

Organization of the Federal Court System

The federal judicial branch of government is composed of the federal courts. The United States Supreme Court is the highest court in the federal system and has the last word on issues of federal law and the federal Constitution. The courts just below the U.S. Supreme Court, the intermediate federal courts, are known as circuit courts of appeal. There are 13 federal circuit courts in the country. Tennessee is within the jurisdiction of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Thus, federal cases originating in Tennessee are appealed to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. The federal trial court in which federal lawsuits originate is the federal district court. Tennessee is divided into three federal districts -- western, middle and eastern.

Federal courts may constitutionally hear only two types of cases: cases involving a federal law question and cases involving citizens of two different states when the amount in dispute is greater than \$75,000.

