



Supreme Court of Illinois

October 6, 2026

SECOND DISTRICT APPELLATE COURT PROGRAM TO ASSIST SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS TO BEGIN NOV. 1

The Illinois Appellate Court Second District is pleased to announce that the launch of a new pilot program aimed at assisting self-represented litigants (SRLs) will take place on November 1. The number of appeals filed by SRLs now makes up approximately 50 percent of filings and continues to increase. This innovative program is designed to address the difficulties experienced both by SRLs and the other party by offering free mediation with volunteer attorneys as mediation advocates.

“Our goal is to solve the problem that brought the parties to court in the first place and a trained mediator may be able to end the controversy to both sides’ satisfaction,” said Second District Presiding Justice Christopher M. Kennedy. “People without attorneys who file appeals have a difficult time navigating the rules of procedure and we think this program will improve the experience for everyone.”

The program will require both lawyer-mediators and *pro bono* mediation attorneys. **Free CLEs hosted by the Appellate Lawyers Association and the Public Interest Law Initiative will be held on October 8 from 2-4 p.m. [for *pro bono* mediation attorneys] and on October 15 from 2-4 p.m. [for lawyer-mediators].** [Click here](#) to register.

The new program will feature mediation, which is a settlement conference facilitated by a trained mediator with the goal of resolving the matter that brings the litigants to court by voluntary agreement. During mediation, a volunteer lawyer will provide guidance and support to the SRL, helping them to better understand the process.

The program is funded by a grant from the Access to Justice Commission, chaired by Judge Jorge Ortiz of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit in Lake County.

(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: James Brunner, Public Information Officer of the Illinois Supreme Court at 217.208.3354 or jbrunner@illinoiscourts.gov.)