HOW DOES A CASE REACH THE **WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT?**



A petitioner may bring a civil case, or the government may commence a criminal case, in the circuit court. There are 261 circuit courts in Wisconsin. After the proceedings, the circuit court will rule in favor of one party. The losing party may file an appeal with the Court of Appeals.



The Court of Appeals is an error-correcting court. It is made up of 16 judges divided into four districts. The Court of Appeals will review and rule in favor of one party. The losing party here may file a Petition for Review. On rare occasions, the Court of Appeals will request certification from the Wisconsin Supreme Court.



PETITION TO BYPASS

After filing an appeal, a party may file a Petition to Bypass, asking the Wisconsin Supreme Court to take the case directly, bypassing the Court of Appeals. It takes a vote of at least four Justices to take a case on Petition to Bypass.



FOR REVIEW

A Petition for Review is when the losing party in a Court of Appeals case asks the Wisconsin Supreme Court to hear the case. It takes a vote of at least three Justices to take a case on a Petition for Review.



REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATION

Certification means the Court of Appeals asks the Supreme Court to decide a case instead of deciding it themselves — often because the case involves an important legal question best handled by the Supreme Court. It takes a vote of at least four Justices to take a case on Certification.

The petitioner may ask the

Wisconsin Supreme Court to

This means that the case has not been heard by any other court. Because the Supreme Court is not a fact-finding tribunal, all parties in the case must agree on the facts.

take Original Action in a case.





WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT

At oral argument, each side is allowed 30 minutes to present their case. Oral argument supplements and clarifies arguments the lawyers have already set forth in written submissions called "briefs." Following each day's oral arguments, the Court meets in conference to discuss and take a preliminary vote on the cases argued that day. After the vote, a Justice is assigned by lot to write the majority opinion. Opinions are posted on the Wisconsin Court System's website on the morning of their release at www.wicourts.gov.