



Supreme Court of Illinois

December 11, 2023

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT AMENDS POLICY ON ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Illinois Supreme Court announced today significant amendments to M.R. 25307 and the Court's Policy on Access for People with Disabilities (Policy) to improve disability access for all Illinois courts. The amended policy is effective January 1, 2024, and all Illinois courts shall report compliance with M.R. 25307 by no later than August 1, 2024.

"The Illinois Supreme Court is committed to access to justice for all users of the court system," Chief Justice Mary Jane Theis said. "We appreciate the efforts of our Access to Justice Commission, members of the disability community and members of the legal aid community who worked on these improvements."

The amendments to the Policy will require all Illinois courts to include updated Court Disability Coordinator (CDC) contact information on notice of accommodation signs and request forms, which will ensure anyone in any court will know who to reach out for disability access questions and concerns. Ensuring that every court has a designated CDC will avoid confusion and inconsistencies for court users with disabilities who might not have otherwise been able to identify the CDC or might have found different policies or information in different courts.

"Ensuring disability access within our courts is not just a legal obligation, but a commitment to access to justice," said Judge Jorge L. Ortiz, Chair of the Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission. "The amended Policy proposed by the Disability Access Committee works to eliminate barriers and foster an accessible court system that promotes access to justice for court users with disabilities across Illinois."

The amended Policy further articulates the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the corresponding Federal Regulations, the Illinois Human Rights Act, and case law clarifying the responsibilities of the courts and the rights of people with disabilities who access court activities. It also updates the definition of "disability" along with other changes in language, shifts the focus of the Policy from "communications" and "accommodations" to all court activities, and redesigns required notices and forms.

The amended Policy can be found [here](#) under the Disability Policies tab.

The amendments to M.R. 25307 and the Policy were proposed by the Commission on Access to Justice's (Commission's) Disability Access Committee (Committee) and approved by the Court. Accommodation signs and forms were updated following feedback sessions with members of the disability community, the Commission's Court Navigator Network, and plain language experts at Illinois Legal Aid Online.

The Committee, established in November 2022, is comprised of disability access and advocacy leaders across the state with diverse backgrounds and experience. They adopted the mission “to promote equal access to the court system for people with disabilities by partnering with the disability community and by engaging all stakeholders, from the community to the courtroom, to identify and address barriers to the court and legal process.”

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