



Supreme Court of Illinois

April 16, 2025

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT ELIMINATES FEES IN MINOR GUARDIANSHIP AND SMALL CLAIMS CASES

The Illinois Supreme Court announced today amendments to M.R. Order 29741 which will eliminate filing and appearance fees in minor guardianship cases and appearance fees in small claim cases. The amended rules are effective October 1, 2025.

“The Illinois Supreme Court is always looking to remove barriers to access to justice in our state,” Chief Justice Mary Jane Theis said. “Removing and simplifying fees and processes for underrepresented litigants helps ensure they are able to have their voices heard in court.”

Under the previous rules for minor guardianship cases, a filing fee was charged for each case when a petitioner filed a separate guardianship petition for each minor. This discouraged an adherence to best practices and placed an undue financial burden on self-represented litigants. Under the amended order, minor guardianship cases are moved from filing fee schedule 2 to schedule 4 and appearance fee schedules 1 to schedule 3, which will see fees for both initiating the action and appearing set to \$0. This helps unify court administrative best practices throughout the state and maximize simplicity and ease burdens for self-represented litigants.

Similarly, the amended order will move small claim cases from appearance fee schedules 1 and 2 to schedule 3 by amending Supreme Court M.R. Order 29741. The amended order is intended to encourage defendant participation in small claim cases by eliminating an existing barrier to participation – the appearance fee. This amended order will not effect the fees for filing a complaint initiating a small claim case.

The Order announcing the amendments can be found [here](#).

The amended order for appearance fees in minor guardianship cases was proposed by the Commission on Access to Justice’s (ATJ) Forms Committee, which consists of 10 members and serves as the leadership and reviewing body ultimately approving all draft and final statewide standardized court forms that are released by the Commission. Thirteen form subcommittees create, review and edit forms for use in the circuit, appellate, and Illinois Supreme Court.

The amended order for appearance fees in small claims cases was proposed by the ATJ Commission Consumer Debt Committee, which was created in 2023 and charged with increasing access to justice in consumer debt cases. The Consumer Debt Committee consists of 12 members, including creditor and debtor attorneys, a circuit court clerk, and a trial judge.

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