

Rule 10-100. Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice

(a) Purpose.

The Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice is established to promote, facilitate, and enhance equal access to justice with an emphasis on access to the Illinois civil courts and administrative agencies for all people, particularly the poor and vulnerable. The purpose is to make access to justice a high priority for everyone in the legal system and, to the maximum extent possible, the Commission is intended to complement and collaborate with other entities addressing access to justice issues.

(b) Membership and Terms.

(1) The Illinois Supreme Court shall appoint seven members to the Commission. In addition, the Illinois Bar Foundation, The Chicago Bar Foundation, Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois, and the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation shall have the right to appoint one member each. The commission shall be composed of five members of the judiciary, five lawyers, and one member who is not a lawyer. The Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court shall appoint a person to serve as chair of the commission from among the members of the commission.

(i) The Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice may, at its discretion, appoint separate specialized working groups and members to assist it in the carrying out of the purposes of the commission. Specialized groups may include, for example, Education, Court Rules/Procedures, Resources, Standardized Forms, and New Initiatives. These groups shall focus on particular issues within the working group's area of concentration. Membership within these specialized groups may be composed of both members and nonmembers of the Illinois Access to Justice Commission.

(2) Appointed members shall be selected based on their dedication to the purposes and goals of the Commission. The potential appointee's contributions to the bar and community and demonstrated commitment to providing legal services to the underserved also shall be considered.

(3) Members of the Commission shall be appointed for terms of three years, except that in making initial appointments to the Commission, the Court may make appointments for one-year or two-year terms to ensure that the terms of the Commission's members are staggered, so that no more than one third of the members' terms expire in any given year.

(4) Members shall not be compensated for their contributions, but may be reimbursed for their necessary expenses.

(c) Duties.

In realizing the purpose of the Commission, the duties may include:

(1) encouraging means by which individuals can find proper legal representation in the judicial system;

(2) maintaining circuit court and community support and assistance so that the existing legal self-help centers in all Illinois counties can remain effective and accessible;

(3) collaborating with the circuit courts to develop standard guidelines and judicial education programs regarding interaction between self-represented litigants, judges, clerks,

and other court personnel;

(4) creating standardized forms for simpler civil legal problems and basic procedural functions that, while not required for use by all litigants, would be required for courts to accept for filing throughout the state to ease the difficulty in self-representation;

(5) addressing language barriers in the courtroom;

(6) addressing the issue of accessibility to the courts, particularly in rural areas of Illinois;

(7) recognizing judges, attorneys, clerks, or other court personnel for their contributions of leadership and commitment to access to justice;

(8) recommending legislation, court rules, codes of conduct, policies, appropriations, and systematic changes that will open greater access to the courts, as needed;

(9) working with law schools in the development and furtherance of court-based programs that enhance equal access to justice;

(10) monitoring and sharing information on equal justice activities of similar entities in Illinois and in states outside of Illinois;

(11) expanding social work and social services in the court system for the purposes of addressing access to justice for individuals with special needs;

(12) supporting and guiding circuit court efforts to increase access through court-based information systems, Web sites, social media, and other technology platforms;

(13) researching and developing information by which the Commission's purpose can be made successful;

(14) promoting and supporting *pro bono* efforts in the state and fostering judicial and circuit court support for *pro bono* efforts throughout the state; and

(15) recommending to the Supreme Court other methods and means of improving the purposes and goals laid out in section (a) above.

(d) Administration.

(1) The Commission shall meet twice a year, at a minimum, and at other times at the request of the chair.

(2) A majority of its members in attendance at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. Meetings may be held at any place within the state and may also be held by means of telecommunication.

(3) The chair may appoint committees of members and assign them responsibilities consistent with the purposes and duties of the Commission.

(4) There shall be an independent annual audit of the Commission, the expenses of which shall be paid from Commission funds.

(5) The Commission shall submit an annual report to the Court reporting on its activities and finances in the previous year and describing future goals for the upcoming year. The Commission's annual report shall include the audit described in paragraph 4 and an accounting of the monies received and expended for its activities in that year.

(6) The Commission shall submit a strategic plan and budget to the Court on a regular cycle.

(7) Members of the Access to Justice Division of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts will staff the Commission, support the Commission's purpose, and assist the Commission in carrying out its duties.

(8) The Commission shall be funded by an annual assessment provided in Rule 756, and other support for the Commission may be provided through in-kind and financial support from a combination of private and public sources.

(9) The Commission shall have the authority to take all appropriate administrative and other actions it deems necessary with respect to its operations and finances, including but not limited to (i) opening one or more bank accounts, (ii) contracting, (iii) purchasing, and (iv) operating in coordination with the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts.

Adopted June 13, 2012, eff. immediately; amended Apr. 8, 2013, eff. immediately; amended Oct. 18, 2022; eff. immediately.