



Supreme Court of Illinois

July 10, 2025

ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION ANNOUNCES SECOND CIRCUIT REMOTE APPEARANCE PILOT PROGRAM

The Illinois Supreme Court’s Commission on Access to Justice (ATJ Commission), partnering with the Second Judicial Circuit of Illinois and Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, Inc., announced today the launch of a two-year pilot program on remote court appearances in southern counties of Illinois.

Land of Lincoln, a Legal Services Corporation funded provider of free civil legal services to low-income and senior residents of central and southern Illinois, and the Second Judicial Circuit both agreed to work on this pilot program. Land of Lincoln attorneys, including Pro-Bono and Judicare attorneys as well as staff attorneys, will appear remotely before Second Judicial Circuit judges. The attorneys and judges in these cases will then provide important data and information on these appearances so the ATJ Commission can learn more about the impact of remote court proceedings and whether they can reduce barriers rural communities experience in accessing justice.

“We at Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, as well as the attorneys in the community who do pro bono work for us, look forward to working with the Second Judicial Circuit on the Remote Appearance Program,” said Diane M. Goffinet, Managing Attorney for Land of Lincoln Legal Aid. “We are pleased that the judges of the Second Circuit are demonstrating their commitment to access to justice for all by allowing remote appearances, thus allowing us to save time and resources that can be put towards helping more people with their legal issues.”

The Second Judicial Circuit is comprised of 12 counties (Crawford, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, and White) and includes counties bordering the states of Indiana and Kentucky.

“The Second Judicial Circuit is committed to the Remote Appearance Pilot Program developed in partnership with Land of Lincoln and the Commission on Access to Justice. This pilot promises to bring essential legal services to more individuals navigating the legal process alone, a critical need in our largely rural region,” said Second Circuit Chief Judge Melissa A. Morgan. “As many of our communities are at or below the poverty level, court participants often elect to appear in our courts without representation. This initiative will connect individuals with legal assistance in a variety of civil matters and provide litigants access to local resources and vital information. By permitting Land of Lincoln staff and volunteer attorneys to appear remotely for court proceedings, they will save time and travel expenses and will have the opportunity to reach across our expansive 12-county Circuit, providing a voice in our courts to unrepresented parties and truly expanding access to justice in the Second Circuit.”

Over the course of the pilot program for the [First Judicial Circuit](#), which took place from June 2021 to July 2023, Land of Lincoln lawyers appeared remotely for 467 proceedings, saving the agency 633.5 hours of time spent traveling to various courthouses and 18,432 miles of driving, resulting in cost savings of \$11,626.83.

The ATJ Commission, established in 2012 by the Illinois Supreme Court, is focused on helping self-represented litigants, limited English proficient litigants, and litigants with a disability access courts while also supporting the judiciary and other court staff in ensuring justice for all.

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