice Courts** are county courts that handle misdemeanor criminal matters, traffic cases, and preliminary hearings and arraignments for gross misdemeanors and felonies. Justice Courts also hear traffic cases, civil matters up to \$10,000, protection orders, and landlord/tenant cases. Justice Courts are referred to as limited jurisdiction courts.
- There are 43 Justice Courts with 63 Justices of the Peace, 9 of whom serve as both Justice of the Peace and Municipal Court Judge.
- District Court has appellate jurisdiction over Justice Court.

Municipal Courts

(30 Judges)

- **Municipal Courts** are city courts that handle misdemeanors and traffic cases in incorporated communities. Municipal Courts are referred to as limited jurisdiction courts.
- There are 18 Municipal Courts with 30 Judges, 9 of whom serve as both Municipal Court Judge and Justice of the Peace.
- District Court has appellate jurisdiction over Municipal Court.

Specialty Court Programs

- **Specialty Courts** are criminal problem-solving courts designed to address the root causes of criminal activity. They coordinate efforts of the judiciary, prosecution, defense, law enforcement, treatment, and applicable social services.
- The goal is to break the revolving door of crime by supporting participants in overcoming the habits and issues that often cause them to become habitual criminals.
- Specialty Courts increase the probability of the participant's success by providing ancillary services such as counseling, mental health treatment, family therapy, job skills training, and other services.

Nevada's Specialty Courts

- The first Specialty Court established in Nevada was a drug court started in 1992 in Clark County. It was the nation's 5th drug court.
- Currently, Nevada has 42 Specialty Courts operating in all judicial districts. There are 26 urban programs and 16 rural programs.
- The 42 Specialty Courts are comprised of 17 adult drug courts, 2 family drug courts, 3 mental health courts, 5 juvenile drug courts, 2 prison re-entry courts, 3 felony DUI courts, 3 DUI courts, 4 alcohol and other drug courts, 2 habitual offender courts, and 1 female prostitution court.



QUESTIONS?