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The United States courts of appeals or circuit courts are the intermediate appellate courts of the United States federal court system. A court of appeals decides appeals from the district courts within its federal judicial circuit, and in some instances from other designated federal courts and administrative agencies. An appellate court, commonly called an appeals court, court of appeals (American English), appeal court (British English), court of second instance or second instance court, is any court of law that is empowered to hear an appeal of a trial court or other lower tribunal. A Acquittal . A jury verdict that a criminal defendant is not guilty, or the finding of a judge that the evidence is insufficient to support a conviction. Welcome. Welcome to the official website for the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. The First Circuit includes the Districts of Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico and Rhode Island.