



SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS JUDICIAL COLLEGE JUDICIAL BRANCH STAFF

Approved by the Supreme Court of Illinois May 2026 Term of Court

Comprehensive Education Plan

for the

Committee on Judicial Branch Staff Education

(JBSE)

I. COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL BRANCH STAFF EDUCATION, CHARGE, PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES, AND MEMBERSHIP

Charge

Under the direction of the Illinois Judicial College Board of Trustees, the Committee on Judicial Branch Staff Education (JBSE) shall develop and deliver curriculum and courses for the target audiences of Supreme and Appellate court judicial law clerks and legal staff, for Supreme Court Librarian and staff, for Supreme and Appellate court clerks and staff, for court interpreters and for staff of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts. Curricula and courses shall enhance the effective and efficient administration of justice in a way that promotes public integrity, trust, and confidence.

Projects and Priorities

1. Adhere to best practices in curriculum and course design consistent with the standards of the National Association of State Judicial Educators and the Illinois Judicial College.
2. Design courses that advance the core principles of the Illinois Judicial College.
3. Uphold the educational standards established by the Illinois Judicial College.
4. Submit an annual continuing education calendar for the July 1 to June 30 calendar year.
5. Ongoing strategic review of educational needs, curricula, courses, programs, delivery methods, and faculty, consistent with Illinois Judicial College core principles and best practices.
6. Ensure curricula and courses are responsive to the needs of the JBSE target audience.
7. Evaluate non-JBSE curricula, courses, and programs for inclusion in the JBSE curricula.
8. Adopt best practices for adult learning and learner focused engagement.
9. Recommend faculty who have completed professional development.
10. Encourage potential faculty to complete Illinois Judicial College professional faculty development.
11. Establish methods of delivery of education programs that are most effective and appropriate.
12. Identify and collaborate with appropriate Illinois Judicial College Standing Committees and Workgroups, and non-Illinois Judicial College Supreme Court entities.

Membership

Except where otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees, the JBSE shall include 18 members. Members shall consist of:

1. Two Appellate Justices; one from the Appellate Court Administrative Committee
2. Two Trial Court Judges; one shall preferably be a Chief Circuit Judge
3. Two Clerks of the Appellate Court
 - a. One permanent member from the First Appellate District
 - b. One rotating member from the Second, Third, Fourth, or Fifth Appellate District
4. Two Appellate Legal Research Directors
 - a. One permanent member from the First Appellate District
 - b. One rotating member from the Second, Third, Fourth, or Fifth Appellate District
5. Three Judicial Law Clerks
 - a. One member from the First Appellate District
 - b. One member from the Second, Third, Fourth, or Fifth Appellate District
 - c. One member appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court that rotates with the term of the Chief Justice

6. The Clerk of the Supreme Court or designee (permanent)
7. The Reporter of Decisions, or designee (permanent)
8. One member from the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
9. Four AOIC status positions
 - a. One member representing Language Access Program;
 - b. The Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer;
 - c. The director of Human Resources, or designee; and
 - d. The Statewide Behavioral Health Administrator.

Leadership

JBSE shall be governed by the Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair shall preside over all Standing Committee meetings. The Chair shall be a Judicial Branch Staff Employee. The Vice Chair shall be a Judge.

Workgroups

Pursuant to Article V, Section 1 (C) of the Illinois Judicial College Bylaws Standing Committees may establish Workgroups to assist the Standing Committees as needed. Non-Standing Committee Workgroup members must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Committee workgroups will be continuously reviewed and populated by the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair as needed. *See Addendum A, Workgroups.*

II. PURPOSE AND GOAL

Purpose

To identify core functions of Judicial Branch Staff and develop skills for professional development; to effectively communicate and collaborate with other justice partners; and to promote the administration of justice consistent with the core values of the Illinois Judicial Branch.

Goal

All Judicial Branch Staff will engage in appropriately targeted educational opportunities to foster professional development on a continuing basis, ensuring the fair, equitable, and efficient administration of justice in Illinois.

III. COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Core Principles

The Illinois Judicial College embraces diversity, inclusion, equity, procedural fairness, access to justice, deliberative decision making and methods to disrupt bias, as core principles to be adopted by all charged with the development and delivery of educational content, the selection of faculty, and Standing Committee and Workgroup members. Continual reflection upon these core principles should be intentional and fundamental to the work of the Judicial College.

General Overview

Curriculum refers to the grouping of related courses or subject matter topics focused on specific goals and learner outcomes and objectives. The development of curricula and courses shall be guided by comprehensive needs assessment data, Illinois Supreme Court rules, policies, and standards, legal authorities, Canons of the Code of Judicial Conduct, trends and emerging topics and technologies, and professional competencies central to the performance of judicial duties consistent with the National Association of Judicial Educators (NASJE) curriculum and course design model, and the core principles of the Illinois Judicial College.

JBSE Overview

To ensure that Judicial Branch Staff perform at the highest level of competency, the Judicial Branch Staff Education Committee recognizes the need for a comprehensive curriculum to maximize continuing education and foster communication and collaboration with all justice partners. The curriculum accommodates the different levels of court experience, knowledge, education, and responsibilities of Judicial Branch Staff.

The curriculum is designed to keep the learner engaged, utilizing interactive learning, technology, round table discussions, and the introduction of assessment tools, to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Differentiation

The curriculum shall bring unified and consistent approaches to diverse audiences who are not only differentiated by role and function, but also differentiated by jurisdictional and geographical nuances, including resources to support full participation in curriculum offerings.

Collaboration

When appropriate, multidisciplinary curriculum may be planned and delivered in collaboration with other Illinois Judicial College Committees, Non-Judicial College Supreme Court Committees or Commissions, justice partners, and other entities or providers.

Methods of Delivery

Delivery methods will consider the regional differences across the state, at the same time incorporating adult learning principles. While professional competencies are not affected by geographical boundaries, local resources as well as cultural, social, and economic issues range widely across the State and there is a necessity to have a multi-pronged delivery approach including state-wide and regional in-person and online courses and programs.

IV. TARGET AUDIENCES

The JBSE committee shall develop and deliver curricula and courses for each primary target audience as indicated below and in the addenda.

One target audience consists of Appellate and Supreme Court Law Clerks, Appellate and Supreme Court Research Attorneys and Staff, Reporter of Decisions and Staff, and Supreme Court Librarian and Staff. *See Addendum B.*

A second target audience consists of Clerks and Deputy Clerks of the Illinois reviewing courts (Supreme Court and Appellate Courts). *See Addendum C.*

A third workgroup consists of court interpreters, both for spoken and sign language, that have completed the certification process through the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts or completed similar requirements through another state's certification program and are listed on the AOIC Court Interpreter Registry. *See Addendum D.*

A fourth workgroup consists of staff of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts. *See Addendum E.*

V. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

There are several core competencies that apply to all workgroups within the Judicial Branch Staff Education Committee:

1. Adhere to the Illinois Judicial Branch State-Paid Employee Code of Conduct or analogous local policy
2. Perform job duties with integrity, professionalism, and impartiality
3. Articulate the relevant rules of professional conduct or ethics related to each specific job category
4. Maintain up-to-date technical skills to efficiently perform duties
5. Recognize the courts' structure, operational policies, and guidelines
6. Listen and communicate attentively and professionally
7. Provide appropriate assistance for self-represented litigants and maintain appropriate boundaries against offering legal advice
8. Demonstrate empathy, patience, civility, and respect for users of the court, the public, and coworkers
9. Consciously avoid bias or partiality
10. Develop understanding of cultures, embrace diversity, and show appropriate consideration for people with disabilities

See Addendum B for additional competencies for Appellate and Supreme Court Law Clerks, Appellate and Supreme Research Clerks, Reporter of Decisions and staff, and Supreme Court Law Librarian and staff.

See Addendum C for additional competencies for Reviewing Court Clerks.

See Addendum D for additional competencies for Interpreters.

See Addendum E for additional competencies for AOIC Staff

VI. FACULTY

Professionals qualified by subject-matter expertise or academic experience are eligible to serve as faculty. Experts with pending cases in Illinois and practicing attorneys shall not be eligible to serve as faculty unless granted a specific waiver from the ineligible status.

Workgroup recommendations shall be submitted to the JBSE and, if approved, submitted to the Board of Trustees for final decision. The Administrative Office shall be consulted regarding the appropriate vetting of potential faculty or entities where concerns are raised regarding potential conflicts of interest with the Courts.

Waivers approving those otherwise disqualified as eligible shall be granted by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the JBSE.

Professional Development

Preference will be given to the selection of faculty who have attended at least one Illinois Judicial College Faculty Development training within a two-year period and who are prepared to deliver approved educational content consistent with adult learning principles and have expressed a willingness to continue faculty development training as recommended.

Professional development shall include courses related to professionalism and civility, legal ethics, problem solving and critical thinking, communications, and Access to Justice in each two-year reporting period.

Continuing education credits shall not be earned for participation in faculty development.

VII. MINIMUM CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS

The Reporting Period

For purposes of the calculation of continuing education credit hours, the reporting period shall be two years, July 1 - June 30 beginning in odd numbered years, e.g., July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025. Due to the wide demographic of the members of JBSE, the requirements for continuing education also vary greatly. Therefore, requirements for each working group's Minimum Continuing Education Hours are provided for in *Addendums B-E*.

MCLE Teaching and Participation Credit

The Supreme Court of Illinois Judicial College (Illinois Judicial College) is an approved provider of Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) in Illinois. Licensed Illinois attorneys are eligible to receive MCLE credit for teaching and participation.

MCLE Qualified Meeting Credit

Effective January 1, 2022, Supreme Court-appointed attorney members serving on a Supreme Court of Illinois Judicial College Standing Committee, Standing Committee Workgroup, or Judicial College Board of Trustee Workgroup, shall earn MCLE credit subject to Rule 795(d)(12). An attorney appointed by the Court to a Standing Committee or approved by the Illinois Judicial College Board of Trustees to serve on an Illinois Judicial College Standing Committee Workgroup shall earn *one hour* of MCLE credit by attending a qualifying meeting. Credit for this (Committee and Workgroup meetings) attendance is *limited to 12 hours* in each two-year reporting period.

Teaching Continuing Education Hours

Managers who present the in-house programs will receive credit hours for preparing and presenting in-house programs. However, these managers shall have attended at least four hours of programs dealing with management responsibilities, diversity, team building, and ethics.

VIII. PROVIDERS

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, on behalf of the Illinois Judicial College, is a presumptive provider of continuing education courses and activities. The Judicial Branch Staff Education Committee shall recommend additional providers of continuing education to the Board of Trustees for approval.

See Illinois Judicial College Provider Policy; Approved Providers; Addendums B - E.

Addendum A

Workgroups

- The “Law Clerks” workgroup, focused on providing education for Appellate and Supreme Court law clerks, Appellate and Supreme Court research clerks, Reporter of Decisions staff, and Supreme Court Law Librarian and staff..
- The “Reviewing Court Clerks” workgroup, focused on reviewing court clerks and staff.
- The “Court Interpreters” workgroup, focused on court interpreters.
- The “AOIC Staff” workgroup, focused on Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts staff and nonlegal staff of the circuit courts.

Addendum B

Law Clerks

Additional competencies for Appellate and Supreme Court Law Clerks, Appellate and Supreme Research Clerks, Reporter of Decisions and Staff, and Supreme Court Law Librarian and Staff, include:

1. Effectively conduct legal research, including analyzing cases for precedent, interpreting and applying statutes, reading legislative history with an understanding of the legislative process, utilizing computer assisted research, and employing secondary sources.
 - a. Appellate and Supreme Court Law Clerks, Appellate and Supreme Court Research Attorneys and Staff, will employ these competencies with an eye toward composing draft dispositions and advising justices on the evaluation of cases. Their use of these skills will generally be to find the appropriate authorities and bring them to bear on observed facts within a given case.
 - b. The Reporter of Decisions and Staff will employ these competencies with an eye toward verification in drafts, with an additional focus on primary research skills where a source chosen by chambers either does not fit the occasion or is inaccurately cited.
 - c. The Supreme Court Librarian and Staff will employ these competencies to assist the other target audiences with their duties and to aid the public in locating desired legal materials.
2. Thoroughly review pleadings and the record to reach impartial conclusions.
3. Draft clear, grammatically correct, well-supported opinions that employ impartial language, that avoid plagiarism via style-compliant citation, and that appropriately communicate the court's resolution.
4. Effectively use job-appropriate technology.
5. Apply management skills and human resources policies to ensure an effective and healthy work environment.
6. Demonstrate a robust understanding of the following: Supreme Court Rules, ethics, and policies and guidelines; impartiality and conscious avoidance of bias; fluency with the court system's structure; and the role of support staff in transparency, public perception of fairness, and trust in the courts.

Because the abilities required of the target audience all build from a foundational set of skills, most courses in each course type will have a component that addresses basic-level skills to both assimilate new or recent hires and to reinforce those skills to experienced members of the target audience, and a component that builds upon and advances those skills, with certain fundamental courses or instruction provided for new or recent hires on self-contained topics such as the structure of the court system and administrative systems. Each course will integrate the subject of professionalism, including collegiality, accepting constructive criticism, impartiality, and ethics. Each course will also integrate the three core values of the Illinois Judicial College: Procedural Fairness, Access to Justice, and Diversity. This integration into the practical skills courses will serve to promote delivery of services by the target audience (*i.e.*, the administration of justice) that is both consistent with and promotes the court's values.

Teaching Continuing Education (CE) Credit Hours

1. Appellate and Supreme Court Law Clerks, Appellate and Supreme Court research attorneys, Reporter of Decisions and staff, and Supreme Court law librarian and staff, and c serving as faculty shall earn judicial college education credit at the rate of three times the length of actual presentation time for an initial presentation of a course in the same educational forum and one time the length of actual presentation time for a repeat presentation of the same course in that educational forum.
2. Retired judicial faculty and attorneys licensed to practice law in Illinois shall earn faculty continuing education credit hours pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 795(d)(5).

Presumptive Providers

National Center for State Courts

ABA Council of Appellate Staff Attorneys

Addendum C

Reviewing Court Clerks

Additional professional competencies for Reviewing Court Clerks include:

1. Describe the appellate process and the specific role of the offices of the Supreme and Appellate Court clerks within the judicial system.
2. Apply Supreme Court policies for court employees on confidentiality, ethics, political activity, and use of social media.
3. Apply Supreme Court policy on assistance to self-represented litigants.
4. Demonstrate familiarity with the standardized forms and related instructions that have been approved pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 10-101.
5. Interact with the public in a manner that is fair, impartial, respectful, and without bias or implicit bias., with an awareness that the offices of the supreme and appellate court clerks are the public face of the reviewing courts in Illinois and that these offices play a key role in shaping the public's perception of the court system. Awareness that the actions, attitude, and temperament of court employees in these offices can demonstrate that the courts operate in a fair and impartial manner and exist for everyone regardless of race/ethnicity, income, nationality, or legal status.
6. Apply and implement effective workplace management strategies, including problem solving, making the transition to supervisor, planning, delegation, and effective communication.

MINIMUM CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS

There is no minimum required education hours for reviewing court clerks. Instead, specific courses, as designated by each department manager are suggested.

Presumptive Providers

HFS Bureau of Training (hfs.bureauoftraining@illinois.gov)

Addendum D Court

Interpreters

Additional competencies for Court Interpreters include Native-like proficiency in all working languages, impartiality, and the ability to accurately turn the source language into the target language without additions, omissions, or paraphrasing while maintaining the language level, tone and intent of the speaker. Court Interpreters must have a broad range of knowledge and skills in all the following areas: linguistic skills, speaking skills, listening comprehensive skills, reading comprehension skills, interpreting skills, and behavioral skills. Court Interpreters must be able to perform these duties remotely as well as in person.

1. Identify legal, subject-specific, and slang terminology.
2. Recognize cultural and regional variations, idiomatic expressions, and colloquialisms, in all working languages.
3. Demonstrate awareness of cultural aspects that affect language.
4. Ability to speak with proper pronunciation, diction, and intonation in all working languages.
5. Ability to read and recognize various written contexts, including formal and informal text, subject-specific vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and colloquialism.
6. Ability to provide transference from one language to another.
7. Ability to preserve accuracy.
8. Ability to reflect register and tone.
9. Ability to practice and follow ethical standards.
10. Ability to conduct business in a professional manner.

Teaching Continuing Education Hours

Court Interpreters who present as faculty would receive credit once minimum continued education hours are set.

Minimum Continued Education Hours

No minimum number of credit hours is currently in place for Court Interpreters.

Presumptive Providers

The National Center for State Courts (<https://www.ncsc.org/>)

Accredited vendors

Vendor List – Continuing Education & Training Resources

Vendor	Description / Link
Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC)	Free webinars and courses provided by the AOIC's Judicial College
American Pie	https://www.americanpieseminars.com/
American Translators Association (ATA)	https://www.atanet.org/
Athena Sky Interpreting	https://athenaskyinterpreting.com/
Castillo Language Services	http://www.castillolanguageservices.com/
Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA)	https://chicata.org/
The Chinese Court Interpreters	Chinese Court Certified Interpreters - Continuing Education
Court Interpreter Training Online	https://courtinterpretertrainingonline.com/
De la Mora Institute of Interpretation	https://delamorainstitute.com/
Linguist Education Online	https://linguisteducationonline.com/
GSO Services LLC	https://gsoservices.net/
Institute of Translation and Interpreting (UK-based)	https://www.itl.org.uk/training.html
Interpretrain	http://www.interpretrain.com/
Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters (MATI)	https://www.matiata.org/CEUs
National Center for State Courts (NCSC)	https://www.ncsc.org/education-events/webinars
National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)	https://najit.org/
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)	https://rid.org/
TransInterpreting	https://www.transinterpreting.com/

Addendum E

AOIC Staff

Additional competencies for the staff of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and nonlegal circuit court staff include:

1. Describe the Judicial Branch, including the judicial circuits and districts, courts (trial, appellate, and supreme courts), and how judges are appointed/elected, etc.
2. Understand the mission, vision, values, and strategic goal areas of the Illinois Judicial Branch Strategic Agenda and the role of the AOIC in supporting the initiatives and committees of the Supreme Court.
3. Possess a general overview of responsibilities of each Division of the AOIC and state judicial branch entities and how they work together.
4. Know the various personnel policies and procedures of the AOIC and the judicial branch. This includes not only AOIC-specific policies and procedures (*e.g.*, leave of absence, timekeeping, etc.) but also personnel policies adopted by the Supreme Court and applicable to the entire branch.
5. Know the relevant Supreme Court rules and policies applicable to the courts and court users.
6. Identify AOIC staff initiatives, such as the efforts of the Wellness Committee and the Inclusion Roundtable.
7. Communicate clearly in all verbal conversations and written documents after closely listening to the questions posed or information requested.
8. Improve strategic planning strengths including collection of data, research techniques, delegation of duties, writing and presenting plans and grants and monitoring and measuring successes.

Additional Core Competencies for staff with leadership or supervisory duties:

1. Understand the mission, vision, values, and strategic goals of the Illinois Judicial Branch Strategic Agenda and the role of the AOIC in supporting the initiatives and committees of the Supreme Court.
2. Know the relevant Supreme Court rules and policies applicable to the courts and court users.
3. Possess a general understanding of employee benefits, including the use of extended sick and the Employee Assistance Program, to guide staff to the appropriate AOIC representatives for assistance.
4. Understand the role and procedures of internal and external auditors.
5. Know the legal compliance responsibilities and expectations of a manager when addressing complaints involving their staff, for example allegations of sexual harassment or other misconduct.
6. Create an environment that promotes employee and institutional wellbeing, including mental health awareness and shared goals for individual and institutional effectiveness.

7. Know how to discuss employee evaluations and performance issues, when to ask for support from HR, and understand the compensation system.
8. Develop problem solving strategies, project implementation, and training protocols.
9. Confront personal, implicit, and systemic bias by acknowledging and understanding cultural, social, and economic differences and societal hierarchies with the potential to possibly indirectly influence decision-making or impact employees and develop strategies to address those biases.

Teaching Continuing Education Hours

Managers who present the in-house programs will receive credit hours for preparing and presenting in-house programs. However, these managers shall have attended at least four hours of programs dealing with management responsibilities, diversity, team building, and ethics.

Minimum Continuing Education Hours

Understanding the unique roles and responsibilities of the divisions of the AOIC and corresponding needs of AOIC staff, division directors are encouraged to provide training opportunities and enhanced skill building to meet the needs of the division and the judicial branch. All AOIC staff must complete courses designed by JBSE to possess the core competencies outlined above. Additionally, employees shall take three hours of collaborative education every two years.

The Reporting Period

For purposes of the calculation of continuing education credit hours, the reporting period shall be two years beginning July 1 of odd-numbered years and ending June 30 of odd-numbered years, *e.g.*, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025.