

How Can Clerks Best Assist Self-Represented



Litigants (SRLs) with E-filing?

Provide SRLs with e-filing information:

- where to find and select an Electronic Filing Service Provider (EFSP);
- how to register for an EFSP account and set up an email address;
- how to sign into the EFSP or how to reset an account;
- how to file into a case including information about: searching for an existing case by case number or party; creating a payment account; selecting location, case category, and case type; entering party information; uploading documents to file in the correct format and size; selecting filing code; and differentiating between lead documents and attachments;
- how a document can be converted to the required file type (PDF) through equipment available within the courthouse; and
- why a filing was rejected.

What can an EFSP Support Hotline help with?

How to get a document into PDF format

How to get an email address

How to register/sign in/get a new password

How to search for existing cases

How to navigate through the EFSP

How to upload documents

How to submit an e-filing envelope

Provide information about the e-filing exemption and copies of the certification form:

Filers are exempt from e-filing automatically if they:

- Are an SRL incarcerated in a jail or correctional facility;
- Are filing a Will or something under Juvenile Court Act; or
- Have a disability that makes it hard to e-file.

Filers are exempt from e-filing for good cause if they turn in a Certification of Exemption from E-filing form stating they:

- Don't have a computer or internet in their home;
- Have difficulty reading or writing in English;
- Are filing a sensitive pleading like an Order for Protection;
- Tried to e-file, but couldn't complete the process because no assistance or equipment is available.

Note:

- **The Certification does not require court approval**
- **Clerks must accept paper filings with a completed certification form for good cause reasons and without a form for automatic reasons**
- **Judges retain discretion to order someone to e-file or not (for subsequent filings)**

This form is approved by the Illinois Supreme Court and is required to be accepted in all Illinois Circuit Courts.

STATE OF ILLINOIS, CIRCUIT COURT	CERTIFICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM E-FILING	For Court Use Only
COUNTY		
Instructions Directly above, enter the name of the county where the case was filed. Enter the name of the person who started the lawsuit as Plaintiff/Petitioner. Enter the name of the person being sued as Defendant/Respondent. Enter the Case Number given by the Circuit Clerk or leave this blank if you do not have one.		
Plaintiff / Petitioner (First, middle, last name)	v.	Case Number
Defendant / Respondent (First, middle, last name)		
1. I am not able to e-file documents in this case for the following reasons (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> I am representing myself and do not have the internet or a computer in my home. My only access is through a public terminal at a courthouse, library, or other location. This poses a financial or other hardship. <input type="checkbox"/> I am representing myself and have trouble reading, writing, or speaking in English. <input type="checkbox"/> I am filing a document in a sensitive case, such as a petition for an order of protection or a civil no contact/stalking order. <input type="checkbox"/> I tried to e-file my documents, but I was unable to complete the process because the equipment or assistance I need is not available.		
2. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 8(c)(5) allows for an exemption from e-filing for good cause. For the above reasons, I need a good cause exemption from e-filing for my entire case or until I am able to e-file.		
I certify that everything in the Certification for Exemption from E-filing is true and correct. I understand that making a false statement on this form is perjury and has penalties provided by law under 735 ILCS 5/1-10.		
/s/ _____ Your Signature		_____ Street Address
Print Your Name		City, State, ZIP
_____ Telephone		_____ Email
GETTING COURT DOCUMENTS BY EMAIL: You should use an email account that you do not share with anyone else and that you check every day. If you do not check your email every day, you may miss important information, notice of court dates, or documents from other parties.		

How Can Clerks Best Assist Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs) with E-filing?

Statewide Self-Help Resources for E-filing

eFileIL information	http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/
Statewide E-filing Guides	http://illinoiscourts.gov/CivilJustice/Resources/Self-Represented_Litigants/E-filing_Information.asp
Odyssey Filer Support	1-800-297-5377 (note: every EFSP has a call number or email address for system questions)
Legal Self-Help Centers	List of programs in Illinois: https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/get-legal-help/lshc-directory
Standardized Forms	Statewide forms and instructions available in six languages: http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/
Public & Law Libraries	Check your local resources
Illinois Legal Aid Online	Free legal information and forms for e-filing and civil, expungment, and traffic legal problems: https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT COMMISSION ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE



E-Filing Guide for Self-Represented Litigants

How to E-File in Odyssey
Step 1: Prepare your Documents




E-filing Steps

- 1 • Prepare Documents
- 2 • Register
- 3 • Sign In
- 4 • Create New Password
- 5 • Add Payment Account
- 6 • Case Information
- 7 • Party Information
- 8 • Upload Filings
- 9 • Pay Fees
- 10 • Review Summary / Submit

Need Help? Call Odyssey's Filer Support Number: 1-800-297-5377

County-Specific Self-Help Resources for E-filing

CASE INFORMATION FOR E-FILING A NEW CASE
If you do not see your legal issue on this chart, please ask a clerk for assistance.

Your area of the law and legal issue	What to select on the E-filing website			
My legal issue is...	Location	Category	Case Type	
I have a... FAMILY LAW CASE 	Divorce	Cook County – Domestic Relations – District 1 – Chicago	General Proceedings	Petition for Dissolution
	Custody	Cook County – Domestic Relations – District 1 – Chicago	General Proceedings	Petition for Allocation of Parental Responsibilities
I need a... PROTECTIVE ORDER 	Order of Protection	Cook County – Domestic Violence – District 1 – Chicago	Civil Protection Order	Petition for Independent Order of Protection
	Evicting a Tenant	Cook County – Civil – District 1 – Chicago	Civil	Eviction (Possession)

Consider creating county-specific e-filing resources such as:

- Posters or handouts explaining the Case Category and Case Types
- Posters or handouts explaining Filing Codes
- Information about how fee waiver applications are processed
- How to use the scanners and find their documents
- FAQ document addressing the issues you hear most often
- Post all resources on court website and have available in courthouse



The AOIC Can Help! For more information on access to justice resources including e-filing resources; Safe Harbor Policy; standardized forms; language access tools; and courthouse signs, please contact us at AccessToJustice@illinoiscourts.gov.

