

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
10TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
POLICY ON ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

I. Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal civil rights statute for individuals with disabilities, requires all state and local governmental entities, including the courts, to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities to ensure equal access to court proceedings, programs and services. The 10th Judicial Circuit of Illinois (Circuit Court) has adopted the following policy and procedures to ensure reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services to persons with disabilities.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Circuit Court to ensure that communications with and accommodations for individuals with disabilities and without disabilities are equally effective, consistent with the requirements of Title II of the ADA. Whenever necessary, the Circuit Court will provide, free of charge, the appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from any Circuit Court program. This policy applies to all members of the public who seek to participate in the Circuit Court's proceedings, programs, and services.

III. Services and Accommodations

Auxiliary aids and services include a wide range of services and devices that promote effective communication with persons with disabilities. Examples of auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities include qualified sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, and real-time transcription services. The Circuit Court may also provide any other reasonable accommodation necessary to permit a person with impairments or disabilities to fully and equally participate in or to observe Circuit Court proceedings, programs, and services.

IV. Disability Coordinator

Each county shall have a Court Disability Coordinator (CDC) designated by the chief circuit judge to assist the Circuit Court with this policy. The CDC, in implementing this policy as set forth herein, acts on behalf of the Circuit Court. A list of the 10th Judicial Circuit Court Disability Coordinators for each county is attached as Exhibit A.

V. Notice that Accommodations are Available

The Court Disability Coordinator (CDC) shall provide written notice that reasonable accommodations are available to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in Circuit Court proceedings, programs, and services. The notice of availability shall be specific for each of the five counties of the 10th Circuit: Exhibit B.1 (Peoria County), Exhibit B.2 (Tazewell County), Exhibit B.3 (Marshall County), Exhibit B.4 (Putnam County), and Exhibit B.5 (Stark County). All five of the notices shall be posted on the 10th Judicial Circuit's website. The notice of availability for a particular county shall be posted in that county's Office of the Circuit Clerk and on its website.

VI. Request for Accommodations

The CDC shall provide a request form to individuals who wish to request services or accommodations for persons with disabilities. The request form, attached as Exhibit C.1 to C.5 (specific as to each county) shall be available on the 10th Judicial Circuit website and the websites of each of the Circuit Clerks.

Whenever possible, a request for accommodation or services shall be made fourteen (14) days in advance of the proceeding, program or service. The request shall be as specific as possible and include a description of the accommodation sought and the date the accommodation is needed. The request shall be mailed or e-mailed to the Court Disability Coordinator for the county wherein the request is being made. The CDC shall respond in writing by mail and e-mail (if an e-mail address was provided in the request), and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the requestor, within seven (7) days from the date the request was received.

The CDC will give "primary consideration" to the request of individuals with disabilities. "Primary consideration" means that the Circuit Court will honor the choice of the individual, unless it demonstrates that another equally effective accommodation is available, or that the requested accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of Circuit Court proceedings, activities, or programs or undue financial and administrative burdens.

VI. Informal Grievance Procedure

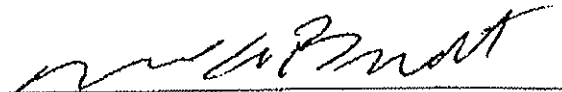
Individuals have the right to file a grievance when they believe the Circuit Court has not complied with the provisions of this policy or the request for accommodations procedure. The grievance shall be filed within seven (7) days after the person filing the complaint becomes aware of the action or inaction. A complaint shall be in writing, using the Circuit Court's grievance form, attached as Exhibit D.1 to D.5 (specific as to each county). The grievance shall contain the name and address of the person filing the complaint, and briefly describe the alleged violation. The complaint shall be mailed or e-mailed to the attention of the CDC. The CDC shall forward a copy of the grievance to the chief circuit judge and to the presiding judge of the county, if any.

Within seven (7) days after receipt of a grievance, the CDC or a designee may meet with the grievant, either in person or by telephone, to discuss the complaint and possible resolution, if the CDC or designee determines such a meeting would be helpful to a determination. Within seven (7) days after the meeting, or within fourteen (14) days after receipt of the complaint if there is no meeting, the CDC shall respond in writing, by mail and e-mail (if an e-mail address was provided in the grievance) and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the grievant. The CDC shall forward a copy of the response to the chief circuit judge and to the presiding judge of the county.

If the response by the CDC does not resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the grievant, the grievant may within seven (7) days of the date of the CDC's written response, appeal the decision to the Chief Circuit Judge of the 10th Judicial Circuit, c/o Court Disability Coordinator of the particular county. The appeal shall be in writing. The CDC shall forward it to the chief circuit judge forthwith. Within fourteen (14) days after receipt of the appeal, the chief circuit judge will respond in writing to the grievant by mail and e-mail (if an e-mail address was provided in the written appeal) with a final resolution of the grievance or complaint.

The grievance procedure outlined herein is deemed informal. In no way does it create a formal administrative hearing and review process and in no way does it affect the rights and duties granted and proscribed under Federal or State law.

Effective 2/1/13



Michael E. Brandt, Chief Circuit Judge
10th Judicial Circuit