

Iowa Judicial Branch Building Visitor Guide



Welcome to the home of the Iowa Supreme Court, the Iowa Court of Appeals, and State Court Administration. This guide is designed to direct you through the public areas of the building and to provide information about the building's special features.

Design Features

The five-story, 124,000 square foot facility is a model of efficiency, durability, and state of the art technology, with a stately look that evokes a sense of permanence. The floor plan is organized around two main components: a formal wing and an office wing. The formal wing contains the ceremonial and public spaces of the building such as the rotunda and courtrooms. The office wing wraps around a glass-covered atrium designed to filter natural light into its core.

The building incorporates classical design elements such as a dome-capped rotunda, a curved pediment, vaulted ceilings, and columns, applied in a modern, simplified style, yet in harmony with the Capitol and the Ola Babcock Miller Building. Traditional building materials including limestone, granite, bronze, copper, and marble, provide durability and add to the building's timeless image.

The ornamental details of the building are simple but elegant. Walls of buff colored marble serve as a graceful backdrop to the rotunda floor, a colorful marble spiral. Some of the decorative details inside the building mimic designs in the Capitol such as the embossed patterns around the rotunda openings and the medallions in the courtroom rails. Stencil patterns in the Capitol influenced the carved stone pediment above the balcony.

The bronze panels above the front entry and balcony doors include an oak branch and a prairie rose. The branch of the oak tree, the state tree, symbolizes the stability of the courts, while the prairie rose, the state flower, symbolizes the compassionate side of justice. The abstract scales of justice in the panel above the balcony doors reflects the balance of stability and compassion.

Historic Allegorical Murals

Murals that once decorated the ceiling of the Supreme Court courtroom in the Capitol, now hang in important public rooms in the Judicial Branch Building. The murals were removed from the old courtroom in 1904 during a fire in the Capitol. In 1999, the Iowa Supreme Court retained an art conservator to remove the murals from the walls of the Ola Babcock Miller Building, where they had been for 100 years, and prepare them for installation in the Judicial Branch Building, which was in the design stage.

Columbia (Main floor south of rotunda)

The largest mural is entitled "Columbia." Columbia, the feminine embodiment of the United States, sits on a throne, with Justice to the right and Iowa to the left. The patrons of the states with their children, the territories, pay homage to Columbia and Justice.

Justice (Main floor west of rotunda)

In this mural, Justice sits holding a scale and a sword. Columbia stands to the right of Justice, ready to defend her. The woman standing on the left side of Justice is relieved because Justice has handed down a decision in the woman's favor. The woman in the left corner is explaining the laws to her child, while the woman in the right corner is unhappy that Justice ruled against her.

At both ends of this mural one can see faint, ghost-like images, which reveal how the artist changed the painting before it was finished. Over time, the top layer of paint has become translucent en-

abling the earlier paint images to show through. This phenomenon is called "pentimenti."

Ceres (Main floor, far west conference room)

The mural "Ceres" is located in the large conference room at the far west end of the main floor. Ceres is the goddess of agriculture. This mural celebrates Iowa's greatness as an agricultural state.

Six Genii (3rd and 4th floor courtrooms) Each of these murals contains a cherubic looking child called a "genius" – a guardian spirit in Roman mythology. Four of the genii are engaged in agricultural tasks: one is harvesting potatoes, another is shearing sheep, a third is binding grain, and another is near a plow. Another is working metal and a sixth is weaving a basket. These paintings encircled the "Ceres" mural when it was in the Capitol.

Justice and Peace (4th floor courtroom)

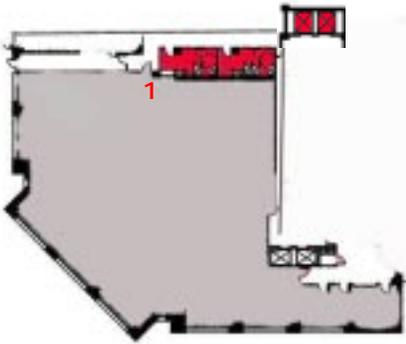
Located in the supreme court courtroom, this mural depicts Justice and Peace seated together on a throne atop of clouds. Justice holds a scale in one hand and a sword in her other hand, poised ready to strike. Peace, holding a palm frond looks on serenely. They bring prosperity, culture, and happiness to the land, as symbolized by the fruits and vegetables spilling from the horn of plenty and the musical instruments. In the upper left corner, a Zeus-like figure is ready to cast down lightning bolts. His face resembles President Ulysses S. Grant.

Scott's Grave

While you're here take time to walk around outside and enjoy the park-like setting. Perched on a hill behind the building you'll find the grave of Alexander Scott, the man who donated the land for the Old Brick Capitol, now the site of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument.

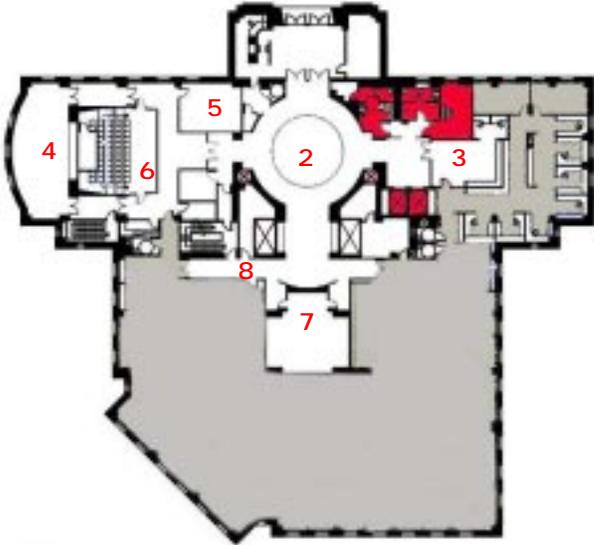
For information about the Iowa Judicial Branch visit www.judicial.state.ia.us





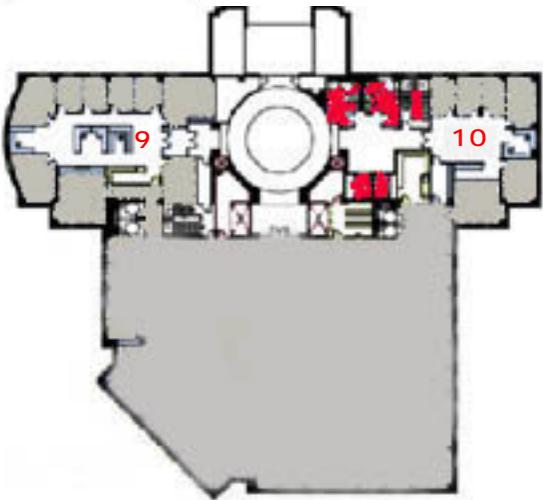
Ground Floor

(#1) The Iowa Court Information Office is responsible for the information technology needs of the state court system.



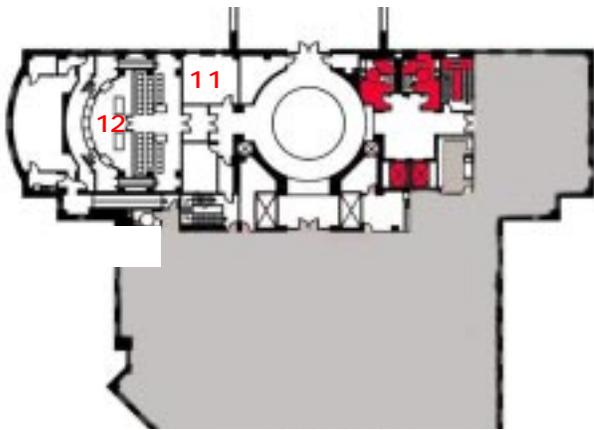
First Floor

(#2) The rotunda, with its colorful spiral floor of inlaid marble, is the major focal point of the building interior. The coffered dome sits 105 feet above the rotunda floor and is 40 feet in diameter. Just east of the rotunda is the public lobby with elevators and restrooms nearby. (#3) The clerk's office is responsible for maintaining all of the records of cases pending before the supreme court and court of appeals. The counter in the clerk's office is made of cherry and marble and resembles the benches in the two courtrooms. The west end of the main floor contains two conference rooms (#4 and #5) and a small auditorium (#6) that seats 48 people. The auditorium may be used for long-distance education programs, in-house lectures, or over flow crowds from the courtrooms. (#7) An ICN room sits behind the mural Columbia. (#8) The ethics office handles complaints regarding attorney misconduct.



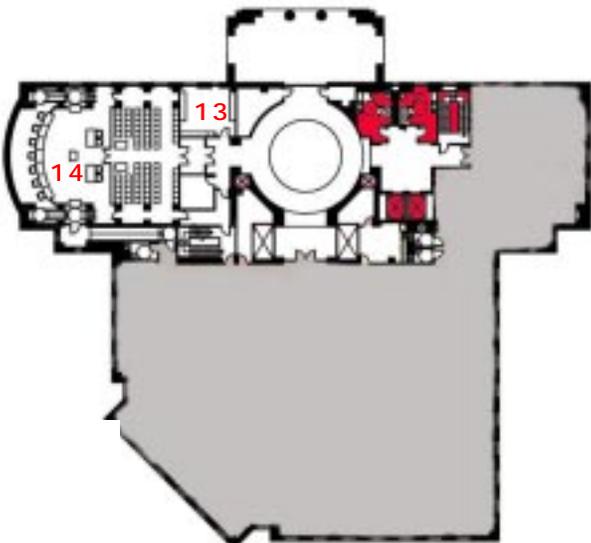
Second Floor

(#9) State Court Administration is responsible for the day-to-day management of the state court system. Its duties include finance, human resources, statistics, education, and technology. (#10) The office of supreme court commissions helps the court regulate the practice of law. It oversees the operations of the Commission on Continuing Legal Education, the Client Security and Attorney Disciplinary Commission, and the Interest on Lawyer Trust Account Commission.



Third Floor

The third floor houses the nine-member Iowa Court of Appeals. The court of appeals hears cases transferred to it by the supreme court. The principal role of the court of appeals is to dispose justly of a high volume of cases. The court hears cases once a month. (#11) Attorneys who are scheduled to argue cases before the court may wait in the lawyers' preparation room adjacent to the courtroom. (#12) The stately court of appeals courtroom has seating for 40 people. It has coffered ceilings, and cherry paneled columns and walls. Although the court of appeals usually hears cases in panels of three judges, the cherry bench can accommodate up to five judges. Bailiffs who sit at the end of the bench assist the court by timing oral arguments. The room is fully equipped with video cameras for recording and broadcasting court proceedings.



Fourth Floor

The fourth floor is the home of the seven-member Iowa Supreme Court, the court of last resort in Iowa. All appeals from the trial court are made directly to the supreme court. The court hears cases once a month. The supreme court is also responsible for supervising the entire Iowa Judicial Branch and for regulating the practice of law. (#13) Attorneys who are scheduled to argue cases before the court may wait in the lawyers' preparation room adjacent to the courtroom. (#14) This imposing courtroom has seating for 66 people. This courtroom, is decorated with a barrel-vaulted, coffered ceiling, a colonnade along the north and south walls, and marble wainscoting. At the west end of the courtroom, the cherry bench with panels decorated with an abstract Roman cross design sits in front of a massive marble wall. The room is fully equipped with video cameras for recording and broadcasting court proceedings.

- Public elevators, stairwell and restrooms
- Authorized personnel only

* To view courtrooms, please contact the security staff at main entrance.