

Mission Statement

The mission of *Our Courts Wisconsin* is to support and further the State Bar of Wisconsin goal of increasing public knowledge of the importance, value, and relevance of the court system in Wisconsin by providing non-partisan informational programs.

Policy Statement

Our Courts Wisconsin presentations and presenters will take no position on any court case, legislation, ballot issue, or proposed change to the court system and will not provide legal advice.



Program Requests or Questions

Contact the State Bar of Wisconsin
Public Education Program Manager
at (608) 250-6191, or email
PubEdCoordinator@WisBar.org.

Increasing public knowledge of the importance, value, and relevance of the judicial system



Getting to know the Third Branch

You may not realize how important a role the courts and the legal system play in our constitutional democracy.

For one thing, the judicial branch is a key component of the three-part system of checks and balances we have in our government, along with the legislative and executive branches — also known as Congress and the President.

For another, the State Bar of Wisconsin believes that a neutral, fair, and impartial justice system is vital to the health of our state, both individually and as a community.

Therefore, the Public Education Committee of the State Bar of Wisconsin has launched a program called *Our Courts Wisconsin* aimed at furthering public knowledge and understanding the courts and the legal system.

Free Community Presentations

Our Courts Wisconsin programs are available free of charge to community groups. If your organization needs a speaker to provide nonpartisan, knowledgeable and informative facts about the legal system, please contact us.

Knowledgeable Presenters

Volunteer teams of lawyers and judges have worked together to develop engaging programs and establish a group of trained speakers for *Our Courts Wisconsin*.

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Information about the State Bar of Wisconsin *Our Courts* program can also be found on the State Bar web site at wisbar.org/OurCourts.

Our Courts Wisconsin Programs

Lincoln's Legacy — This essay was written by Hon. Russell E. Carparelli, a Colorado Court of Appeals judge since 2003, with the collaboration of the Colorado Judicial Commission and *Our Courts Colorado*. This essay shares a personal side of Abraham Lincoln and offers attendees an understanding of how Lincoln guided our nation to move closer to the ideals of equality and liberty. We do not speak of Abraham Lincoln as one of our nation's Founders, yet we owe him an incalculable debt of gratitude for his commitment to the principles of equality and liberty stated in the Declaration of Independence and for transforming the Constitution to give those principles the power of law.

Myths and Realities in Wisconsin's Courts — This humorous presentation will help audiences understand the judicial system through excerpts from various pop culture depictions of court proceedings. The entertainment industry often presents an unrealistic and unflattering view of what happens in the courtroom, and this program aims to correct some of the misinformation. From Judge Judy to John Grisham, we'll be separating myth from reality and learning more about the court system along the way.

Understanding the Criminal Court Process: Protecting the Rights of Wisconsin Citizens — This basic level presentation will provide an overview of the criminal court proceedings. The focus is to review the most common terms used and how the process works. Topics may include discussion on: 1) types of charges; 2) the role of the judge, district attorney, public defender, jury; 3) the various stages of a criminal proceeding, from pre-trial hearings to plea bargaining or trial to sentencing; 4) the preservation of rights throughout the process; and 5) appropriate courtroom behavior.

Understanding the Importance of Your Court System: Courts Serving Wisconsin Citizens — Courts are an essential part of our democracy and provide balance in our government. Fair and impartial courts are the cornerstone of our system of justice. This interactive program will provide an overview of the Wisconsin Court System, along with information to help attendees understand the role of courts in society and the values on which they are built including accountability; the rule of law; and equal justice for all.

