

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT COMMISSION

ACCESS

TO

JUSTICE

EDUCATION. SUPPORT. EMPOWERMENT.

Ensuring Meaningful Access to the Courts



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Executive Summary

The Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice (ATJ Commission) presents this Strategic Plan to detail Principles, Initiatives, and activities for ensuring meaningful access to the courts for FY 2020-2023. The Strategic Plan builds on the existing work of the ATJ Commission and the growing statewide and national momentum towards enhancing access to justice and improving the court user experience¹.

To fully understand what it means to have access to justice, it is important to hear directly from court users about barriers they faced when going to court. Last year, the ATJ Commission interviewed self-represented litigants about their experiences with the judicial system. Their stories reveal the incredible stress caused by their underlying legal problems—stress that is compounded by their attempts to use the judicial system without the help of a lawyer.

The following interview excerpts reveal a few examples of the barriers self-represented litigants faced when participating in their civil court cases:

1. In 2015, the National Conference of Chief Justices passed Resolution 5, reaffirming the commitment to meaningful access to justice for essential civil legal needs in all state courts.



Legalese is not anyone's first language.

MONICA, SMALL CLAIMS

The judicial system...is a game. If you know the rules of the game, you can play and succeed. If you don't know the rules of the game, it is very hard to participate and to succeed.

SANDI, PERSONAL INJURY

[I paid] almost \$200 to appear and answer. I didn't know until after I borrowed the money that you can ask for a waiver. They have no signs up that let you know. There is nothing in the documents you receive. Put signs up. Let people know what the costs are. If you go to McDonalds, you know how much a cup of coffee is.

DOROTHY, FORECLOSURE

I think there should be...a walkthrough of what you would want to do because you are representing yourself. And there was no information anywhere. I had to find that information out when I was already in court and would lose because...it [was too late].

TOPAZ, TRAFFIC INFRACTION





Principles and Key Initiatives to Promote Meaningful Access to the Courts

The ATJ Commission has developed a Statement of Principles to describe the overarching goals that guide its work. Based on those Principles, the ATJ identified 10 priority Initiatives for FY 2020-2023. Some of the Initiatives continue existing work. Other Initiatives represent new or expanded areas of focus for the ATJ Commission. Each Initiative is intended to meet one or more of the Principles. Our goal is that all the Initiatives, taken together, fulfill the Principles expressed.

The ATJ Commission will pursue the proposed Initiatives by providing leadership, oversight, and in some situations, financial resources. In addition, the ATJ Commission will continue to prioritize mechanisms for regular input from judges, court staff, and court users about how to improve the court system and evaluate the effectiveness of the ATJ Commission's Initiatives.



Statement of Principles

EQUAL ACCESS: Court users should have access to justice through full participation in the judicial process, regardless of their circumstances, socio-economic status, English language proficiency, cultural background, disability status, or legal representation status.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS: Court users should have access to a fair, impartial, and transparent judicial branch where they are treated with dignity, respect, equality, and professional courtesy.

ASSISTANCE: Court users should have access to assistance with navigating the courthouse and understanding court systems and procedures from individuals with particular knowledge and sensitivity to their needs.

PLAIN LANGUAGE: Court users should have access to a wide variety of plain language resources designed to help them understand and exercise their civil and procedural rights.

PROCESS SIMPLIFICATION: Court users should find that court procedures and policies are streamlined and efficient, while still preserving due process and substantive and procedural fairness.

TECHNOLOGY: The ATJ Commission will promote the deployment of user-friendly technology to provide court users with assistance and information, as well as to streamline and simplify court procedures and processes.

PROMOTING LEGAL REPRESENTATION:

The ATJ Commission will promote free and affordable representation for those who cannot afford legal representation and encourage the development or enhancement of *pro bono* programs.

COMMUNICATION: The ATJ Commission will ensure public awareness of its Initiatives and will effectively communicate with its partners and court users through all available channels to achieve successful implementation of its programs and to solicit feedback.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: The ATJ Commission will strive for continuous improvement and increased capacity to best meet the diverse and evolving needs of court users.

Initiatives for Ensuring Meaningful Access to the Courts for FY 2020-2023

INITIATIVE 1: Identify and promote strategies for removing and reducing barriers to accessing the court system. This includes procedural, financial, logistical, or geographic barriers.

INITIATIVE 2: Expand and unify existing court navigator programs to help more court users access the court system and continue to improve the efficiency of the court system.

INITIATIVE 3: Develop self-help services and resources that are useful and accessible to court users.

INITIATIVE 4: Identify, analyze, and implement technology-based programs and services to increase access to the courts.

INITIATIVE 5: Foster community trust and engagement by cultivating communication and coordination between the courts, non-traditional court stakeholders, justice partners, and the public.

INITIATIVE 6: Promote the use of standardized, plain-language legal forms statewide and continue to develop, automate, and translate forms for areas of law frequently encountered by court users.

INITIATIVE 7: Promote language access resources and language assistance services by recruiting and training spoken and sign language interpreters to achieve court certification, encouraging judges and court personnel to provide appropriate language assistance both inside and outside of the courtrooms, and building awareness in limited English proficient communities about language access assistance available in the courts.

INITIATIVE 8: Offer trainings and educational material on access to justice topics to help court stakeholders better serve court users.

INITIATIVE 9: Identify, develop, and promote court policies and rules that promote legal representation, including full- and limited-scope representation, in partnership with court stakeholders, bar associations, community groups, and justice partners.

INITIATIVE 10: Evaluate and reflect on activities to ensure each Initiative is implemented to achieve the desired outcome.

The ATJ Commission is grateful for the opportunity to share its vision with the Illinois Supreme Court. The ATJ Commission welcomes the Supreme Court's guidance and looks forward to continued collaboration in the years ahead.

Respectfully submitted by the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice:

CHAIR:

The Honorable Mary K. Rochford
Illinois Appellate Court

MEMBERS:

Carolyn H. Clift
Attorney at Law (Ret.)

Linda T. Coberly
Winston & Strawn LLP

Hon. Thomas M. Harris, Jr.
Justice, Illinois Appellate Court

Hon. Leonard Murray
Circuit Court Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County

Jennifer T. Nijman
Partner, Nijman Franzetti LLP

Hon. Jorge L. Ortiz
Circuit Judge, 19th Judicial Circuit

Justice Daniel J. Pierce
Justice, Illinois Appellate Court

Wendy Hinton Vaughn
*Clinical Associate Professor, Northern Illinois University
College of Law*

Andrew M. Weaver
Senior Supervising Attorney, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid

Tammy R. Weikert
Circuit Clerk of Rock Island County

SECTION 1

THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT COMMISSION ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE DIVISION

In 2012, the Illinois Supreme Court established the ATJ Commission to promote, facilitate, and enhance equal access to justice with an emphasis on the Illinois civil courts. The Illinois Supreme Court directed² the ATJ Commission to complement existing efforts and to coordinate and collaborate with the civil legal aid funders and service providers of our state that devote significant resources and efforts to provide legal representation to those in need. To that end, under the leadership of the Supreme Court, the ATJ Commission and the Access to Justice Division of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC ATJ Division) focus on improvements, resources, and programs within the judicial system to assist self-represented litigants with accessing our courts; assist legal aid and *pro bono* lawyers in their representation of their clients; and provide support for the judiciary and other court personnel in ensuring justice for all.

The ATJ Commission is composed of 11 Commissioners who are appointed for three-year terms. The Supreme Court appoints seven members, while The Chicago Bar Foundation, Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois, Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, and Illinois Bar Foundation each name a Commissioner. Justice Thomas L. Kilbride is the Supreme Court liaison to the Commission.

2. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 10-100

Current membership includes:

CHAIR:

The Honorable Mary K. Rochford
First District Appellate Court

MEMBERS:

Carolyn H. Clift
Attorney at Law (Ret.)

Linda T. Coberly
Winston & Strawn LLP

Hon. Thomas M. Harris, Jr.
Justice, Illinois Appellate Court

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Circuit Court of Cook County*

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*Clinical Associate Professor,
Northern Illinois University
College of Law*

Andrew M. Weaver
*Senior Supervising Attorney,
Land of Lincoln Legal Aid*

Tammy R. Weikert
Circuit Clerk of Rock Island County



The ATJ Commission has established committees and subcommittees that are composed of volunteers from different parts of the state with expertise to help in its work. There is no doubt that the accomplishments of the ATJ Commission are due in significant part to their efforts. Committees include the Appellate Committee, Community Trust Committee, Court Guidance and Training Committee, Forms Committee (with many subcommittees), Language Access Committee, Remote Appearance Committee, Rules and Policy Review Committee, and Self-Represented Coordinator Grant Program Selection Committee. See Appendix A for a list of committee and subcommittee volunteers.

The AOIC ATJ Division integrates the ATJ Commission's Initiatives into the operations and systems of the judicial branch at a statewide level. The AOIC ATJ Division communicates and coordinates with other divisions of the AOIC so that the ATJ Commission's access to justice policies and Initiatives are incorporated into the work of the other divisions. The ATJ Commission and the AOIC ATJ Division also coordinate with other Supreme Court Committees and Commissions to achieve cohesiveness, including with the Illinois Judicial Conference, which is discussed in more detail in Section 4 below. The AOIC ATJ Division is active in national groups seeking to increase access to justice. At this time, the ATJ Commission expresses gratitude and a recognition that its endeavors depend on the immense professionalism, knowledge, dedication, and helpfulness of the AOIC ATJ Division.

STAFF OF THE AOIC ATJ DIVISION INCLUDES:

Alison Spanner

Assistant Director

Sophia Akbar

Senior Program Manager, Language Access

Noor Alawawda

Program Coordinator, Language Access

Kathleen Callahan

Senior Program Manager, Forms

Kathryn Hensley

*Senior Program Manager, Appellate and IL
JusticeCorps*

Jill Roberts

Supervising Senior Program Manager

Hayley Yussman

Assistant to the Assistant Director

The core goal of the ATJ Commission and the AOIC ATJ Division is to help make the entire judicial system fairer and more efficient for court users, judges, circuit clerks, court personnel, and all other stakeholders. A description of the ATJ Commission Accomplishments during the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan Period is included in Section 9 below.

This Strategic Plan builds on the existing work of the ATJ Commission and the AOIC ATJ Division and the growing statewide and national momentum towards enhancing access to justice and improving the court user experience.

A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS STRATEGIC PLAN:

Self-represented litigant is a person who participates in a court case without a lawyer.

Limited English proficient litigant is a person not fluent in the English language.

Court user includes self-represented litigants, limited English proficient litigants, and other litigants who face barriers to participating in their court case.

Justice partners includes all organizations working on access to justice issues.

Court stakeholders include judges, court staff, clerks, law librarians, lawyers, and law students.

An approved interpreter is a spoken or sign language interpreter that has completed the requirements of the AOIC Court Interpreter Certification Program and is listed on the [AOIC Interpreter Registry](#), or has completed similar requirements through another state's certification program.



SECTION 2

SPECIAL THANKS

The ATJ Commission is grateful for this opportunity to share its vision with the Illinois Supreme Court. The ATJ Commission welcomes the Court's guidance and looks forward to continued collaboration in the years ahead.

This Strategic Plan would not have been possible without the advice and guidance of the ATJ Commission's Strategic Planning Committee chaired by **Jennifer Nijman**, an ATJ Commissioner. The ATJ Commission recognizes and thanks the members of the Strategic Planning Committee for their significant contributions:

Sophia Akbar
AOIC

Noor Alawawda
AOIC

Leslie Corbett
Illinois Equal Justice Foundation

Carolyn Clift
ATJ Commissioner

Justice Thomas Harris
ATJ Commissioner

Kathryn Hensley
AOIC

Bob Glaves
The Chicago Bar Foundation

Kathleen Callahan
AOIC

Hanna Kaufman
Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois

Mark Marquardt
Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois

Samira Nazem
The Chicago Bar Foundation

Jennifer Nijman
ATJ Commissioner

Judge Jorge Ortiz
ATJ Commissioner

Justice Mary K. Rochford
Chair, ATJ Commission

Jill Roberts
AOIC

Alison Spanner
AOIC

Andrew Weaver
ATJ Commissioner

Tammy Weikert
ATJ Commissioner

Stacey Weiler
Illinois Bar Foundation

Hayley Yussman
AOIC

SECTION 3

ACCESSING THE COURT SYSTEM: CONTEXT AND EXPERIENCE

The fundamental mission of our court system is to deliver justice to all litigants by protecting their rights and liberties, upholding the rule of law, and serving as a fair and neutral arbiter to resolve disputes. The Illinois Supreme Court and ATJ Commission are prepared and committed to do more to ensure our judicial system is truly accessible for all and meets the diverse needs of our community.

As detailed in the Commission's [2017-2020 Strategic Plan](#)³, many significant factors contribute to the gap in resources, assistance, and representation facing our community. Illinois judicial system stakeholders including court leadership, legal aid organizations, and the private bar, are grappling with many stark realities:

- 1) In a system intended to be used by lawyers, more than half of court users in civil cases are trying to navigate the system without one⁴;
- 2) Trust and confidence in the ability of courts to resolve disputes has been diminishing⁵;
- 3) Poverty rates remain high throughout the state, with nearly one in three residents living in or near poverty⁶;
- 4) There are not enough *pro bono* or legal aid lawyers across the state to meet the legal needs of all low-income litigants⁷;
- 5) Courts have insufficient resources to meet the needs of the growing limited English proficient population; and
- 6) Lower income and even many middle-income persons are increasingly priced out of the market for private lawyers.

These factors create barriers for vulnerable court users seeking to find justice in our courts. These and other factors underscore the need for the creation and continuation of the ATJ Commission.

3. [courts.illinois.gov/SupremeCourt/Committees/ATJ_Comm/ATJ_Comm_Strategic_Plan.pdf](#)

4. National Center for State Courts (2015, November). The Landscape of Civil Litigation in State Courts. Available online at <https://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/Research/CivilJusticeReport-2015.ashx>

5. National Center for State Courts (2020, January). 2019 Public Opinion Survey. Available online at https://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/Topics/Public%20Trust%20and%20Confidence/SoSC_2019_Survey_Analysis_2019.ashx

6. Buitrago, K., Rynell, A., & Tuttle, S. (2017, March). Cycle of Risk: The Intersection of Poverty, Violence, and Trauma in Illinois. Heartland Alliance. Available at https://www.heartlandalliance.org/povertyreport/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2017/03/FINAL_PR17_3_14.pdf

7. Legal Services Corporation (2017, June). The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans. Available at <https://www.lsc.gov/sites/default/files/images/TheJusticeGap-FullReport.pdf>

A. The Self-Represented Litigant Experience

Throughout 2018 and 2019, the ATJ Commission's Court Guidance and Training Committee interviewed self-represented litigants about their experiences interacting with the court system. The videos of those interviews are used as tools in court stakeholder education and training and provide unique insight into the self-represented litigant experience. Their stories reveal the incredible stress caused by their underlying legal problems—stress that is compounded by their attempts to use the judicial system without the help of a lawyer.

The following are highlights of what we learned from the interviews by topic.

CONFUSING AND STRESSFUL PROCESS:

For many court users, the legal system can seem opaque and feel intimidating. Self-represented litigants face unfamiliar legal terminology and jargon, in addition to complicated court procedures and substantive law, which can increase the anxiety around the process of going to court.

Legalese is not anyone's first language.

MONICA, SMALL CLAIMS

It's fight or flight. Cry and scream and you have to cap all that in to be able to communicate with someone who you've been waiting three hours now to speak to...and while they may not be showing any marks of impatience, you yourself are like: "oh my god, there are 50 people behind me. I need to say this in two minutes."

RACHEL, FAMILY LAW

We had to teach ourselves what the justice system was and how to go about surviving in it.

SANDI, PERSONAL INJURY

Throughout this whole process, I kind of stumbled in the dark...If I am going to make a cup of coffee I have to grind the coffee, put the grounds in the coffee pot, I know the steps to get to the coffee. Here I didn't know the steps. I didn't even know what I didn't know.

RACHEL, FAMILY LAW

PROCEDURAL BARRIERS:

Providing meaningful access to justice requires addressing the systematic barriers that make it exceedingly difficult for many court users to address even very simple legal matters in court.

I had gone to 3 or 4 court proceedings. The judge called my case and I went forward. I spoke. I didn't know I was really not "appearing" and giving an "answer." Being naïve, I thought appearing was showing up... I just did not understand until I met with an attorney. He explained to me that you are not really recognized until you file an appearance and an answer.

DOROTHY, FORECLOSURE

I didn't know...that I had to make certain arguments in the answer and if I didn't make those arguments then that I could never raise them again. Which seems to be so unfair.

DOROTHY, FORECLOSURE

NO ONE TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS:

The numbers and needs of self-represented litigants require creative thinking about how to best ensure everyone has meaningful access to the court system; reduce frustration for litigants, courts, and court staff; and increase efficiency.

When you interact with a self-represented litigant, know they are not the enemy...the questions that they ask may not be intentionally vague, but they are questions that are valid to them.

SANDI, PERSONAL INJURY

I [was] not looking for legal advice about my case, about guidance on my case, but just the procedure of the steps.

MONICA, SMALL CLAIMS

LITTLE TRUST IN THE SYSTEM:

Courts are not immune to the problem of declining confidence in government and other public institutions.

It's a system for pay...only the wealthy can afford justice.

TOPAZ, TRAFFIC INFRACTION

The judicial system...is a game. If you know the rules of the game, you can play and succeed. If you don't know the rules of the game, it is very hard to participate and to succeed.

SANDI, PERSONAL INJURY

LACK OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION:

Many front-line court staff, judges, and lawyers are still unaware of self-help tools, resources, policies, or how use to them.

[I paid] almost \$200 to appear and answer. I didn't know until after I borrowed the money that you can ask for a waiver. They have no signs up that let you know. There is nothing in the documents you receive. Put signs up. Let people know what the costs are. If you go to McDonalds, you know how much a cup of coffee is.

DOROTHY, FORECLOSURE

I think there should be...a walkthrough of what you would want to do because you are representing yourself. And there was no information anywhere. I had to find that information out when I was already in court and would lose because...it [was too late].

TOPAZ, TRAFFIC INFRACTION

THE NEED FOR FREE OR AFFORDABLE REPRESENTATION:

Most litigants wish to be represented by a lawyer, but many cannot afford one and often are unable to access free or affordable legal services. As a result, a growing number of litigants are proceeding alone in a system designed for lawyers.

It's not that I feel myself above the law or above lawyers. I just don't have money. I felt like the whole process was punishing me for not having money.

TOPAZ, TRAFFIC INFRACTION

My dad and I did try to very hard to get a legal aid attorney. We tried hard to get any attorney that we could. [A lawyer told us] if "I were to take the case the fee would be more, probably, than what you would recover if you were to pursue it."

SANDI, PERSONAL INJURY

I had no access to cash, so that was the problem.

RAZ, CONDO EVICTION

The experiences of self-represented litigants tell a consistent story: it is extremely difficult for a person without formal legal training to represent themselves in court. Feelings of confusion and frustration abound. As a result, fundamental legal issues—such as housing, personal safety, child custody, employment, and debt—are not being presented to the court in an effective way, and many more are likely going entirely unaddressed by the judicial system.

B. The Consequences of Ineffective Court Interpreting – A Silent Injustice

The self-represented litigants highlighted above spoke English as a first language. Imagine having a legal issue and not being able to speak English well, or being deaf or hard of hearing. Beyond the lack of affordable lawyers, procedural barriers, stress, and confusing process: what if you had to navigate the court process with a language barrier? Or you arrived at court only to find an interpreter is either unavailable or unskilled? Or your family member is unexpectedly asked to be your interpreter? The potential consequences to “access” are swift and severe.

Ensuring equal access to justice requires that all litigants—including those with limited English proficiency—have the opportunity to participate meaningfully throughout the legal proceedings. Justice cannot be achieved when litigants are unable to understand what is going on, or to convey crucial information to the court.

(Victor Ponce v. State of Indiana, 9 N.E.3d 1265 (2014))

In *Victor Ponce*, the Indiana Supreme Court overturned a felony drug conviction due to an ineffective interpreter. The translated court transcript revealed that the interpreter did not provide an accurate or complete Spanish and English interpretation of the judicial proceedings, which resulted in the judge and Mr. Ponce not being able to effectively communicate.

Cases like this one are reminders of the seriousness of ineffective interpreting for a person with limited English proficiency. Often an interpreter is the only person in the courtroom who understands both English and the second language spoken or signed by the person who is limited English proficient. There is no one who can challenge whether the interpreter is doing their job correctly. And the limited English proficient person, who may have a valid right to appeal due to ineffective interpreting, has little chance of knowing, for example, whether statements made in

court are being communicated accurately and completely or whether a lawyer’s questions or a judge’s instructions are being interpreted correctly.

In this way, ineffective interpreting is a silent injustice. Unqualified interpreters can result in the presentation of incorrect evidence, affect the reliability of testimony, and mislead judges, juries, and lawyers. The problem is compounded by the fact that most courtrooms do not have digital recording systems, so there is often no mechanism for examining the interpreter’s rendition. Court reporters will capture the interpreter’s English interpretation of what the limited English proficient person said to the courts but will not capture the interpreter’s original communication to the limited English proficient person in the second language.

The ATJ Commission seeks to address challenges and barriers faced by self-represented and limited English proficient litigants as detailed in the “Initiatives for Ensuring Meaningful Access to the Courts” section below.

SECTION 4

ILLINOIS JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

In October of 2019, the Illinois Supreme Court released its first Illinois Judicial Branch Strategic Agenda. It was developed and approved by the [Illinois Judicial Conference](http://illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/Jud_Conf/default.asp)⁸. The Agenda sets forth a mission statement, vision statement, and core values for the Judicial Branch, as well as strategies and goals to achieve them. The Agenda's centerpiece goals include the advancement of access to justice and court innovation. The Agenda will serve as a guide for the future of the Judicial Branch as it begins the current implementation phase.

As part of the implementation phase, the Illinois Judicial Conference assigned the ATJ Commission three projects⁹ that are to be completed by October of 2020. The ATJ Commission has incorporated all three projects into its "Initiatives for Ensuring Meaningful Access to the Courts" described in Section 6 below and is ready and willing to receive additional projects from the Illinois Judicial Conference for implementation in years two and three.



8. http://illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/Jud_Conf/default.asp

9. Promote remote appearances in civil cases through improved rules, policy, and education; identify a point person in each circuit to assist court users and provide education; and publish standardized forms in eviction and small claims and consider a rule amendment to Supreme Court Rule 10-101.

SECTION 5

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The ATJ Commission developed the following Statement of Principles, which serve as the foundation for this Strategic Plan and its Initiatives. The ATJ Commission will review the Principles on an ongoing basis and they will serve as the lens through which we measure success. Following the Statement of Principles are a series of Initiatives that identify activities planned for the next three years. Each Initiative is intended to meet one or more of the Principles. Our goal is that the Initiatives, taken together, fulfill the Principles.

EQUAL ACCESS: Court users should have access to justice through full participation in the judicial process, regardless of their circumstances, socio-economic status, English language proficiency, cultural background, disability status, or legal representation status.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS: Court users should have access to a fair, impartial, and transparent judicial branch where they are treated with dignity, respect, equality, and professional courtesy.

ASSISTANCE: Court users should have access to assistance with navigating the courthouse and understanding court systems and procedures from individuals with particular knowledge and sensitivity to their needs.

PLAIN LANGUAGE: Court users should have access to a wide variety of plain language resources designed to help them understand and exercise their civil and procedural rights.

PROCESS SIMPLIFICATION: Court users should find that court procedures and policies are streamlined and efficient, while still preserving due process and substantive and procedural fairness.

TECHNOLOGY: The ATJ Commission will promote the deployment of user-friendly technology to provide court users with assistance and information, as well as to streamline and simplify court procedures and processes.

PROMOTING LEGAL REPRESENTATION: The ATJ Commission will promote free and affordable representation for those who cannot afford legal representation and encourage the development or enhancement of *pro bono* programs.

COMMUNICATION: The ATJ Commission will ensure public awareness of its Initiatives and will effectively communicate with its partners and court users through all available channels to achieve successful implementation of its programs and to solicit feedback.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: The ATJ Commission will strive for continuous improvement and increased capacity to best meet the diverse and evolving needs of court users.

SECTION 6

INITIATIVES FOR ENSURING MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO THE COURTS

Initiative 1:

Identify and promote strategies for removing and reducing barriers to accessing the court system. This includes procedural, financial, logistical, or geographic barriers.

The ATJ Commission will continue to explore both large- and small-scale opportunities to simplify and streamline court processes and to remove other barriers that may prevent court patrons from accessing or fully participating in the court system.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Working with justice partners and court stakeholders to simplify and reform the legal process through both the legislative and rulemaking avenues that reduce procedural, financial, and other barriers;
- Identifying and implementing innovative models for streamlining and improving case management including Early Resolution Programs, dedicated court calls for self-represented litigants, and remote appearances for many court events;
- Advancing best practices for user-centered design within the courthouse for wayfinding assistance, electronic court dockets, referral sheets, and other helpful court signage;
- Developing and promoting the use of standardized court signs that inform court patrons about available resources and services (for example, interpreters, e-filing, fee waivers, and standardized court forms);
- Educating court stakeholders and justice partners about civil and criminal fee waivers;

- Promoting the use of court-based alternatives to litigation in areas of law where there are large numbers of self-represented litigants (for example, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, and online dispute resolution);
- Tracking challenges related to e-filing that may impede access to the courts for self-represented litigants and developing new e-filing resources, as appropriate; and
- Drafting a uniform policy to be presented to the Illinois Supreme Court allowing greater use of cell phones in courthouses and encouraging its adoption statewide.

Early Resolution Programs (ERP):

ERP involves a streamlined pathway for certain divorce cases when the Petitioner and Respondent are self-represented. The ERPs in McHenry County and Lake County allow for parties to complete their divorce on their first court appearance. Both counties partner with Prairie State Legal Services to review the prove-up documents for completeness before going before the judge. Cook County has implemented a triage program. Parties meet with a Hearing Officer to assesses whether their case can be resolved quickly after finalizing paperwork or if the case should be returned to the regular court call. The preliminary results of these programs show the time from filing to resolution has decreased. All three ERPs are supported by the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator grant program.

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 1:

As a result of the Commission's strategic partnerships and implementation of user-centered reforms, court users will experience a streamlined, consistent, less stressful, and transparent court system.

Initiative 2:

Expand and unify existing court navigator programs to help more court users access the court system and continue to improve the efficiency of the court system.

“Court navigators” are persons trained to provide legal information and procedural guidance to court users, but who do not provide legal advice or representation. Navigators may be members of the Illinois JusticeCorps program, the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators grant program, or court volunteers. In other cases, a navigator may be a staff person, such as a circuit clerk, law clerk, law librarian, or self-help center employee. In addition to providing assistance to court patrons, navigators also ensure that new policies and resources designed to assist court patrons are shared and implemented at the local level.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Formalizing a statewide Court Navigator Network and identifying a court navigator in each judicial circuit;
- Continuing to fund, support, and sustain Illinois JusticeCorps at its current locations, as well as exploring expansion to new sites across the state;
- Expanding the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator grant program to encourage the development of additional innovative programs to assist court users;
- Integrating training opportunities and resources currently offered exclusively to Illinois JusticeCorps fellows or Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators and offering these trainings to all members of the Court Navigator Network; and
- Instituting comprehensive evaluation methods to determine strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to improve the Court Navigator Network, Illinois JusticeCorps, and the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator grant program.

Illinois JusticeCorps:

First launched at the Daley Center in 2009, Illinois JusticeCorps now operates in 13 courthouses across the state. JusticeCorps fellows and members, many of whom are students or recent college graduates, receive intensive training on working with court users, explaining legal processes, providing directions and legal information, and making effective referrals to legal and social service organizations. The ATJ Commission, The Chicago Bar Foundation, and Illinois Bar Foundation oversee and fund the operations of the JusticeCorps program with matching AmeriCorps funding from the Serve Illinois Commission. See Appendix B for more information about Illinois JusticeCorps.

Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator Grant Program:

Established under the 2017-2020 ATJ Strategic Plan, the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators program served over 50,000 court users in its first two years. Utilizing grant funds, Coordinators developed innovative projects, which ranged from repurposing courthouse space for help desks and improving signage materials to creating early resolution programs that resolve divorce cases more quickly (for more on Early Resolution Programs, see Initiative 1). Coordinators received in-person and remote trainings throughout the grant year, addressing topics such as information vs. legal advice, making referrals, customer service, implicit bias, assisting people who are dealing with mental illness, plain language, user-centered design, communication/de-escalation, and working with court users who have low literacy levels. See Appendix D for a list of funded projects.

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 2:

All circuits have at least one court navigator who has access to training and resources to address the needs of court users. Illinois JusticeCorps continues to provide information, navigational assistance, and a friendly presence in courthouses. Expansion to additional sites will be explored. More judicial circuits will utilize the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator grant program to execute projects that address the needs of court users. The expansion and integration of the Court Navigator Network will track the geographic diversity of the state and be responsive to local needs. Coordinated training and education programs will strengthen and enhance the skills of court navigators, resulting in increased communication and consistency throughout the network.

Initiative 3:

Develop self-help services and resources that are useful and accessible to court users.

The ATJ Commission will develop and share legal information, referrals, and resources with court users, court stakeholders, and justice partners assisting court users.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Maintaining an ATJ Commission website designed to reach court users in need of self-help services and resources in coordination with Illinois Legal Aid Online and other justice partners;
- Translating the ATJ Commission website content and resources into languages other than English;
- Posting updated information and new resources online as they become available and featuring these developments and innovations in the ATJ Commission's quarterly newsletter;
- Utilizing social media and other communication outlets, such as the Illinois Supreme Court's monthly newsletter and the ATJ Commission's quarterly newsletter, to convey information and messaging;
- Using maps to show where court-based resources related to language access, self-help initiatives, and legal aid organizations are located and how they relate to other service providers, including community-based groups, medical-legal partnerships, social service entities, and mediation services;
- Developing and implementing self-help resources in civil appeals, including a virtual help desk, illustrated overviews, videos, and research guides;
- Supporting the expansion of self-help and legal advice assistance for self-represented litigants in civil appeals by utilizing statewide partners;
- Interviewing and surveying court staff and volunteers to gain a more holistic perspective on the challenges self-represented litigants face in courthouses; and
- Coordinating education and outreach efforts to raise awareness of web-based and other resources.

Appellate Resource Program:

Launched in 2017 within the AOIC ATJ Division, the Appellate Resources Program has created vital resources for self-represented litigants in civil appeals. Some notable developments include:

- *New website content containing comprehensive FAQs, guides, lawyer referral information, case information, and e-filing manuals.*
- *A 10-month pilot project with the First Appellate District that proactively sent self-help information and forms to self-represented litigants. Over 450 appellants were contacted through the program.*
- *An appellate video series that explains each step of an appeal.*
- *A virtual help desk will be launched in 2020. The initiative, in partnership with the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI), will utilize pro bono lawyers to answer questions submitted by self-represented litigants through the online “Illinois Free Legal Answers” platform.*

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 3:

Information, services, and resources to help court users will be posted and disseminated on the ATJ Commission’s website and on other justice partner sites in an easy-to-understand, mobile-friendly format that is easily accessible. Court users can better find legal assistance and court-based services to assist with their needs. Court users in need of legal advice for their civil appeals will have the opportunity to speak with a lawyer for a consultation. Resources will continue to be developed to meet the evolving needs of court users at all three levels of the Illinois courts.

Initiative 4:

Identify, analyze, and implement technology-based programs and services to increase access to the courts.

Technology is a vital tool that, if used well, can help court users more easily access courts and, in turn, can help courts serve court users more effectively. It can also be used to better serve those with a disability, presuming the technology complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)¹⁰.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Implementing and supporting projects that use technology to allow for remote appearances;
- Expanding the use of video remote interpreting;
- Evaluating and recommending policies, rules, and educational programs to encourage remote appearances;
- Updating helpful resources for e-filing and evaluating the impact of e-filing on court users in Illinois;
- Collaborating with justice partners to develop additional automated interviews that improve and streamline the process for creating and e-filing documents;
- Evaluating existing email or text messaging reminder programs¹¹ and making recommendations for statewide adoption of such programs;
- Promoting the use and expansion of digital court recording to ensure all court users have access to complete court records;
- Ensuring new court technologies are compliant with the ADA and designed with the self-represented user in mind;
- Supporting pilot Online Dispute Resolution programs and evaluating their effectiveness, benefits, and pitfalls through the creation of a grant program; and
- Creating ways to share legal information interactively, utilizing tools such as chatbots and videos, through the ATJ Commission's website, Illinois Legal Aid Online, and other justice partner websites.

10. ADA compliance refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design, which states that all electronic and information technology (like websites) must be accessible to people with disabilities.

11. The Illinois Judicial Conference assigned a similar deliverable to a new Court Access & Dispute Resolution Task Force and the ATJ Commission will collaborate with this Task Force and avoid duplication of effort.

Other technology projects:

The ATJ Commission indirectly supports numerous technology projects including:

- *Increasing the availability of digital recording or court reporting services across the state to ensure there is a record of all proceedings in case of an appeal.*
- *Exploring the use of technology to modernize and improve communication, including service of process and court notifications.*
- *Expanding the use of online payment systems for court fees and fines.*

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 4:

Court users can easily access information and successfully complete their court business remotely if they choose. Courts have greater access to approved interpreters in all languages through remote technology in courtrooms and other areas of the courthouse as needed. Judges and court personnel facilitate remote participation for court users and court interpreters and feel comfortable with technologies employed by their court. The remote technologies are reliable, efficient, cost-effective, and do not compromise the quality of communications and court proceedings.

Initiative 5:

Foster community trust and engagement by cultivating communication and coordination between the courts, non-traditional court stakeholders, justice partners, and the public.

Research shows that when faced with a life problem, it is not the court system most people turn to but rather family, friends, and trusted resources in their communities. Therefore, community organizations are important entry points into the legal ecosystem. Partnerships with such organizations are vital to the work of the ATJ Commission in sharing resources and increasing trust and confidence in the courts.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Continuing the work of the ATJ Commission's Community Trust Committee in the south suburbs of Chicago;
- Hosting town hall meetings in additional counties, starting with Lee County, to bring together social service providers, community organizations, legal aid providers, healthcare providers, public libraries, and others to learn about the information gaps and challenges faced in providing legal information to clients and to share referral information and other helpful resources;
- Examining feedback from town hall meetings and identifying ways to increase access to the court that reflect local needs;
- Creating a "virtual town hall" on the ATJ Commission's website for anyone to share experiences, questions, and concerns about the legal system;
- Developing a public relations strategy and maintaining a communication feedback loop with the public;
- Preparing a report identifying effective community engagement strategies and offering statewide recommendations for pursuing community trust work at the local level; and
- Reviewing the results of focus groups and surveys as part of the Justice For All Grant and implementing projects to address gaps identified.

Justice for All Grant:

In October 2019, the AOIC and ATJ Commission were awarded a \$100,000 grant from the National Center for State Courts as part of its Justice for All initiative. The grant is being used to conduct a comprehensive and critical analysis of statewide resources and justice gaps and to develop a workable action plan for bridging the gap between legal needs and legal resources. A Justice for All Advisory Committee has been created, which includes statewide representatives from the courts, the legal community, and non-traditional court stakeholders. Grant initiatives include data collection, asset mapping, focus groups, surveys, and the drafting of an action plan. At the end of the grant year, a report will be published that includes recommended projects to implement in 2021 and beyond.

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 5:

Court stakeholders, community organizations, and the ATJ Commission maintain open and direct communication with the public to strengthen trust and confidence, and to improve delivery of court services. Court stakeholders partner with local community networks so court users receive current information about resources and referrals for social services and, in turn, social service providers better understand how to engage with the court system. Projects have been implemented in the court system that directly reflect the public's needs.

Initiative 6:

Promote the use of standardized, plain-language legal forms statewide and continue to develop, automate, and translate forms for areas of law frequently encountered by court users.

The ATJ Commission has developed a library of standardized, plain-language legal forms and seeks to promote increased use of the forms and more widespread acceptance of the forms by court stakeholders throughout the state. The ATJ Commission will continue to develop new forms, especially in the areas of the law where there is the most need.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Developing and implementing a statewide plan to promote the widespread use, availability, and adoption of standardized forms and to ensure all courts adhere to the mandate of Supreme Court Rule 10-101, which requires all ATJ Commission approved forms be accepted for filing;
- Fostering an ongoing dialogue and education campaign with court users, justice partners, court stakeholders, and community stakeholders;
- Launching new drafting subcommittees to respond to the demand for forms in areas of law where the need is greatest among self-represented litigants;
- Continuing to finalize and update ADA compliant suites of instructions, forms, and orders in the following case types: appellate, divorce, civil forfeiture, eviction, expungement/sealing, guardianship, mortgage foreclosure, name change, orders of protection, procedural forms, and small claims;
- Translating standardized forms into Spanish as a top priority, and then prioritizing translation into Polish, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Arabic, and other languages as demand requires and in coordination with the AOIC's Language Access program;
- Continuing to automate standardized forms and expand their integration with the e-filing system;

- Soliciting feedback from users and court stakeholders on the use of standardized forms, including but not limited to:
 - how the forms are being used across the state;
 - role of forms in increasing efficiency;
 - issues with electronic accessibility of the forms; and
 - effectiveness of the forms' current design and whether any redesign would be helpful; and
- Examining whether amendments to Supreme Court Rule 10-101 would further promote the availability and use of standardized forms.

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 6:

Courts across the state make standardized forms readily available, both electronically and in print, and consistently adhere to the mandates of Supreme Court Rule 10-101. The ATJ Commission, together with court stakeholders and justice partners, enhance usability of the standardized forms for all court users.

Initiative 7:

Promote language access resources and language assistance services by recruiting and training spoken and sign language interpreters to achieve court certification, encouraging judges and court personnel to provide appropriate language assistance both inside and outside of the courtrooms, and building awareness in limited English proficient communities about language access assistance available in the courts.

Court interpreting is a sophisticated and demanding profession that requires skills beyond simply being bilingual. To avoid significant risks to the justice system, the AOIC ATJ Division trains judges and court personnel on the importance of providing approved interpreters in civil and criminal cases, and also administers a court interpreter certification program to assess language proficiency and interpreting skills¹². However, AOIC annual data reveals that only 66% of instances of interpretation used an approved interpreter listed on the AOIC Interpreter Registry. There is a great need for more judicial and court staff education, interpreter recruitment, and community education about access to interpreters, and most importantly, access to approved interpreters.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Promoting the AOIC's Interpreter Registry, usage of approved interpreters, and the importance of language access to judges and court staff;
- Conducting stakeholder meetings across the state to assist in the development of a statewide Strategic Plan. The plan will identify current challenges and barriers in language access service delivery and chart a meaningful path forward;
- Recruiting interpreters to pursue certification, particularly in rural areas for languages that have little or no representation on the AOIC Interpreter Registry, and for interpreters in rare languages;
- Developing additional translated resources for limited English proficient litigants, such as court forms, signage, and informational videos about processes and procedures;

12. As of this writing, the AOIC Interpreter Registry includes 253 interpreters in 14 languages. The AOIC also reimburses courts that use interpreters on the Registry to incentivize the use of approved interpreters.

- Analyzing how to strengthen the certification process, including developing a continuing education requirement and a certification fee waiver process for low-income interpreters seeking certification;
- Promoting training around video remote interpreting and encouraging its expanded use;
- Educating court stakeholders on options for interpreting services needed outside the courtroom or in emergency court situations, such as on-demand telephone interpreting services; and
- Considering changes to the Illinois Supreme Court Language Access Policy to encourage the additional use of approved interpreters on the AOIC's Interpreter Registry.

Video Remote Interpreting:

A video remote interpreting (VRI) pilot program has been launched in three counties: Winnebago, McLean and Champaign. While each pilot is still in the beginning implementation phase, the equipment has allowed Winnebago and McLean counties to connect with approved interpreters in other states or other parts of Illinois and to save on interpreter travel costs without sacrificing quality.

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 7:

All court users with limited English proficiency can access information and experience the court system in the same way as English-speaking court users through the assistance of translated resources, approved interpreters, and auxiliary services provided by courts. All limited English proficiency court users are aware of, or can easily understand, what services and resources are available to them both inside and outside of the courtroom.

Initiative 8:

Offer trainings and educational material on access to justice topics to help court stakeholders better serve court users.

Court stakeholders have expressed a strong desire for more training and resource materials to help them better serve the growing population of self-represented and limited English proficient litigants.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Reviewing and updating all existing access to justice training materials;
- Developing new strategies for disseminating training and educational materials to judges and clerks, in both print and electronic formats, particularly focusing on video trainings;
- Continuing to offer the court user interactive simulation¹³ to court stakeholders and other constituencies to raise awareness of the many barriers facing court users;
- Collaborating with justice partners, including the Illinois Judicial College, the Illinois Association of Court Clerks, and the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism to deliver training on access to justice topics; and
- Continuing to plan and host the Law Student Leaders Access to Justice Summit to educate future lawyers on how they can provide equal access to our court system.

13. The “Court Training Simulation: Understanding the Self-Represented Litigant Experience” was developed in 2019 by the AOIC, The CBF, and IBF and is designed to inform court stakeholders, justice partners, and the broader legal community about the challenges faced by self-represented litigants in court and how they can make a difference

Access to justice training topics include:

- *Language access*
- *Plain language*
- *Legal information vs. legal advice*
- *Standardized forms*
- *Procedural fairness*
- *Deliberate decision-making and implicit bias*
- *Fee and assessment waivers*
- *User-end of e-filing*
- *Limited scope representation*
- *Self-represented litigants in the courtroom – Supreme Court Rule 63(A)(4)*
- *Self-represented litigants and court staff – customer service and referrals*
- *Remote appearances*
- *For more information, see [Access to Justice Spiral, a Compilation of Policies, Rules, Tips & Best Practices](#), Updated November 2019.*

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 8:

Court stakeholders continue to adapt in order to serve the needs of all court users and have access to information and training materials on a range of access to justice topics and initiatives.

Initiative 9:

Identify, develop, and promote court policies and rules that promote legal representation, including full-and limited-scope representation, in partnership with court stakeholders, bar associations, community groups, and justice partners.

Most litigants find themselves without legal representation due to circumstances beyond their control. The inability to find and pay for a lawyer is regularly cited as the biggest driver of self-representation. While the ATJ Commission understands the benefits and importance of full scope representation, the reality is that there are not enough legal aid and *pro bono* resources to address the unmet legal needs of low-income litigants, and legal representation remains cost-prohibitive for many working class and middle-class litigants.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Promoting the use of limited scope representation through training and education for court stakeholders and identifying potential improvements to the relevant rules and forms;
- Increasing the visibility of limited scope representation through targeted marketing opportunities, such as articles in legal community publications;
- Collecting data on the number of limited scope appearances filed quarterly and analyzing the data to gain a better understanding of how this tool is being utilized and to identify gaps in its use;
- Exploring ways to remove barriers for *pro bono* and legal aid lawyers to provide free and reduced-cost services to low-income litigants;
- Collaborating with justice partners to create additional avenues for self-represented litigants to speak with a lawyer about their legal issue, including both court-based help desks and virtual help desks;
- Investigating opportunities to support and encourage *pro bono* representation; and
- Reviewing, updating, and promoting resources for starting and sustaining a court-based *pro bono* program.

Limited Scope Representation:

Illinois Rule of Professional Conduct 1.2(c) allows lawyers to “limit the scope of representation if the limitation is reasonable under the circumstances and the client gives informed consent.” Limited scope representation gives potential clients who cannot afford to pay for full representation, the opportunity to hire a lawyer for portions of a legal matter that a lawyer is most needed. Limited scope, or unbundling, allows lawyers to charge a fixed fee by discrete task in a case and concentrate on providing value rather than on billing time. In turn, clients have predictability and certainty with respect to legal fees.

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 9:

All court users can access some form of legal information or advice through the courts, legal self-help resources, legal advice desks, legal aid lawyers, pro bono lawyers, or private representation. Court stakeholders are familiar with limited scope representation rules and litigants can find private lawyers offering limited scope services.

Initiative 10:

Evaluate and reflect on activities to ensure each Initiative is implemented to achieve the desired outcome.

Regular evaluation should be an integral component of each Initiative to ensure the work of the ATJ Commission addresses the needs of court users and court stakeholders alike.

Activities in support of this Initiative include:

- Collecting and analyzing data on activities to evaluate their effectiveness when possible;
- Reviewing and evaluating challenges and successes and providing a written report to ATJ Commission, if appropriate, when an activity is complete;
- Drafting and using project plans to track progress on activities;
- Modifying activities as necessary based on feedback from evaluations to ensure the ATJ Commission's work is impactful and responsive; and
- Providing a yearly progress report on activities.

DEFINITION FOR SUCCESS FOR INITIATIVE 10:

Activities undertaken within each Initiative are monitored, evaluated, and modified as necessary to meet the diverse and constantly evolving needs of court users.

SECTION 7

BUDGET

The ATJ Commission will pursue the proposed Initiatives by providing leadership, oversight, and when necessary, financial resources.¹⁴ Initiatives will be accomplished through the committees and subcommittees of the ATJ Commission and the AOIC ATJ Division, in collaboration with relevant court stakeholders and justice partners, and/or with consultants hired for discrete purposes. In all its undertakings, the ATJ Commission will work closely with the Illinois Supreme Court and the AOIC.

YEAR 1	INITIATIVE	ACTIVITY	AMOUNT
2		Illinois JusticeCorps	183,000
1, 2		Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator Grant funds	210,000
2		Court Navigator Network Training	30,000
1, 3, 6, 7		Marketing and Promotion of All Resources	10,000
2, 4		Online Dispute Resolution Pilots	15,000
3, 4, 5, 6, 7		Website Maintenance	3,000
2, 3, 4, 10		Evaluation, Survey, and Analysis Software	13,000
3, 4, 6		Automating Standardized Forms	50,000
3, 4, 7, 8		Training Videos (for example, interviews with litigants and short informational videos)	5,000
3, 4, 9		Appellate Legal Answers	10,000
1, 4		Remote Appearance Technology Pilots and Training/Education	15,000
4		Conference Travel	7,000
5		Community Trust Meetings and Development	7,000
5, 9		Justice For All Implementation	10,000
8, 9		Law School Leaders Access to Justice Summit	10,000
7		Language Access Tablets Pilot	2,400
		Catering for ATJ Commission Meetings	1,500
TOTAL:			581,900

14. The ATJ Commission's yearly income is approximately \$420,000 and currently has a sufficient reserve to cover spending that exceeds its yearly income during this plan.

7. BUDGET

YEAR 2	INITIATIVE	ACTIVITY	AMOUNT
	2	Illinois JusticeCorps	183,000
	1, 2	Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator Grants	210,000
	2	Court Navigator Network Training	40,000
	1, 3, 6, 7	Marketing and Promotion of All Resources	10,000
	2, 4	Online Dispute Resolution Pilots	20,000
	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Website Maintenance	3,000
	3, 5, 6, 7	Social Media	5,000
	2, 3, 4, 10	Evaluation, Survey, and Analysis Software	9,000
	3, 4, 6	Automating Standardized Forms	50,000
	3, 4, 7, 8	Training Videos	5,000
	3, 4, 9	Appellate Legal Answers	10,000
	1, 4	Remote Appearance Technology Pilots and Training/Education	15,000
	4	Conference Travel	7,000
	5	Community Trust Meetings and Development	7,000
	5, 9	Justice For All Implementation	10,000
	7	Language Access Tablets Pilot Expansion	5,000
	5	Regional ATJ Commission Meeting	8,000
		Catering for ATJ Commission Meetings	1,500
TOTAL:			598,500

YEAR 3	INITIATIVE	ACTIVITY	AMOUNT
	2	Illinois JusticeCorps	183,000
	1, 2	Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator Grant Funds	210,000
	2	Court Navigator Network Training	50,000
	1, 3, 6, 7	Marketing and Promotion of All Resources	10,000
	2, 4	Online Dispute Resolution Pilots	25,000
	3, 5, 6, 7	Website Maintenance	3,000
	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Social Media	5,000
	3, 4, 10	Evaluation, Survey, and Analysis Software	9,000
	3, 4, 6	Automating Standardized Forms	50,000
	3, 4, 7, 8	Training Videos	5,000
	3, 4, 9	Appellate Legal Answers	10,000
	1, 4	Remote Appearance Technology Pilots and Training/Education	15,000
	4	Conference Travel	7,000
	5	Community Trust Meetings and Development	7,000
	5, 9	Justice For All Implementation	10,000
	8, 9	Law School Leaders Access to Justice Summit	10,000
	7	Language Access Tablets Pilot Expansion	16,000
	5	Regional ATJ Commission Meeting	8,000
		Catering for ATJ Commission Meetings	1,500
TOTAL:			634,500

SECTION 8

ATJ COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE 2017- 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN PERIOD

Since its formation in 2012, the ATJ Commission and AOIC ATJ Division have worked diligently to reduce barriers to justice. The following is a what was accomplished under the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan. The ATJ Commission recognizes the tireless efforts of the AOIC ATJ Division in securing these accomplishments. We also owe much gratitude to the amazing volunteers who serve on the committees and subcommittees of the Commission.

CREATION OF STANDARDIZED FORMS

To date, the ATJ Commission's Forms Committee has published over 45 standardized statewide form suites for use in the circuit court, appellate court, and Supreme Court. Currently, forms are being developed by 14 drafting subcommittees in the following areas of law: Appellate, Divorce/Family Law, Eviction, Juvenile Expungement, Adult Expungement, Civil Procedures, Criminal

Procedures, Name Change, Protective Orders, Small Claims, Civil Asset Forfeiture, Certificates, Mortgage Foreclosure, and Guardianship. Published forms are being translated into the languages most commonly spoken by self-represented litigants with limited English proficiency. See Appendix C for a list of approved and translated forms.

INCREASED USE OF APPROVED INTERPRETERS

It is critical for courts to have access to an available pool of approved court interpreters proficient in multiple languages including American sign language. The AOIC ATJ Division continues to improve its online Court Interpreter Registry, which currently has 266 interpreters who speak 22 languages. The certification process includes an orientation, as well as written and oral exams, and is offered on a rolling basis each year. The AOIC reimburses counties that use interpreters on the Registry. In 2015, only 25% of state court interpretations were done by interpreters on the Registry. In 2018, this number increased to 66%. Additionally, the AOIC ATJ Division increased the professionalism standards required to be on the Registry and has removed interpreters who had not taken an oral test in their language. The capacity of the AOIC ATJ Division to address this issue has expanded with the creation of a program coordinator position to oversee the interpreter certification program.

SKILL-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COURT INTERPRETERS

Court interpreting is a sophisticated and demanding profession that requires much more than the ability to speak a second language. In the courtroom, every word matters. The AOIC ATJ Division offered subsidized skill-building courses for interpreters attempting to pass the oral test, both in person and online. The courses were attended by 139 interpreters, which is almost half of the interpreters on the Registry. American sign language, Spanish, Korean, and language-neutral courses were offered. The AOIC ATJ Division also created a Spanish and language-neutral oral exam using Illinois court transcripts, which has helped several candidates improve their exam scores and performance skills.

APPELLATE RESOURCE PROGRAM AND DATA COLLECTION

In 2017, the Illinois Supreme Court approved the hiring of a Senior Program Manager at the AOIC to further the work of the ATJ Appellate Committee. Her position was split between the Appellate Resource Program and managing aspects of Illinois JusticeCorps. Later that year the Appellate Resource Program was launched within the AOIC ATJ Division. Since its inception, the program has implemented various measures to assist self-represented litigants in civil appeals. First, the program launched a dedicated self-help page¹⁵ on the Supreme Court's website, which offers a number of resources to assist self-represented litigants, including a Guide for Appeals to the Illinois Appellate Court for Self-

Represented Litigants¹⁶; a comprehensive FAQ section; one-page overviews of the civil appellate process; step-by-step e-filing guides; and videos.

Further, the AOIC's Appellate Resource Program, in conjunction with the First District Clerk's Office, launched a 10-month pilot project (March through December 2019) to proactively reach out to self-represented litigants in civil appeals. The goals of this pilot project were to better understand questions self-represented litigants have about the civil appellate process, to more effectively recognize what barriers they have in completing their appeals, and to obtain more specific data on outcomes.

Finally, the submission of self-represented litigant appellate data by clerks to the AOIC is now mandated in all five appellate districts. This information is being used to make strategic, data-driven decisions and to ensure new programs are effectively serving their target audiences.

SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT COORDINATORS

The Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator Program was launched in 2017 and created the first-ever statewide network of court personnel dedicated to addressing issues affecting self-represented litigants. This grant-funded program trains and supports a network of coordinators based in courthouses across Illinois, who work collaboratively and creatively to identify strategies for improving access to justice for self-represented litigants.

15. illinoiscourts.gov/CivilJustice/Resources/Self-Represented_Litigants/self-represented-civil-appeals.asp

16. courts.illinois.gov/CivilJustice/Resources/Guide_for_Appeals_to_the_IL_Appellate_Court.pdf

Additionally, Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators learn from one another's successes, share resources, and work to provide the best possible services for self-represented litigants.

Over 50,000 self-represented litigants were directly served during the first two years of the program, and resources and information were made widely available to assist others. Projects initiated by the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators include repurposing courthouse space for help desks; improving signage and materials; and creating early resolution programs to resolve cases more quickly.

A total of \$276,632 has been awarded to courts through this initiative, with grants awarded to nine judicial circuits in year one; 11 judicial circuits in year two; and 12 judicial circuits in year three. The remaining initiative budget is utilized for in-person training sessions addressing topics such as information vs. legal advice, making referrals, customer service, implicit bias, mental illness, plain language, user-centered design, communication/de-escalation, and literacy. See Appendix D for a list of all program participants.

EXPANSION OF JUSTICECORPS

Illinois JusticeCorps expanded to three new courthouses—the Leighton Criminal Courthouse (Cook County), Kane County, and McHenry County—bringing the total to 13 courthouses in 11 counties, including locations in each of the state's five appellate districts. In the 2018-2019 program year, JusticeCorps assisted 116,427 court patrons. Illinois JusticeCorps also implemented court partnership

agreements in all site locations and conducted the first-ever alumni survey, which was used to assess educational and career outcomes for former members and to provide feedback on how to improve the program.

DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-HELP WEBSITES

The Senior Program Manager for Self-Represented Litigants of the ATJ Division travelled throughout the state to evaluate the available self-help resources while also presenting training courses for court and clerk staffs. Based on this experience, the ATJ Commission developed its website, Resources for Self-Represented Litigants¹⁷. The site includes a comprehensive E-filing guide, useful legal information, lawyer referral information, and resources for free or low-cost legal advice.

Additionally, the ATJ Commission and AOIC ATJ Division created a shared website with members of the Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator Program, which houses all available self-help resources in the circuits where there is a Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator.

ATJ COMMISSION BRAND AND WEBSITE

The ATJ Commission, its committees and its subcommittees and the AOIC ATJ Division work incredibly hard to develop materials for self-represented litigants, limited English proficient litigants, judges, and court staff. The new brand and website will help the ATJ Commission disseminate its message and promote the use of its resources. The brand and website will be made public in spring 2020.

17. illinoiscourts.gov/CivilJustice/Resources/Self-Represented_Litigants/self-represented.asp

COMMUNITY TRUST COMMITTEE TOWN HALLS

When faced with a life problem, most people turn to family, friends, and local community resources for help, rather than seeking relief through the courts. Therefore, the ATJ Commission's Community Trust Committee brought together social service providers, community organizations, faith-based organizations, legal aid providers, local law enforcement and healthcare providers, as well as judges and court staff, at town halls in the south suburbs of Chicago. Participants learned about information gaps, challenges service groups face in providing legal information to their clients, and the need to share referral information and other helpful resources. After information-gathering, the Community Trust Committee will establish a system of communication among the various stakeholders and explore trainings and programs to respond to issues raised by the participants. The Committee has plans to expand its work to Lee County in the 15th Judicial Circuit.

EDUCATION AND RESOURCES ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE TOPICS

Between 2017 and 2020, the AOIC ATJ Division staffed several judicial trainings on topics, which included: working with self-represented litigants and those with limited English proficiency; 2019 Civil Fee Waiver updates and the new Criminal Court Assessments; limited-scope representation; and a poverty simulation for judges to "walk in the shoes" of a low-income self-represented litigant facing eviction. See Appendix E for a comprehensive list of the trainings provided. The Court Guidance and Training Committee created a judicial bench card with helpful tips and reminders about how

to best work with self-represented litigants in the courtroom. See Appendix F for self-represented litigants and Supreme Court Rule 63(A)(4) bench card. The practical tips include: using plain language; explaining court processes; actively listening; and providing self-represented litigants with checklists and referrals. Additionally, the AOIC ATJ Division provided trainings to court staff, circuit clerks, and Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators based in all 102 counties.

REMOTE APPEARANCES

The ATJ Commission partnered with the Circuit Court of Cook County on a Remote Video Pilot Program. It allows litigants to appear remotely in the following court divisions: Domestic Relations, Chancery and County. The Pilot Program launched on December 2, 2019 and will run for one year. The Remote Appearance Committee of the ATJ Commission finalized revisions to court rules and developed a remote appearance policy to guide a more liberal use of remote appearances by courts throughout the state.

VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETING TECHNOLOGY

The AOIC ATJ Division developed a video remote interpreting (VRI) pilot program in three counties: Winnebago, McLean, and Champaign. The AOIC ATJ Division received a technical assistance grant from the State Justice Institute to hire a consultant from the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). The consultant evaluated the benefits and challenges associated with using video remote interpreting. While each pilot is still in the beginning stages, the equipment has allowed Winnebago and McLean

counties to connect with approved interpreters in other states or other parts of Illinois, and to save on interpreter travel costs without sacrificing quality of service.

LAW STUDENT LEADERS SUMMIT

The ATJ Commission launched an inaugural Law Student Leaders Access to Justice Summit in February 2019. The ATJ Commission hosted 70 law students and faculty from each of the state's nine law schools, Illinois JusticeCorps Fellows, and community members for a day focused on educating and inspiring future leaders on how they can help provide equal access to our judicial system in their respective career paths. Delegates were selected by the Deans of each respective law school and represented a diverse group of both public interest and non-public interest focused students. The ATJ Commission intends to host future summits on a biennial basis.

THE JEFFERY D. COLMAN ACCESS TO JUSTICE AWARD

Created in 2019, the ATJ Award will recognize individuals who have made a significant or meaningful contribution to improving access to our civil court system for litigants who are self-represented, limited English proficient, disabled, or otherwise vulnerable. It will be given to one person each year in honor of Jeff Colman's years of service—as the first Chair of the ATJ Commission and then as a Commissioner. It is anticipated the first award will be given in late 2020 or early 2021.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO E-FILING MANDATE

To address barriers that mandatory e-filing (effective January 1, 2018) may pose for vulnerable populations, the ATJ Commission proposed changes to Supreme Court Rule 9 for an exemption to e-filing and created a standardized form for the exemption. With these changes, exemptions from the e-filing mandate became available to those who had no computer or internet in the home; difficulty reading, writing, or speaking English; or were required to file documents in a sensitive case. Disability was added as an automatic exemption. The AOIC ATJ Division also created instruction manuals for how to go through the 10 steps necessary for e-filing in the Odyssey and i2File systems. In addition, the AOIC ATJ Division fielded calls about e-filing from self-represented litigants, judges, court staff, lawyers, and others to troubleshoot issues. Revisions were also made to the Safe Harbor Policy in November 2018 to add sections for e-filing assistance.

ADOPTION OF PLAIN LANGUAGE POLICY BY THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT

To address the important role plain language plays in procedural fairness and access to justice, the ATJ Commission proposed a Plain Language Policy to the Illinois Supreme Court¹⁸, which was adopted in 2018. The Policy is intended to provide guidance to judges, court staff, circuit clerks and law librarians when developing written materials and communicating to the public about legal information, court processes, rules, and forms. The ATJ Commission also adopted a reference guide¹⁹ for writing in plain language.

18. courts.illinois.gov/CivilJustice/Training_Education/Plain_Language_Policy.pdf

19. courts.illinois.gov/CivilJustice/Training_Education/ReferenceGuide.pdf

HELPFUL INFORMATION ADDED TO SUMMONS

The ATJ Commission proposed revisions to Supreme Court Rule 101 to require a summons to provide information about e-filing and self-help resources where the rule was previously silent. The amendments become effective in January 2018.

AMENDMENTS TO SUPREME COURT RULE 16 REMOVED NOTARY BARRIER

Prior to the addition of Supreme Court Rule 16, the law required self-represented litigants to find and pay fees for notary services in order to participate in their legal cases. This requirement only applied to those unrepresented by counsel and served as a significant access barrier for self-represented litigants, especially those with limited means. Supreme Court Rule 16, as proposed by the ATJ Commission, removed the notary requirement and allowed for an affidavit to be filed under oath under 735 ILCS 5/1-109. This new rule became effective July 2018.

EARLY RESOLUTION PROGRAMS

The ATJ Commission, through its Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator program, provided grant funding for early resolution divorce programs in McHenry, Lake, and Cook counties. The McHenry County and Lake County programs invite petitioners and respondents who are unrepresented in simple divorce cases without children to get divorces on their first court appearance by agreement. Both counties partner with Prairie State Legal Services to have lawyers review the prove-up documents for completeness prior to going before the judge. Cook County implemented a triage program for cases filed

by unrepresented petitioners. Those parties meet with a hearing officer to assess whether their case can be resolved quickly after finalizing paperwork, or if the case should be returned to the regular court call. The preliminary results of these programs show they can significantly reduce the time from filing to resolution.

SUPREME COURT APPROVAL OF ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROGRAM IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) uses technology to facilitate the resolution of disputes, or of issues within disputes, usually between parties who are self-represented. ODR primarily involves negotiation, mediation, arbitration, or a combination of all of these. The Illinois Supreme Court recently approved its first ODR pilot program, in Peoria County. Utilizing a \$5,000 grant from the ATJ Commission, the county implemented a pilot ODR program as an enhancement to its mandatory mediation program in dissolution of marriage cases for self-represented parents. The pilot project started in the fall of 2019 and will run for one year.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO COURT FEES AND FINES

The Illinois Access to Justice Act created the Statutory Court Fee Task Force to study court fees and fines and make recommendations to standardize and improve the system. The Task Force, staffed by the AOIC ATJ Division, convened with membership from all three branches of government and issued recommendations in 2016. The Task Force found that many filing fees imposed on litigants in civil

cases and court costs on defendants in criminal cases resulted in excessive financial impact on citizens, particularly those with low incomes. It was additionally discovered that fees could vary significantly from county to county, even for the same type of proceedings.

As a result of the study and recommendations, changes were made to Supreme Court Rules and legislative statutes in 2019 to greatly expand circuit and appellate court fee waivers and introduce a civil assessment schedule. Amendments to Supreme Court Rule 298 and new Rule 404 allow for partial civil fee waivers and criminal fee waivers, and Public Act 100-0987 simplifies the imposition, collection, and distribution of court assessments.

To educate the judicial branch, the AOIC ATJ Division created a comprehensive packet of information for judges and clerks, including a judicial bench card and Federal Poverty Level chart (updated annually), as well as an overview document highlighting the changes to the law. See Appendix G for a sample of those materials.

EFFORTS TO INCREASE LIMITED SCOPE REPRESENTATION

To improve education and awareness about limited scope representation, the ATJ Commission's Court Guidance and Training Committee created a judicial bench card and the AOIC ATJ Division developed a training session that was provided at the biennial Judicial Educational Conference in 2018. See Appendix H for the Limited Scope bench card.

JUSTICE FOR ALL GRANT

In October 2019, the AOIC and ATJ Commission were awarded a \$100,000 grant from the National Center for State Courts as part of its Justice for All initiative. In collaboration with statewide justice partners, the grant is being used to conduct a comprehensive and critical analysis of statewide resources and justice gaps and to develop a workable action plan for bridging the gap between legal needs and legal resources. A Justice for All Advisory Committee has been created, which includes statewide representatives from the courts, the legal community, and non-traditional stakeholders. Grant initiatives include data collection, asset mapping, focus groups, surveys, and the drafting of an action plan. At the end of the grant year, a report will be published that includes recommended projects to be implemented in 2021 and beyond.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Resources for Access to Justice:
ATJ Commission Committees and Subcommittees

APPENDIX B

Where is JusticeCorps?

APPENDIX C

Published Statewide Standardized Court Forms

APPENDIX D

Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators
Summary of Awards

APPENDIX E

Resources for Access to Justice:
Training for Court Stakeholders July 2017-March 2020

APPENDIX F

Bench Card: Self-Represented Litigants and SCR 63(A)(4)

APPENDIX G

Bench Card: Civil Fee and Criminal Assessment Waivers

APPENDIX H

Bench Card: Limited Scope Representation



Resources for Access to Justice: ATJ Commission Committees and Subcommittees

1. Appellate Committee

- Committee
 - Judge Daniel J. Pierce, Co-Chair, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Judge Mary K. Rochford, Co-Chair, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Judge Robert Carter, Appellate Court Justice of the 3rd District
 - Judge Thomas Harris, Appellate Court Justice of the 4th District
 - Judge Margaret Stanton McBride, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Judge Mary Schostok, Appellate Court Justice of the 2nd District
- Staff:
 - Bob Glaves, The Chicago Bar Foundation
 - Kathryn Hensley, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

2. Community Trust Committee

- Committee
 - Carolyn Clift, Co-Chair, Illinois Equal Justice Foundation
 - Judge Jorge Ortiz, Co-Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Lake County
 - Matthew Davison, Illinois Guardianship & Advocacy Commission
 - Judge Maureen Ward Kirby, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Judge Sharon Sullivan, Presiding Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County
 - Judge Nichole Patton, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Veronique Baker, Illinois Guardianship & Advocacy Commission
 - Dina Merrell, The Chicago Bar Foundation
 - Leslie Corbett, Illinois Equal Justice Foundation
 - Cynthia Sadkin, Legal Aid Chicago
 - Cortney Redman, Illinois JusticeCorps
 - Denise Bezick-Hume, Prairie State Legal Services
 - Judge Darron Bowden, Associate Judge, Cook County
 - Judge Mary K. Rochford, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Judie Smith, Cook County Public Defender
 - Barbara Barreno-Paschall, Commissioner, Illinois Human Rights Commission
- Staff
 - Sophia Akbar, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
 - Jill Roberts, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
 - Alison Spanner, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

3. Court Guidance and Training Committee

- Subcommittee: Judges
 - Judge Johannah B. Weber, Chair, Circuit Judge of the 2nd Judicial Circuit, Jefferson County
 - Judge Clarence M. Darrow, Presiding Judge of the Civil Division/Acting Chief Judge of the 14th Judicial Circuit, Rock Island County
 - Judge Sharon Sullivan, Presiding Judge of the County Division, Circuit Court of Cook County
 - David Holtermann, The Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois
 - Judge Elizabeth Rochford, Associate Judge of the 19th Judicial Circuit, Lake County
 - Judge Michael Hyman, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Judge Michael Kramer, Chief Judge of the 21st Judicial Circuit, Kankakee County
 - Wendy Vaughn, Northern Illinois University College of Law
- Subcommittee: Clerks
 - Tammy R. Weikert, Chair, Circuit Clerk, Rock Island County
 - Maureen Josh, Circuit Clerk, DeKalb County
 - Kelly Smeltzer, General Counsel, Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County
 - Sandi Cianci, Circuit Clerk, Kankakee County
 - Holly Lemons, Circuit Clerk, Montgomery County
 - Lori Geschwandner, Circuit Clerk, Adams County
 - Kim Stahl, Circuit Clerk, Ogle County
 - Kahalah Clay, Circuit Clerk, St. Clair County
- Staff
 - Jill Roberts, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

4. Forms Committee

- Committee
 - Judge Michael A. Fiello, Co-Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Jackson County
 - Judge Catherine Schneider, Co-Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Mark Swartz, Lawyers Committee for Better Housing
 - Judge Ed Schoenbaum, Retired Judge, Sangamon County
 - George Vournazos, Cook County Sheriff's Office
 - Julie Bauer, Winston & Strawn, Cook County
 - Carmen R. Anderson, Cook County Circuit Court
 - Marilyn Stromborg, DeKalb County Circuit Clerks Office
 - Susan Simone, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid
 - Richard Toboz, Heavner, Beyers & Mihlar, LLC
 - Teri Ross, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Subcommittees
 - Appellate Subcommittee
 - Josh Vincent, Chair, Hinshaw & Culberston LLP
 - Jeffrey Kaplan, Clerk of the 2nd Appellate District
 - Carolyn Grosboll, Clerk of the Supreme Court
 - Susan Simone, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid
 - Tina Schillaci, 1st Appellate District

- Kathryn Hensley, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
- Amy Clark, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Adult Expungement and Sealing/ Criminal Records Relief Subcommittee
 - Beth Johnson, Chair, Rights and Restoration Law Group, LLC
 - Courtney Kelledees, Rights and Restoration Law Group, LLC
 - Anthony Lowery, Safer Foundation
 - Halle Cox, Kane County Law Library & Self-Help Legal Center
 - Andrew May, Neal, Gerber, & Eisenberg
 - Steve Fus, United Airlines
 - Judge Thomas Byrne, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Aliyar Durrani, A.S. Durani Attorney at Law
 - Teri Ross, Illinois Legal Aid Online
 - Brandon Williams, Cabrini Green Legal Aid
 - Arienne Jones, Cook County State's Attorney
- Certificates Subcommittee
 - Aliyar Durrani, A.S. Durrani Attorney at Law
 - Courtney Kelledees, Rights and Restoration Law Group, LLC
 - Judge Thomas Byrne, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Steven Fus, United Airlines
 - Anthony Lowery, Safer Foundation
 - Brandon Williams, Cabrini Green Legal Aid
- Civil Asset Forfeiture Subcommittee
 - Judge James Carroll, Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Judge Vincent F. Cornelius, Circuit Court Judge, Will County
 - Jonathan Brayman, Breen & Pugh
 - John Rekowski, Madison County Public Defender
 - Ben Ruddell, ACLU
 - James Lynch, Cook County State's Attorney
 - John Karnavas, Cook County State's Attorney
 - Teri Ross, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Civil Procedures Subcommittee
 - Judge Catherine Schneider, Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Marisa Wiesman, Prairie State Legal Services
 - Deidre Baumann, Baumann & Shuldiner
 - Maureen Josh, Circuit Clerk of DeKalb County
 - Elizabeth Howlett Bogie, 19th Judicial Circuit Court
 - Andrew Sharp, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Criminal Procedures Subcommittee
 - Edward Huntley, Chair, Retired, Illinois Department of Corrections
 - Zachary Pollack, Sabucco, Beck, Hensen, Massino, and Pollack
 - Jonathan Pilsner, Office of the State Appellate Defender
 - Jared Giuffre, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
 - Suzanne H. Armstrong, Office of the Chief Judge, 18th Judicial Circuit

- Judge Carey Gill, Circuit Court Judge, 1st Judicial Circuit
- Judge John Wasilewski, Retired Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
- Lori Geschwander, Circuit Clerk of Adams County
- Daniel Bronke, Washington County State's Attorney
- Teri Ross, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Divorce Subcommittee
 - Judge Michael A. Fiello, Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Jackson County
 - Susan Pulido-Craven, CARPLS
 - Benjamin Lawson, Lawson & O'Brien
 - Judge Pamela Loza, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Anthony Andreano, Andreano & Lyons
 - Erin Bodendorfer, Katz & Stefani LLC
 - Amy Clark, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Eviction Subcommittee
 - Mark Swartz, Chair, Lawyers Committee for Better Housing
 - Richard Toboz, Heavner, Beyers & Mihlar, LLC
 - Matthew Hulstein, Chicago Volunteer Legal Services
 - Michelle Fitzsimmons, Prairie State Legal Services
 - Lawrence Wood, Legal Aid Chicago
 - Judge Jean Golden, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Will Asa, Miller & Steeno, P.C.
 - Michael Zink, Starr, Bejgiert, Zink & Rowells
 - Jill Roberts, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
 - Matthew Newsted, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Guardianship Subcommittee
 - Megan Nolan, Johnson & Johnson, Belleville
 - Maureen Loughran, Lawrence Kamin, Ltd.
 - Steven Iden, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid
 - Judge James Riley, FMS Law Group, Retired Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Walter Zukowski, Zukowski Law Offices
 - Rebekah Azar Rashidfarokhi, Chicago Volunteer Legal Services
 - Cheryl Lipton, Center for Disability and Elder Law
 - Judge Susan Kennedy Sullivan, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Don Everhart, Clerk of the Circuit Court of McLean County
 - Jennifer Shadid, Office of the Chief Judge, 10th Judicial Circuit
 - Andrew Sharp, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Juvenile Expungement Subcommittee
 - Judge Martin J. Mengarelli, Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Bond County
 - Sarah Sallen Stewart, Legal Aid Chicago
 - Sue Pak, Cabrini Green Legal Aid
 - Halle Cox, Kane County Law Library & Self-Help Legal Center
 - Julie L Biehl, Northwestern University, Pritzker School of Law
 - Parul Desai, Cook County Public Defender

- Lizzy Ullman, Loyola University Chicago
- Natanya Pope, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Mortgage Foreclosure Subcommittee
 - Justice Mathias Delort, Chair, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Carina Segalini, Circuit Court of Cook County
 - James Brady, Legal Aid Chicago,
 - Lois Durbin, Circuit Clerk of Macon County
 - Judge Suzanne C. Mangiamele, Circuit Court Judge, McHenry County,
 - Lee Perres, Lee Scott Perres, PC
 - Judge Christy Solverson, Presiding Circuit Court Judge, Jackson County,
 - Martin Potter, Codilis & Associates
 - Professor Damian Ortiz, The John Marshall Law School
- Name Change Subcommittee
 - Adrian Barr, Chair, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid
 - Don Everhart, Circuit Clerk of McClean County
 - Jenna Kearns, Illinois JusticeCorps
 - James Crawley, Kennedy & Associates
 - Jennifer Shadid, Office of the Chief Judge, 10th Judicial Circuit
 - Natanya Pope, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Protective Orders Subcommittee
 - Judge Steven Sawyer (Ret.), Chair, Sharp-Hundley P.C., Former Chief Judge of the 2nd Circuit
 - Gail A Thomas, Southern Illinois University School of Law
 - Loretta Line, Cook County Circuit Court, Domestic Violence Division
 - Margaret Duval, Ascend Justice
 - Candice Stearns, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid
 - Matthew Newsted, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Small Claims Subcommittee
 - Katie Blakeman, Chair, Circuit Clerk of Champaign County
 - Ashlee Highland, CARPLS
 - Bob Markoff, Markoff Law LLC
 - Judge Ronald Gerts, Circuit Court Judge, Kankakee County
 - Anne Ray, Markel Corp
 - Andrew Sharp, Illinois Legal Aid Online
- Staff
 - Kathleen Callahan, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
 - Hayley Yussman, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

5. Language Access Committee

- Committee
 - Judge Grace Dickler, Co-Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Judge Diann Marsalek, Co-Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
 - Judge Sandra Parga, Strategic Planning Subcommittee Chair, Circuit Court Judge, Kane County

- Elena Caloca-Norman, Director of Office of Interpreter Services, Circuit Court of Cook County
- Ann Gronlund, Master Sign Language Interpreter
- Judge Esteban Sanchez, Circuit Court Judge, Sangamon County
- Samira Nazem, The Chicago Bar Foundation
- Ami Gandhi, Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law
- Judge Debra Walker, Circuit Court Judge, Cook County
- Katie Blakeman, Circuit Clerk, Champaign County
- Roger Holland, Kane County Trial Court Administrator
- Adrienne Haley, Administrative Assistant to the Chief Judge, Kankakee County
- Denise Bezick-Hume, Prairie State Legal Services
- Elias Shakkour, Arabic Interpreter
- Judie Smith, Cook County Public Defender
- Marta Almodovar, Cook County Office of Accessibility, Education, and Outreach
- Kate Jankowski, Certified Polish Interpreter
- Staff
 - Sophia Akbar, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
 - Noor Alawawda, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

6. Remote Appearance Committee

- Committee
 - Jennifer Nijman, Chair, Nijman Franzetti LLP
 - Judge Mary Mikva, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Judge Mary K. Rochford, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Judge Robert Pilmer, Chief Judge of the 23rd Judicial Circuit, Kendall County
 - Judge Lisa Wilson, Associate Judge of the 10th Judicial Circuit, Tazewell County
 - Maggie Miller, Office of Presiding Judge Grace Dickler
 - Rachel A Boehm, Boehm Law Group, P.C.
 - Nolan Wright, Southern Illinois University School of Law
 - Samira Nazem, The Chicago Bar Foundation
 - Marisa Wiesman, Prairie State Legal Services
 - Andrew Weaver, Land of Lincoln Legal Aid
 - Sarah Taylor, Barrett, Twomey, Broom, Hughes & Hoke, LLP
 - Carina Segalini, Circuit Court of Cook County
- Staff
 - Jill Roberts, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

7. Rules and Policy Review Committee

- Committee
 - Linda Coberly, Chair, Winston & Strawn LLP
 - Committee in development
- Staff
 - Alison Spanner, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

8. Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator Selection Committee

- Committee
 - Judge Mary K. Rochford, Chair, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Samira Nazem, The Chicago Bar Foundation

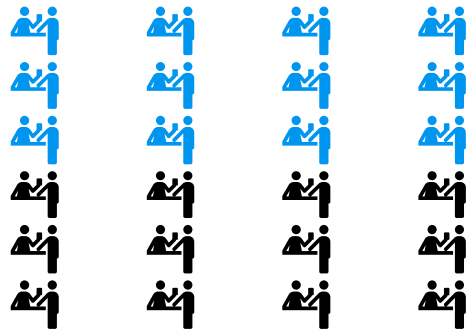
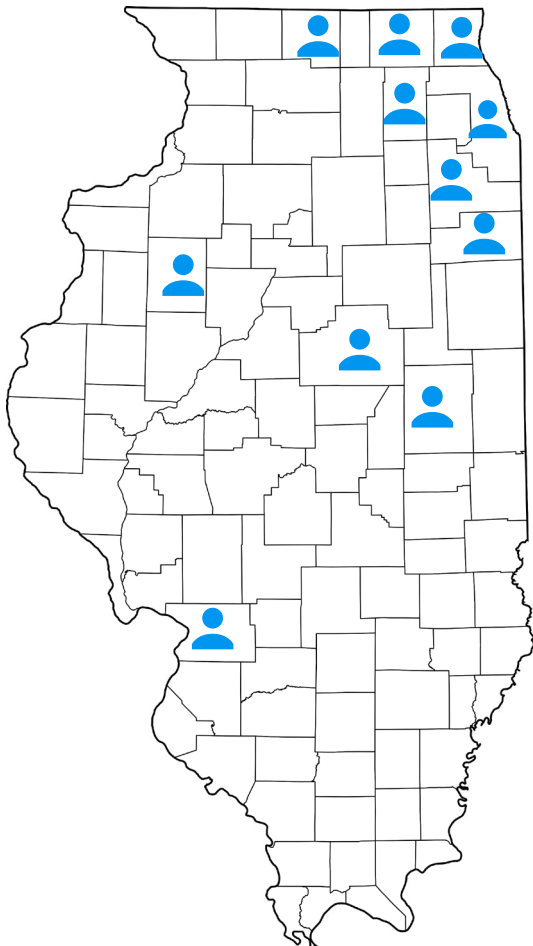
- Hanna Kaufman, The Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois
- Judge Leonard Murray, Associate Judge of Cook County
- Wendy Vaughn, Northern Illinois University College of Law
- Stacey Weiler, Illinois Bar Foundation
- Alison Spanner, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
- Kathryn Hensley, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
- Staff
 - Jill Roberts, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

9. Steering Committee for Illinois JusticeCorps

- Committee
 - Judge Patricia Golden, Chair, Retired
 - Judge Mary K. Rochford, Appellate Court Justice of the 1st District
 - Judge Leonard Murray, Associate Judge of Cook County
 - Lisa Nyuli, Ariano Hardy Ritt Nyuli Richmond Lytle & Goettel, P.C.
 - Melanie Lomax, Office of the Chief Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County
 - Tom Panoff, Mayer Brown
 - Maureen Josh, Circuit Clerk, DeKalb County
- Staff:
 - Bob Glaves, The Chicago Bar Foundation
 - Samira Nazem, The Chicago Bar Foundation
 - Cortney Redman, The Chicago Bar Foundation, Illinois JusticeCorps Regional Director for Cook and Lake Counties
 - Stacey Weiler, Illinois Bar Foundation, Program Operations Director, Illinois JusticeCorps
 - Jenna Kearns, Illinois JusticeCorps Regional Director
 - Kathryn Hensley, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
 - Alison Spanner, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Where is JusticeCorps?

13 Sites in 11 Counties



46% of Circuits
are served by Illinois JusticeCorps

EVERY
JUSTICECORPS
MEMBER SERVES
AT LEAST
300 HOURS
OVER THE COURSE OF
ONE YEAR



Courthouses Served:
Champaign; Cook (Daley Center, Markham, and Leighton Criminal Court Building); Kane; Kankakee; Knox; Lake; Madison; McHenry; McLean; Will; and Winnebago



Published Statewide Standardized Court Forms

Which Forms Are Currently Available?

To date, the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice's Forms Committee has finalized and published the following forms and their corresponding instructions:

- *Appellate*: Notice of Appeal, Docketing Statement, Bystanders Report, Agreed Statement of Facts, Request for Preparation of Record on Appeal, Request for Report of Proceedings (Transcripts), Application for Waiver of Court Fees (Appellate Court), Appellant's Brief, Appellee's Brief, Appellant's Reply Brief, Appellate Motion, Appellate Motion Order and Petition for Rehearing.
- *Criminal*: Application for Waiver of Criminal Court Assessments, Order for Waiver of Criminal Court Assessments.
- *Divorce*: Petition for Dissolution of Marriage/Civil Union (No Children), Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage/Civil Union (No Children), Petition for Dissolution of Marriage/Civil Union (with Children), Parenting Plan, Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage/Civil Union (with Children), Summons Petition for Dissolution of Marriage/Civil Union, Entry of Appearance, Certification Agreement, Order for Support, Support Information Sheet, Income Withholding for Support, Interim Fee Award Order, and Financial Affidavit (Family & Divorce Cases).
- *Eviction*: Eviction Order.
- *Expungement/Sealing*: Request to Expunge & Impound Criminal Records and/or Seal Criminal Records, Order to Expunge & Impound and/or Seal Criminal Records, Order Denying Request to Expunge & Impound and/or Seal Criminal Records, Notice of Filing for Expungement and/or Sealing, Request to Expunge Juvenile Records, Notice of Filing for Juvenile Expungement, Order to Expunge Juvenile Records, Certificate of Good Conduct, and Change of Address.
- *Mortgage Foreclosure*: Mortgage Foreclosure Appearance and Answer, Motion to Stay Foreclosure Sale, Order to Stay Foreclosure Sale, Notice of Motion to Stay Foreclosure Sale, Motion to Vacate Default Judgment of Foreclosure, Notice of Motion to Vacate Default Judgment of Foreclosure, and Order to Vacate Default Judgment of Foreclosure.
- *Name Change*: Request for Name Change (Adult), Order for Name Change (Adult) Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change (Adult), Request for Name Change (Minor), Order for Name Change (Minor), Notice of Court Date (Minor), Publication Notice (Minor), Letter to Sheriff (Minor), Motion to Waive Notice & Publication (Request for Name Change)*, and Order to Waive Publication*,
 *Published versions for both Adult and Minor Name Change form suites.
- *Orders of Protection*: Petition for Order of Protection, Order of Protection, Emergency Order of Protection, and Summons (Protective Orders).

- *Post-Judgment*: Citation to Discover Assets to Debtor, Citation to Discover Assets to Debtor’s Employer, Citation to Discover Assets to Debtor’s Employer Letter to the Sheriff, Citation to Discover Assets to Debtor’s Bank, Citation to Discover Assets to Debtor’s Bank Letter to the Sheriff, Emergency Motion to Claim Exemption, Notice of Emergency Motion to Claim Exemption, and Order Emergency Motion to Claim Exemption.
- *Identity Theft*: Identity Theft Affidavit (Credit Card or Debt Buyer Collection Action).
- *Procedural Forms*: Application for Waiver of Court Fees, Order for Waiver of Court Fees , Appearance, Answer/Response to Complaint/Petition, Motion, Motion Order, Notice of Court Date for Motion, Motion to Continue or Extend Time, Order Granting/Denying Motion to Continue or Extend Time, Summons, Letter to the Sheriff, Interpreter Request, Notice of Limited Scope Appearance, Notice of Withdrawal of Limited Scope Appearance, Objection to Withdrawal of Limited Scope Appearance, Proof of Service, Proof of Delivery, Certificate for Exemption from E-Filing, and Certificate for Exemption from E-Filing.
- *Supreme Court Forms*: Motion, Motion Order, Petition for Rehearing, Application for Waiver of Court Fees, and Certificate for Exemption from E-Filing.

Which Forms are translated and available for those with Limited English Proficiency?

- *Available in Spanish, Polish, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Korean*: Appearance and Financial Affidavit (Family and Divorce Cases).
- *Available in Spanish*: Answer/Response to Complaint/Petition, Eviction Order, Motion, Notice of Court Date for Motion, Motion to Continue or Extend Time, Identity Theft Affidavit, Appellate Court Certification for Exemption from E-Filing, Supreme Court Certification for Exemption from E-filing, and Interpreter Request.

All forms are available at illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/default.asp.

**Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators
Summary of Awards
Year 1: 2017-2018**

Judicial Circuit	App. District	Counties Served	Coordinator	Project Summary	Award
First	Fifth	Alexander; Jackson; Johnson; Massac; Pope; Pulaski; Saline; Union; Williamson.	Brenda Sprague, Administrative Assistant, Office of Chief Judge, First Circuit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form committees of SRLs, attorneys, paralegals, and other community members Better utilize circuit websites Provide professional training and education for legal professionals, the public, or SRLs Increase community awareness of resources 	Training \$10,000
Third	Fifth	Madison & Bond	Angela Warta, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change layout of physical space in Madison and add work stations Create Self-Help Center in Bond Improve standardized form distribution 	Training \$15,000
Tenth	Third	Marshall, Peoria, Putnam, Stark, and Tazewell	Rena' Parker, Trial Court Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create uniform practices throughout Circuit Update SRL information on websites 	Training only
Twelfth	Third	Will	Jeane Fillipitch, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconfigure the resources and equipment in Self-Help Center Create user guides for efilng 	Training \$5000
Fourteenth	Third	Rock Island	Rose Reazor, Arbitration Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set-up efilng stations Track cases Develop Language Clearinghouse 	Training only
Fifteenth	Second	Lee, Ogle, Stephenson	Le Ann Brandenburg, Trial Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint one Resource Person to rotate in the 3 counties Establish meeting space to meet with 	Training \$15,000

			Administrator	SRLs, with necessary equipment	
Sixteenth	Second	Kane	Halle Cox, Director, Kane Law Library and Self-Help Legal Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop family court 'prescription pads' • Translate SRL information into Spanish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with public libraries to take "Lawyer in the Library" on the road • Provide training on basic legal research skills to public librarians 	Training \$10,000
Seventeenth	Second	Winnebago & Boone	Brian Buzard, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-reminders (text and/or email) • Video Remote Interpreting • Pictogram Charts for family/divorce, OP, small claims, eviction 	Training \$5000
Nineteenth	Second	Lake	Elizabeth Howlett Bogie, Senior Staff Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Case Facilitator (case manager, education about process/expectations, set interim date when one party SRL, identify length of case) 	Training only
Twenty First	Third	Kankakee	Adrienne Haley, Admin Assistant to Chief Judge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate information into Spanish • Create self-help brochures and booklets • Ensure all partners have and distribute self-help materials 	Training \$5000
Twenty Second	Second	McHenry	Susy Huffman, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Resolution Program for Divorces involving SRLs (screen cases, coordinate with attorneys to negotiate settlement on first appearance to shorten time from filing to disposition) 	Training \$15,000
Cook	First	Cook	Maggie Miller & Nathalie Silva, Domestic Relations Attys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand services to suburban districts • Train navigators to assist SRLs • Compile guide for how to do research • Conduct personal consultations 	Training \$10,000

Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators
Summary of Awards
Year 2: 2018-2019

Judicial Circuit	App. District	Counties Served	Coordinator	Project Summary	Award
First	Fifth	Alexander; Jackson; Johnson; Massac; Pope; Pulaski; Saline; Union; Williamson.	Brenda Sprague, Administrative Assistant, Office of Chief Judge, First Circuit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form committees of SRLs, attorneys, paralegals, and other community members Better utilize circuit websites Provide professional training and education for legal professionals, the public, or SRLs Increase community awareness of resources 	Training \$12,000
Third	Fifth	Madison & Bond	Angela Warta, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recipient last year Did not ask for additional funds but will participate with network 	Training only
Eighth	Fourth	Adams	Jennifer Power, Law Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and staff a self-help desk with better signage and materials 	Training \$10,000
Tenth	Third	Peoria	Rena' Parker, Trial Court Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot an Online Dispute Resolution project 	Training \$5,000
Twelfth	Third	Will	Jeane Fillipitch, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LanguageLine for non-court events (spoken language and ASL) Translate materials into Spanish 	Training \$3,400
Fourteenth	Third	Rock Island	Rose Reasor, Arbitration Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant last year Did not ask for funds this year but will participate with network 	Training only
Fifteenth	Second	Lee, Ogle, Stephenson	Le Ann Brandenburg, Trial Court Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize a Resource Person to rotate in those 3 counties Do community outreach to teach how to e-file 	Training \$18,500

Sixteenth	Second	Kane	Halle Cox, Director, Kane Law Library and Self-Help Legal Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 'prescription pads' • Translate SRL information into Spanish • Partner with public libraries to take "Lawyer in the Library" on the road • Provide training on basic legal research skills to public librarians 	Training \$12,000
Seventeenth	Second	Winnebago & Boone	Brian Buzard, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on reimagining self-help center in Boone County • Print and distribute Mediation brochures • Continue with e-reminder program and pictograms 	Training \$3000
Nineteenth	Second	Lake	Elizabeth Howlett Bogie, Senior Staff Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a self-represented litigant court call in family court • Create an Early Resolution Program 	Training \$15,000
Twenty First	Third	Kankakee	Adrienne Haley, Admin Assistant to Chief Judge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate information into Spanish • Create self-help brochures and booklets • Ensure all partners have and distribute self-help materials 	Training \$1000
Twenty Second	Second	McHenry	Susy Huffman, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Early Resolution Program for Divorces involving SRLs (screen cases, coordinate with attorneys to negotiate settlement on first appearance to shorten time from filing to disposition) 	Training \$10,000
Cook	First	Cook	Maggie Miller & Nathalie Silva, Domestic Relations Attys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipient last year • Did not ask for additional funds but will participate with network 	Training only

**Self-Represented Litigant Coordinators
Summary of Awards
Year 3: 2019-2020**

Judicial Circuit	App. District	Counties Served	Coordinator	Project Summary	Award
First	Fifth	Alexander; Jackson; Johnson; Massac; Pope; Pulaski; Saline; Union; Williamson.	Brenda Sprague, Administrative Assistant, Office of Chief Judge, First Circuit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue meeting with committee members from all counties • Develop new partnerships • Duplicate Pro Bono Divorce Clinic & Lawyer in the Library programs • Increase community awareness of resources 	Training \$14,000
Third	Fifth	Madison	Angela Wille, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement a Mediation program for cases with both sides SRL 	Training \$5,000
Eighth	Fourth	Adams, Pike	Jennifer Power, Law Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue SRL Help Desk in Adams County • Create SRL resource space in Pike County 	Training \$6,000
Tenth	Third	Peoria	Rena' Parker, Trial Court Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Pilot of Online Dispute Resolution project for family cases in Peoria County and expand to Tazewell County 	Training \$5,000
Eleventh	Fourth	McLean	Mary Sellmyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve physical space in Law Library to better serve SRLs 	Training \$5,000
Twelfth	Third	Will	Alfreda Baran, Law Library Paralegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement an Early Resolution Program for Divorce and Paternity Cases 	Training \$7,500
Fifteenth	Second	Lee, Ogle, Carroll	Le Ann Brandenburg, Trial Court Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize a Resource Person to rotate in those 3 counties • Train court staff on info vs. advice 	Training \$12,000
Sixteenth	Second	Kane	Halle Cox, Director, Kane Law Library and Self-Help Legal Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 'prescription pads' • Translate SRL information into Spanish • Partner with public libraries to take "Lawyer in the Library" on the road • Provide training on basic legal research skills to public librarians 	Training \$10,000

Seventeenth	Second	Winnebago & Boone	Brian Buzard, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create resource centers outside of specific courtrooms 	Training \$1,000
Nineteenth	Second	Lake	Elizabeth Howlett Bogie, Lead Staff Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Early Resolution Program to include divorce with children • Establish an SRL space in the law library 	Training \$13,000
Twenty Second	Second	McHenry	Susy Huffman, Law Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Early Resolution Program for Divorces involving SRLs 	Training \$9,000
Cook	First	Cook-Chicago	Maggie Miller & Nathalie Silva, Domestic Relations Attys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the early resolution triage program for all domestic relations cases with two SRLs 	Training \$1,200
Cook	First	Cook-Maywood	LaShanda O'Quinn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with CVLS for a legal advice clinic • Get a scanner for SRL work station 	Training \$8,032
Sixth	Fourth	Champaign	Lori Hansen, Trial Court Admin		Training Only
Seventh	Fourth	Sangamon	Suzann Maxheimer, Trial Court Admin		Training Only
Ninth	Third	Knox	Deja Jenkins, JusticeCorps		Training Only
Twenty First	Third	Kankakee	Nancy Hinton, Trial Court Admin		Training Only



Resources for Access to Justice: Training for Court Stakeholders July 2017-March 2020

Training for Judges

- Feb. & Apr. 2018 Judicial Education Conference Liaison for SRL sessions
- May 2, 2018 DUI Training (judges & probation) Poverty Simulation
- Jan. 17, 2019 New Judge Orientation Liaison for ATJ session
- Jan. 18, 2019 Conference of Chief Judges CTAA & Waivers
- Apr. 11, 2019 18th Judicial Circuit CTAA & Waivers
- June 21, 2019 Conference of Chief Judges Fee & Assessment Waivers
- Sept. 18, 2019 AJA Conference Liaison for Poverty Simulation
- Dec. 9, 2019 New Judge Orientation Liaison for ATJ session
- Feb. 2020 Judicial Education Conference Liaison for SRL & fee waiver,
presenter Language Access
- Mar. 19, 2020 Judges, TCAs, Clerks, other staff ATJ Liaison for Emergency
Preparedness Webinar

Trainings for Court Staff/Circuit Clerks through Zones & at County-Level

- Jan.10, 2018 Zone IV & Zone V (Northern counties) Info v. Advice
- Mar. 8, 2018 Zone I (Southern counties) Info v. Advice
- Mar. 9, 2018 Zone III (West Central counties) Info v. Advice
- Mar. 28, 2018 Kankakee County Info v. Advice
- May 3, 2018 Sangamon County Info v. Advice
- May 4, 2018 Zone II (East Central counties) Info v. Advice
- June 19, 2018 Cook County (2 sessions) E-filing
- June 20, 2018 Cook County (2 sessions) E-filing
- June 21, 2018 Cook County (2 sessions) E-filing
- Aug. 15, 2018 Monroe County Info v. Advice
- Aug.17, 2018 Wayne County Info v. Advice
- Sept. 18, 2018 IACC Annual Conference (Oak Brook) E-filing
- Oct. 25, 2018 Zone II (East Central counties) E-filing & Cust. Service
- Oct.25, 2018 Ford County All ATJ Topics
- Oct. 25, 2018 Livingston County All ATJ Topics

- Feb. 28, 2019 Winnebago County Court Staff Info v. Advice
- Mar. 5, 2019 Rock Island Clerk Staff Info v. Advice
- Mar. 6, 2019 Pike County Clerk Staff Info vs. Advice & ATJ general
- July 9, 2019 15th Circuit Clerk Staff Info vs. Advice & E-filing
- July 16, 2019 Kane County Clerk Staff Info vs. Advice
- July 18, 2019 3rd Circuit Civility Training with Commission on Professionalism
- Sept. 6, 2019 Peoria County Interns & Court Partners Info vs. Advice
- Sept. 27, 2019 9th Circuit Civility Training with Commission on Professionalism
- Nov. 14, 2019 IACO Winter Conference Appellate Resources

Trainings for Court Navigators

- Aug. 25, 2017 JusticeCorps Forms
- Dec. 7, 2017 SRL Coordinators ILAO, Info v. Advice, E-filing, Referrals
- Dec. 8, 2017 SRL Coordinators Customer Service, Implicit Bias
- Feb. 8, 2018 SRL Coordinators Maximizing Self-Help Centers, Public Libraries, and Law Libraries
- Mar. 8, 2018 SRL Coordinators Working with SRLs with Mental Illness
- Mar. 10, 2018 JusticeCorps COLORS Training
- Apr. 12, 2018 SRL Coordinators Assisting Elder and Disabled patrons
- May 10, 2018 SRL Coordinators Info vs. Advice/Unauthorized Practice of Law
- June 11, 2018 SRL Coordinators Mental Health, Communication & Deescalation, DV trauma
- June 12, 2018 SRL Coordinators User Centered Design & Plain Language
- July 12, 2018 SRL Coordinators Language Access outside of the courtroom
- Aug. 9, 2018 SRL Coordinators Bar Assoc., Pro Bono, & Legal Aid Partnerships
- Aug. 21, 2018 JusticeCorps E-filing
- Sept. 13, 2018 SRL Coordinators Disability Accommodations
- Dec. 6, 2018 SRL Coordinators ILAO, Referrals, Trauma Informed Services
- Dec. 7, 2018 SRL Coordinators Communication Skills, Implicit Bias
- Jan. 10, 2019 SRL Coordinators Safe Harbor Policy updates
- Feb. 14, 2019 SRL Coordinators Expungement & Sealing
- Mar. 14, 2019 SRL Coordinators Hot Topics
- Apr. 11, 2019 SRL Coordinators Appellate Court Resources
- May 2, 2019 SRL Coordinators Mental Illness, Deescalation,

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|---|
| | | Fees & Fines, Safe Harbor trainers |
| • May 3, 2019 | SRL Coordinators | Literacy, Plain Language |
| • June 11, 2019 | SRL Coordinators | Community Trust Initiatives |
| • July 11, 2019 | SRL Coordinators | Fee & Assessment Waivers |
| • Aug. 8, 2019 | SRL Coordinators | Appellate Videos with Vyond |
| • Aug. 19, 2019 | JusticeCorps | SRL Experience Simulation |
| • Aug. 20, 2019 | JusticeCorps | Forms, E-filing, Waivers, Info vs. Advice |
| • Sept. 19, 2019 | SRL Coordinators | Order for Protection Standardized Forms |
| • Jan. 9, 2020 | SRL Coordinators | PILI Legal Answers, SRL Experience Simulation |
| • Jan. 10, 2020 | SRL Coordinators | Lawyer in the Library programs, Cannabis, Parental Allocation |
| • Feb. 13, 2020 | SRL Coordinators | Info vs. Advice signage & Law Library space |

Trainings for Other Court Stakeholders

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| • Sept. 8, 2017 | Illinois Legal Advocate Conference | ATJ Commission Work |
| • Aug. 16, 2018 | First Judicial Circuit – public libraries | Info vs. Advice, E-filing |
| • Oct. 11, 2018 | CBA Legal Aid Committee | ATJ Commission Work |
| • Nov. 2, 2018 | Metropolitan Tenant's Organization | E-filing |
| • Feb. 7, 2019 | Chicago Public Library, Adult Services Librarians | Info vs. Advice |
| • Aug. 22, 2019 | First Judicial Circuit – public libraries | Info vs. Advice, E-filing |
| • Sept. 18, 2019 | Chicago Public Library-Regional Meeting | E-filing |
| • Sept. 19, 2019 | Chicago Public Library-Regional Meeting | E-filing |
| • Sept. 24, 2019 | Chicago Public Library-Regional Meeting | E-filing |
| • Dec. 4, 2019 | CBF Board of Directors & YPB | SRL Experience Simulation |
| • Mar. 5, 2020 | SRLN National Conference | SRL Experience Simulation, E-filing |
| • Mar. 6, 2020 | SRLN National Conference | SRL Coordinator program, Limited Scope Representation, Statewide Forms |
| • Mar. 10, 2020 | Chicago Bar Association CLE | SRL Experience Simulation |
| • Mar. 12, 2020 | Appellate Clerks | Safe Harbor Policy, Language Access, & ADA |
| • Mar. 23, 2020 | Appellate Clerks | Safe Harbor Policy, Language Access, & ADA |



ILLINOIS JUDICIAL BRANCH

November 2019 v. 1

Bench Card: Self-Represented Litigants and SCR 63(A)(4)

Judges have the power and obligation to ensure that Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs) are fairly heard.

Illinois Supreme Court Rule 63(A)(4)

A judge shall accord to every person who has a legal interest in a proceeding, or that person's lawyer, the right to be heard according to the law. A judge may make reasonable efforts, consistent with the law and court rules, to facilitate the ability of self-represented litigants to be fairly heard.

Tips for ensuring SRLs are fairly heard:

1. Use simple, plain language; avoid legal jargon; and explain legal concepts.
2. Explain overall court processes (including evidentiary and foundational requirements) and what will happen in court.
3. Ask the SRL what questions they have and check for understanding throughout proceedings.
4. Liberally construe pleadings: look to the substance of a pleading rather than its title.
5. Ask neutral questions for clarification or to focus the proceedings and consider modifying the traditional order of taking evidence.
6. Explain why you are doing something and your basis for rulings.
7. Recognize that most SRLs may be scared and nervous.
8. Be courteous, patient, and an active listener to ease tension.
9. Remember procedural fairness principles: voice, neutrality, respect, trust, understanding, and helpfulness.
10. Appreciate your unconscious biases and increase cultural competencies.
11. Use certified interpreters for limited English proficient or hearing impaired litigants.
12. Provide SRLs with checklists, handouts, and other resources or referrals.

1. Plain Language

The Supreme Court has adopted a Policy on Plain Language stating "All informational documents and informational instructions shall be drafted in plain language whenever practicable. There are times that legal terms may be necessary in informational documents and/or informational instructions and should continue to be used; in those cases, judges...should provide plain language definitions of those legal terms."

2. Explain Court Process

Many SRLs have little, if any, understanding of the court process. You should ensure that SRLs have a basic understanding of the process for that particular day and for the case overall. When explaining process, it is proper to do so in the same manner that you would explain it to a jury. You may wish to provide an explanation of substantive and procedural matters at the beginning of proceedings or have helpful signage posted around the courtroom to identify staff and establish basic procedure (e.g. turn off cell phones).

3. Check for Understanding

At every court appearance, ask if SRLs have questions and if they understand what happened. Consider asking them to summarize what they think happened or what they need to do to ensure they understand. Provide SRLs with detailed written court orders, checklists, or instruction sheets to take with them.

4. Liberally Construe Pleadings

SRLs sometimes use the wrong forms or label pleadings incorrectly. You should focus on the contents of the document and the issues raised.

5. Ask Questions & Consider Modifying Process

You should ask open-ended questions to elicit general information and to obtain clarification from parties or witnesses. You should explain why the questions are being asked and that your questions should not be taken as indicating your opinion of the case. Consider modifying the order of the proceedings as another way to focus the hearing on matters that are material and elicit relevant information more efficiently.

All materials referenced in this bench card, as well as sample resources and referral sheets, can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/ATJCourts>

Bench Card: Self-Represented Litigants and SCR 63(A)(4)

All materials referenced in this bench card, as well as sample resources and referral sheets, can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/ATJCourts>

6. Explain What You're Doing

You should explain why you are doing something (like looking at computer to read a pleading or calling cases in an order that permits interpreters or attorneys to get to other courtrooms) to avoid implying disinterest or bias. You also should explain your rulings, particularly on the admissibility of evidence.

7. SRLs are Stressed

Although the cases you hear are routine for you, they are of the utmost importance to litigants. Court is confusing and the stakes are high. To ease anxiety or tension a judge may: call a recess to allow a person a chance to calm down before proceeding; provide the litigant with an opportunity to leave the courtroom or have a glass of water; and consider safety in the placement of litigants in relation to each other and witnesses in the courtroom.

8. Active Listening & Patience

Some ways to further ease tension for SRLs is by smiling and actively listening (making eye contact, nodding, stopping other work). Introduce yourself and greet all parties by name. Many SRLs report feeling ignored when judges appear friendly with lawyers, but not with them. Things might take longer when SRLs are involved and, generally, that is ok. Also, SRLs may be late or miss court dates due to transportation, employment, or child care challenges. Be patient in hearing the SRLs' explanations and consider remote appearances under SCR 185 for simple status dates to avoid these issues.

9. Procedural Fairness

Research shows that higher perceptions of procedural fairness lead to better acceptance of court decisions and compliance with orders. The elements are:

- Voice: ability of SRLs to be heard
- Neutrality: consistent treatment & unbiased decisions
- Respect: treating SRLs with courtesy & respect
- Trust: perceiving a judge as sincere and caring
- Understanding: ensuring SRLs can understand procedure, decisions, and how decisions are made
- Helpfulness: SRLs perceiving court staff as interested in their situation

10. Unconscious Bias & Cultural Competence

Implicit bias is a psychological process that influences decision-making outside of conscious awareness. Everyone has biases based on repeated exposure to group stereotypes even if you consciously disagree with them. One way to decrease bias is to increase cultural competence (your ability to understand and communicate effectively with people across cultures). Another is developing a positive attitude towards cultural differences and gaining knowledge of cultural practices to improve your interactions with some SRLs.

11. Language Access

In both civil and criminal proceedings, limited English proficient or hearing impaired litigants are entitled to court-provided interpreters. See 735 ILCS 5/8-1402-1403, 725 ILCS 140/2, and Illinois Supreme Court Language Access Policy. A Courtroom Interpreting Bench Card contains information about how to determine the need for an interpreter and tips for communicating through interpreters.

12. Resources & Referrals

Judges and all court, library, and clerk staff may provide SRLs with legal information and referrals. You should discuss with your staff their role in providing that information under the Supreme Court Policy on Assistance to Court Patrons ("Safe Harbor Policy"). Most resources and referrals are locally based, so be sure to learn about what is available in your area. Statewide information may always be shared, including:

- ILAO: www.illinoislegalaid.org
- Forms: www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/
- Legal Aid:
 - Statewide Armed Forces Network: 855-452-3526
 - Cook - CARPLS: 312-738-9200
 - Northern IL – Prairie State: 800-531-7057
 - Southern IL – Land of Lincoln: 877-342-7891
- Bar referral services: ISBA LawyerFind: 800-922-8757 (offers ½ hour attorney consultation for \$25)

Confirm your referral information regularly to make sure the resources are current. If you will be sending SRLs to another office in the courthouse or community, take time to visit so that you are able to give them informed directions on how to get there and guidance on what to expect.

For additional information or assistance with creating helpful resources, please contact:

Jill E. Roberts, Senior Program Manager-SRLs Administrative Office of the IL Courts, Access to Justice Division
312-793-2305; jroberts@illinoiscourts.gov November 2019 v. 1



ILLINOIS JUDICIAL BRANCH

Updated Jan. 2020

Bench Card: Civil Fee and Criminal Assessment Waivers

Before Evaluating Applications

- If an applicant receives a public benefit or is income eligible, a judge shall grant a waiver pursuant to statute.
- A judge has the discretion to:
 - hold an in-person hearing and/or order the applicant to produce supporting documents;
 - allow deferred or installment payments; and
 - grant a waiver based on substantial hardship.
- All waiver applications should be reviewed independent of the underlying pleading or charge.

How Does a Judge Determine Whether an Applicant is Indigent and Qualifies for a Waiver?

There are three ways an applicant qualifies for a FULL waiver:

1. **Means-Based Public Benefit:** Applicant receives assistance from one or more of the following governmental public benefits programs:
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (*Not* Social Security Retirement, Disability, or Survivors benefit)
 - Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (AABD)
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly Food Stamps)
 - General Assistance (GA), Transitional Assistance, or State Children and Family Assistance

NOTE: receiving another type of public benefit that is not on this list means that the person doesn't automatically qualify for a full waiver under statute, but may still qualify based on hardship or income level.
2. **Substantial Hardship:** Applicant demonstrates that paying court fees would pose a substantial hardship.
3. **Household Income:** Applicant's available household income is at or below a percentage of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL): 125% in civil cases or 200% in criminal cases for a full waiver.

NOTE: for both criminal and civil cases, parties are considered indigent and the parties' fees/assessments can be waived if a legal services provider certifies that the person is eligible to receive those free legal services.

Applicants must use the Statewide Standardized Forms

- Forms suites include:
 - Getting Started overview
 - Instructions for asking for a waiver
 - Application for applicants to fill out
 - Order for judges to complete
- One suite for civil cases and another for criminal cases
- Available at <http://illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/Circuit.asp>

1. Determining Indigency – Means-Based Public Benefits

An applicant who receives one or more means-based public benefit automatically qualifies for a full waiver. All these benefits require rigorous screening and regular recertification. Most programs have asset caps, but allow recipients to own one home and one car. Many public benefits recipients work or own property but still live in or near poverty due to low wages, irregular work schedules, household dependents, or declining property values. *If an applicant establishes they receive a qualifying public benefit, analysis is complete and the full waiver shall be granted.*

For more information on the specific criteria and screening procedures for the individual benefit programs, please visit <https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/> or <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx>.

Public Benefits as a Proxy for Indigency

Means-based public benefits programs are:

- Contingent on proof of income, assets, identity, legal status, and other eligibility criteria.
- Recertified on a regular basis.
- Verified by experienced agencies with access to federal databases that can check bank accounts, employment history, and immigration records.
- Proven to have minimal levels of fraud.

Relying on these programs will:

- Reduce the administrative burden on judges and staff.
- Increase efficiency in processing waiver applications.
- Improve statewide consistency of application handling.
- Avoid the appearance of bias by adhering to objective criteria.
- Reduce redundancy for applicants who have already gone through background and income screening.
- Avoid duplication of work by multiple government agencies.

2. Determining Indigency-Substantial Hardship

If an applicant does not receive a public benefit or their income is higher than the stated FPL percentage, they can still qualify for a waiver. A judge may exercise discretion and grant a full waiver to an applicant who can demonstrate that paying the court fees or assessments would constitute a substantial hardship to the individual or the family. Factors to consider, in addition to public benefits and income, are the applicant's monthly expenses and supporting documents showing the fee or assessment would be a substantial hardship.

Bench Card: Civil Fee and Criminal Assessment Waivers

3. Determining Indigency – Household Income

If an applicant does not receive a means-based public benefit, the thing to look at before substantial hardship is income. The most common measure of indigency is the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), the measure set and used by the US government. The FPL is updated each year and applies uniformly throughout the US without adjustment for variation in cost of living. For more information on the federal poverty level, visit <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>. 100% of the 2020 annual FPL for one person is \$12,760 and \$26,200 for a family of four, and the monthly FPL is \$1,063 for one person and \$2,183 for a family of four.

MONTHLY Federal Poverty Level

#	125% FPL	150% FPL	175% FPL	200% FPL	250% FPL	300% FPL	400% FPL
1	\$1,329	1,595	1,861	2,127	2,658	3,190	4,253
2	\$1,796	2,155	2,514	2,873	3,592	4,310	5,747
3	\$2,263	2,715	3,168	3,620	4,525	5,430	7,240
4	\$2,729	3,275	3,821	4,367	5,458	6,550	8,733
5	\$3,196	3,835	4,474	5,113	6,392	7,670	10,227
6	\$3,663	4,395	5,128	5,860	7,325	8,790	11,720

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines> (link to percentage chart on right side)- 2020

Full or Partial Waivers

If an applicant's available household income is 125% or less of FPL (civil cases) or 200% or less of FPL (criminal cases), judges SHALL grant them full waivers. If their income falls in the ranges listed below, judges SHALL grant the corresponding partial waiver. Use these charts as a way to see all bases for full or partial waivers:

Civil Fee Waiver 735 ILCS 5/5-105

100% Waiver	Receives a means-based public benefit (regardless of income)
100% Waiver	Payment would result in substantial hardship (regardless of income)
100% Waiver	Available income 125% FPL or less
75% Waiver	Available income greater than 125% but does not exceed 150% FPL
50% Waiver	Available income greater than 150% but does not exceed 175% FPL
25% Waiver	Available income greater than 175% but does not exceed 200% FPL

Criminal Assessment Waiver 725 ILCS 5/124A-20

100% Waiver	Receives a means-based public benefit (regardless of income)
100% Waiver	Payment would result in substantial hardship (regardless of income)
100% Waiver	Available income 200% FPL or less
75% Waiver	Available income greater than 200% but does not exceed 250% FPL
50% Waiver	Available income greater than 250% but does not exceed 300% FPL
25% Waiver	Available income greater than 300% but does not exceed 400% FPL

Granting or Denying Applications

- A judge must specify a reason in the order if the waiver application is denied.
- Rely on the objective criteria to review waiver applications to avoid potential influence or appearance of bias.
- Do not make assumptions based on an applicant's appearance, clothing, possessions, or demeanor.
- Many applicants have disabilities, both visible and invisible, that can interfere with their ability to work.
- Having a job is not an automatic disqualifier. A federal minimum wage employee with one minor child can work 40 hours a week and still fall under the federal poverty level.
- Having an attorney is not an automatic disqualifier. Some pro bono and limited scope attorneys represent clients in or near poverty. Other attorneys work on contingency or are paid by someone other than the applicant.
- Owning a home is not an automatic disqualifier. Many home owners are "underwater." Even those with equity in the home may live in poverty since it is not a fungible asset.
- There are no residency requirements for waiver applications.

For additional information, please contact:

Jill E. Roberts, Supervising Senior Program Manager
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Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice &
Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts **Updated Jan. 2020**

Civil Fee Waiver 735 ILCS 5/5-105

100% Waiver	Receives a means-based public benefit (regardless of income)
100% Waiver	Payment would result in substantial hardship (regardless of income)
100% Waiver	Available income 125% FPL or less
75% Waiver	Available income greater than 125% but does not exceed 150% FPL
50% Waiver	Available income greater than 150% but does not exceed 175% FPL
25% Waiver	Available income greater than 175% but does not exceed 200% FPL

Criminal Assessment Waiver 725 ILCS 5/124A-20

100% Waiver	Receives a means-based public benefit (regardless of income)
100% Waiver	Payment would result in substantial hardship (regardless of income)
100% Waiver	Available income 200% FPL or less
75% Waiver	Available income greater than 200% but does not exceed 250% FPL
50% Waiver	Available income greater than 250% but does not exceed 300% FPL
25% Waiver	Available income greater than 300% but does not exceed 400% FPL

2020 Federal Poverty Level - ANNUAL Income

Family Size	125% FPL	150% FPL	175% FPL	200% FPL	250% FPL	300% FPL	400% FPL
1	\$15,950	19,140	22,330	25,520	31,900	38,280	51,040
2	\$21,550	25,860	30,170	34,480	43,100	51,720	68,960
3	\$27,150	32,580	38,010	43,440	54,300	65,160	86,880
4	\$32,750	39,300	45,850	52,400	65,500	78,600	104,800
5	\$38,350	46,020	53,690	61,360	76,700	92,040	122,720
6	\$43,950	52,740	61,530	70,320	87,900	105,480	140,640
7	\$49,550	59,460	69,370	79,280	99,100	118,920	158,560
8	\$55,150	66,180	77,210	88,240	110,330	132,360	176,480
Add amount for each additional person	\$5,600	6,720	7,840	8,960	11,200	13,440	17,920

Figures from: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

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2020 Federal Poverty Level - MONTHLY Income

Family Size	125% FPL	150% FPL	175% FPL	200% FPL	250% FPL	300% FPL	400% FPL
1	\$1,329	1,595	1,861	2,127	2,658	3,190	4,253
2	\$1,796	2,155	2,514	2,873	3,592	4,310	5,747
3	\$2,263	2,715	3,168	3,620	4,525	5,430	7,240
4	\$2,729	3,275	3,821	4,367	5,458	6,550	8,733
5	\$3,196	3,835	4,474	5,113	6,392	7,670	10,227
6	\$3,663	4,395	5,128	5,860	7,325	8,790	11,720
7	\$4,129	4,955	5,781	6,607	8,258	9,910	13,213
8	\$4,596	5,515	6,434	7,353	9,192	11,030	14,707
Add amount for each additional person	\$467	560	653	747	933	1,120	1,493

Figures from: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

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Illinois Court \$ Waivers Overview

Civil Court fees, costs, and charges (including filing fees, costs of service of process, charges for mandatory processes or procedures to start, defend, or enforce a case) and Criminal Court assessments (not punitive fines/restitution and not fees for violations of the Vehicle Code) may be fully or partially waived by a judge for those that qualify because:

(1) they receive a means-based public benefit, OR (2) they have income within certain limits of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), OR (3) it would be a substantial hardship to pay the fees or assessments.

For more information about Civil Court Waivers, go to 735 ILCS 5/5-105 and Illinois Supreme Court Rule 298
For more information about Criminal Court Waivers, go to 725 ILCS 5/124A-20 and Illinois Supreme Court Rule 404



Required Forms

Everyone **MUST** use the statewide standardized waiver forms. There is one forms suite for civil cases and one for criminal cases. Forms can be found at the circuit clerk's office or online at <http://illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/default.asp>.

Clerks and Courts **MUST** accept these forms and any accompanying court documents.



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Means-Based Public Benefits

Judges **MUST** grant full waivers for applicants who receive one or more of the following means-based public benefits:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI, not Social Security)
- Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (AABD)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Food Stamps)
- General Assistance (GA), Transitional Assistance, State Children and Family Assistance

Benefit recipient's income has already been fully vetted by the government.



Income

Judges **MUST** grant waivers for applicants whose income qualifies as follows:

Civil Cases

- 100% Waiver if income is up to 125% of FPL
- 75% Waiver if income is 125-150% of FPL
- 50% Waiver if income is 150-175% of FPL
- 25% Waiver if income is 175-200% of FPL

Criminal Cases

- 100% Waiver if income is up to 200% of FPL
- 75% Waiver if income is 200-250% of FPL
- 50% Waiver if income is 250-300% of FPL
- 25% Waiver if income is 300-400% of FPL



Substantial Hardship

Judges **MAY** grant a full waiver if applicants show that paying court fees or assessments would be a substantial hardship for them or their family.

100% of the 2020 FPL for one person is \$12,760 and \$26,200 for a family of four annually.

NOTE: FPL changes every year. For current levels check: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>.



What to Expect

- Every courthouse processes applications differently.
- Judges may require applicants to come to an in-person hearing or show documentation.
- Judges **must state a reason for denial in the order if they deny the application.**
- If judge later finds that an applicant wasn't actually eligible or that their financial circumstances have changed, they may order fees be paid in civil cases.
- Waivers in civil cases expire after one year.



ILLINOIS JUDICIAL BRANCH

Bench Card: Limited Scope Representation

A self-represented litigant may proceed with the partial assistance (“limited scope representation”) of a lawyer in some matters. For example, a self-represented litigant may be coached by a lawyer outside of court, may rely on pleadings prepared by a lawyer, or may be represented by a lawyer in court for only a discrete portion of the case. Illinois Supreme Court Rules permit limited scope representation in civil proceedings at the trial court

General Authority for Limited Scope Representation

Ethics of Limited Scope

Illinois Rule of Professional Conduct 1.2(c)

“A lawyer may limit the scope of the representation if the limitation is reasonable under the circumstances and the client gives informed consent.”

Limited Scope Appearances

Illinois Supreme Court Rule 13(c)

- ❖ **Filing a Limited Scope Appearance.** Rule 13(c)(6) allows lawyers to make a limited scope appearance on behalf of a litigant in civil proceedings.
 - ✓ There must be a written representation agreement between the litigant and lawyer.
 - ✓ The lawyer must file a Notice of Limited Scope Appearance in the form prescribed in the rule. (Notice is available as a standardized form.)
 - ✓ The Notice must specify the aspects of the proceeding to which the appearance pertains.
 - ✓ A lawyer may make more than one Limited Scope Appearance during the course of a proceeding.
- ❖ **Ending a Limited Scope Appearance.** There are two ways a limited scope appearance may end under Rule 13(c)(7):
 - ✓ The lawyer can make an oral motion for withdrawal without notice if the client is present in court at that time.
 - ✓ The lawyer can file a Notice of Withdrawal of Limited Scope Appearance and serve it on the represented party as well as the court and other parties. In the absence of a timely objection (filed within 21 days of service), the appearance automatically terminates without a court order.
- ❖ **Objecting to Withdrawal** of a Limited Scope Appearance. Rule 13(c)(7) allows a litigant to object to withdrawal only by alleging the lawyer has not completed the representation specified in the Notice of Limited Scope Appearance.
 - ✓ If the represented party objects to the proposed withdrawal, SCR 13(c)(7) requires an evidentiary hearing on the issue of whether the specified representation has been completed.
 - ✓ Following the hearing, SCR 13(c)(7) requires the court to allow the lawyer to withdraw unless it expressly finds that the lawyer has not completed the limited scope representation.

Document Preparation Assistance Illinois Supreme Court Rule 137(e)

A lawyer may assist in drafting or reviewing documents that will be filed by a party on a self-represented basis.

- ✓ The lawyer is not required to file an appearance (general or limited scope).
- ✓ The pleading, motion or other paper is to be signed by the party, not the lawyer providing assistance.
- ✓ The rule does not require the lawyer’s involvement in preparing a document to be noted.

Service Requirements

Illinois Supreme Court Rule 11(f)

SCR 11(f) requires that documents must be served on both a lawyer who has filed a Notice of Limited Scope Appearances and the party represented pursuant to the appearance until the appearance is withdrawn or terminates pursuant to SCR 13(c).

Managing Limited Scope in the Courtroom

The **Comments to Rule 13** address several practical issues related to limited scope appearances:

- ❖ The rule does not limit the number of Limited Scope Appearances that can be filed in a given matter.
- ❖ There is no restriction on the purpose of a Limited Scope Appearance.
- ❖ Lawyers are encouraged to seek withdrawal via oral motion (with litigant present) to ensure the withdrawal is timely and that the court is aware of it.
- ❖ The rule does not restrict the court’s ability to manage cases or respond to abuses of limited scope representation.
- ❖ The comments caution against refusing to permit a lawyer’s withdrawal or encouraging a lawyer to remain in a case. Such practices may discourage a lawyer from undertaking limited representation in the future.

Standardized Forms

The Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission has produced three statewide forms that must be accepted for use in connection with limited scope appearances: Notice of Limited Scope Appearance, Notice of Withdrawal of Limited Scope Appearance, and Objection to Withdrawal of Limited Scope Appearance. All three are available from the Illinois Courts website through this link: http://illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/procedures/limited_scope.asp

Limited Scope Appearance Form

The Limited Scope Appearance should reflect the limitations agreed to by the lawyer and the party and should be signed by both.

- ✓ The lawyer should file a new Limited Scope Appearance if the lawyer seeks to appear in a proceeding not specified in the original appearance.
- ✓ The limitations specified in the notice should be consistent with the scope of representation described in the representation agreement required under SCR 13(c).
- ✓ The key issue in hearing an objection to a lawyer’s notice to withdraw is whether the lawyer has completed the representation as specified in section 3 of the Notice of Limited Scope Appearance (see below).

3. The attorney appears pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 13(c)(6). This appearance is limited in scope to the following matter(s) in which the attorney will represent the Party (*check and complete all that apply*):

in the court proceeding (*identify*) _____ on the following date: _____

and in any continuance of that proceeding

at the trial on the following date: _____

and in any continuance of that trial

and until judgment

at the following deposition(s): _____

if a family law matter, specify the scope and limits of representation: _____

Other (*specify the scope and limits of representation*): _____

4. If this appearance does not extend to all matters to be considered at the proceeding(s) above, identify the discrete issues within each proceeding covered by this appearance: _____