

USER INSTRUCTIONS

WELCOME TO THE CLERK'S OFFICE ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM

Welcome to the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County's Electronic Filing System ("eFiling System"). The eFiling System is presently limited to the filing of Law Division cases within the Clerk's Office and can accept documents such as pleadings, motions and other papers filed in relation to Law Division cases. Please note that the following documents may not be filed using the eFiling System: Condemnation cases, Sealed documents and documents filed in impounded cases or cases where access to the official court file is otherwise restricted by statute, rule, or order, and Applications and Affidavits to Sue or Defend as an Indigent Person pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 298 ("298 Petition"). To file such documents, please visit or mail (except 298 Petitions, which must be filed in person) the document to the Law Division in Room 801 of the Daley Center, 50 W. Washington Street, Chicago, IL, 60602 or one of the Suburban Districts where you wish to file your case. For more information regarding the 298 Petition (including the electronic filing of a *granted* 298 Petition, please see section below titled **APPLICATION AND AFFIDAVIT TO SUE OR DEFEND AS AN INDIGENT PERSON.**

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE eFILING SYSTEM

Confirmation E-mail

In order to register for the eFiling System, you will need to provide your name and contact information. During registration, you will be prompted to create a unique username and password. After you have completed your registration, an e-mail requesting confirmation of your registration will be sent to your email address. Please follow the instructions on the e-mail and confirm the registration. Your registration will not be complete until you finish this process. If you do not see the confirmation e-mail in your inbox, your spam filter may have blocked it. Try adding notifications@uscourts.com to your e-mail safe senders list. Your e-mail Help, Options or Preferences folder can show you how to do this.

The confirmation e-mail will contain information you entered into the eFiling System, including your unique username and password. This confirmation e-mail is only sent to the primary e-mail account entered into the E-Filing System. The e-mail addresses entered in the Carbon Copy "CC" field will not receive this confirmation e-mail. (For explanation regarding e-mail accounts listed in the "CC" field, please see the section below titled, "Explanation of Carbon Copy ("CC") Notifications"). If at any time you forget your username or password, you may request this information through the eFiling System. On the login page, there is a box that prompts you to enter your username and password. Below these fields are two links labeled, "Forgot your password? Click here!" as well as, "Forgot your User ID? Click here!" You may click on the applicable link to request your forgotten information.

Multiple-Attorney Law Firms

When attorneys from multiple-attorney law firms are registering for the eFiling System, it may be helpful to have a designee who receives all the e-mail notifications for all cases filed through

the eFiling System. This can be accomplished by requiring all attorneys to add the designee as a person to be carbon-copied on all notices. (See “Explanation of Carbon Copy (“CC”) Notification”). The designee can ensure that the information is forwarded to the correct attorney(s). In the event that one attorney is taken off a case, this type of internal system will ensure that all pertinent information sent from the eFiling System to designated e-mail account(s) is received by the proper person(s) in the law firm. We recommend that multiple- attorney law firms establish internal eFiling System usage policies.

Attorney Code & Attorney Registration Disciplinary Commission Number

If you are an attorney authorized to practice in Illinois, you will need to provide your or your firm’s Cook County Attorney Code and your individual Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (ARDC) number. If you do not have your ARDC number, please call the ARDC at (800) 826-8625. If you do not have a Cook County Attorney Code, please see the section labeled “How to Obtain a Cook County Attorney Code” referenced herein.

Attorney In Good Standing

Please note, in order to register for the eFiling System you must be an Illinois Attorney in good standing with the ARDC. If you are denied registration due to your status with the ARDC, but are later returned to good standing, it is your responsibility to update your change of status with the Clerk’s Office.

Personal Information in the E-Filing System

If you are an attorney and need to change contact information associated with your Cook County Attorney Code, please follow the instructions in the “How to Obtain a Cook County Attorney Code” section below.

Note: When you make changes to your personal information within the eFiling System, the updates are reflected in the eFiling System only and not transmitted to the Clerk’s Office.

Out-of-State Attorneys

If you are an attorney licensed outside the State of Illinois and do not have an Illinois ARDC number, you are not able to use the E-Filing System. Please see the Supreme Court rules on practicing in another jurisdiction. (See Illinois Supreme Court Rule 707 for *Pro Hac Vice*).

EXPLANATION OF CARBON COPY (“CC”) NOTIFICATIONS

In the Registration section of the eFiling System, you will be able to enter additional e-mail addresses under Carbon Copy (“CC”) Notifications. All e-mails, including notification of initial case filings, confirmations, case notices, etc. that you receive will also be sent to your CC e-mail addresses. You may change, add, or delete the CC addresses at any time by going into the Update Account section under “My Account,” and clicking on “Change Alternative Emails.”

HOW TO OBTAIN A COOK COUNTY ATTORNEY CODE

In order to obtain a Cook County Attorney Code, or to change your Cook County Attorney Code contact information, please complete the *Cook County Attorney Code Request Form*. A link to the form is provided [here](#). You will also need copies of your current and valid ARDC card AND your valid government-issued driver's license or identification card.

Once you have completed the form, you may submit the form with the copies of the required identification documents as directed on the *Cook County Attorney Code Request Form*.

If you would like to receive your attorney code on the same day you send in your request, please submit your request via facsimile, e-mail, or in person between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., during the regular business day.

eFILING SYSTEM INFORMATION UPDATE FORM

The eFiling System Information Update Form ("Update Form") is for attorneys and *pro se* litigants who want to update the following information on their eFiling System account: 1) Remove or add an attorney and/or litigant for receipt of notices and access to an eFiled Case(s) on the eFiling System; 2) Opt in or out of electronic service; or, 3) Change the name on the eFiling System. All other eFiling System personal information may be updated by clicking "My Account" on the menu bar. For a link to the Update Form, please click [here](#):

Attorneys and *pro se* litigants must come in person to the Law Division of the Clerk's Office at 50 W. Washington St., Chicago, IL, Room 801, to turn in the Update Form. Please bring with you a valid government I.D. and any supporting documentation, if necessary, for your specific request.

Attorneys

A law firm or attorney can utilize the Update Form to remove or add an attorney on an eFiled case. Please refer to section 1A of the Update Form for an option to remove a current attorney from an e-Filed case, or to add a new attorney to an eFiled case. Under section 1A, you may also elect to opt in or out of electronic service for an eFiled case. If you consent to electronic service on the eFiling System, but later change your mind and wish to opt out, you must complete the Update Form and bring it to the Clerk's Office. For more detailed information on opting in or opting out of electronic service on the eFiling System, please see section labeled "Electronic Service Agreement" below.

If you are an attorney and you legally change your name, the Update Form can be used to request that your name be changed on the eFiling System, but only if your new name has been updated with the ARDC. (Please contact the ARDC for information on how to update your name associated with your ARDC number). Once you have a new ARDC card bearing your new name, please bring a copy of the card along with the Update Form to the Clerk's Office to have your name changed on the eFiling System.

Pro Se Litigants

A *pro se* litigant can use the Update Form to change his/her name in the event that he/she misspelled the name during registration on the eFiling System, or he/she has legally changed his/her name. Under section 2A of the Update Form, please select the option stating that you want to change your name on the eFiling System. Along with the completed Update Form, you must also present proof of the name change by producing a certified copy of one of the following documents: name change judgment, divorce decree, marriage license, or any other document that provides the legal authority to change your name.

A *pro se* litigant can also use the Update Form to opt in or opt out of electronic service on the eFiling System. During registration, you will have the option of consenting to electronic service through the eFiling System. If you consent to electronic service, but later change your mind and wish to opt out, you must complete the Update Form and bring it into the Clerk's Office. For more detailed information on opting in or opting out of electronic service on the eFiling System, please see section labeled "Electronic Service Agreement" below.

ELECTRONIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

All Registrants of the eFiling System will have the option of sending and/or receiving electronic service through the eFiling System. During registration, you will have the option of consenting to receiving service electronically through the eFiling System. Only documents that do not require personal service as a matter of law may be served electronically. If you indicated at registration that you consent to receiving service electronically through the eFiling System, but later change your mind, it is your responsibility to communicate this change to the opposing litigant(s) in all your pending and future cases. In order to undo your consent status in your eFiling account, you must come in person to the Law Division of the Clerk's Office at 50 W. Washington St., Chicago, IL, Room 801, or to one of the Suburban Districts and make this request in person. You will be required to complete the Update Form to process your request. For more detailed information on the Update Form, please see section labeled "eFiling System Information Update Form" above. If you did not check that you consent to electronic service through the eFiling System when registering, but later want to change this status to indicate that you do consent, you may update this change by going into the "Update Account" section under "My Accounts" and clicking on "Change eService Status."

Please refer to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 12(d), "Effective Date of Service by Facsimile Transmission," as a guide to determine the date of service for electronically served documents.

INFORMATION ABOUT DOCUMENT FORMAT

To be accepted in the eFiling System, all documents must be submitted in a Portable Document Format (PDF) format. The user is responsible for ensuring that his or her documents are in the proper PDF format before being submitted into the eFiling System. To convert your document to a PDF, you may use the link provided in the eFiling System.

In addition, the specific format of a document shall comply with court rules and applicable statutory requirements.

When converting your documents to PDF format, it is your responsibility to ensure that the conversion has not altered the content of the original document. Please ensure that the final PDF copy of your document is accurate before submitting it on the eFiling System.

The maximum size per PDF document that can be uploaded is 5 MB. If your document is larger than 5 MB, the eFiling System will not be able to properly upload it; however, you may upload your document in sections and include in the same filing at no extra cost. There is no limit to the number of documents that can be uploaded per filing.

SIGNATURE REQUIREMENT FOR ELECTRONICALLY FILED DOCUMENTS

Each electronically filed document, including every pleading, motion, and other paper shall bear a facsimile or typographical signature of the attorney, or *pro se* party, authorizing such filing, and shall be deemed to have been signed by the individual identified. In the absence of a facsimile or typographical signature, any document electronically filed with a username and password issued by the eFiling System, shall be deemed to have been signed by the holder of the username and password.

CASE FILING FEE SCHEDULE INFORMATION, VENDOR E-FILING SYSTEM USAGE FEES, AND ELECTRONIC PAYMENT FEE

Please click on the following links to access the Fee Schedules:

[Case Filing Fee Schedule](#)

[Vendor E-Filing System Usage Fees](#)

[Electronic Payment Fees](#)

INSTRUCTIONS ON FILING NEW CASE/PLEADINGS/MOTIONS

Please click on the following link to be connected to a video tutorial: [Video Tutorial](#)

Important Note: As you go through the eFiling System to file a new case, please remember the number of plaintiffs and defendants listed for your case. During the case initiation process, you will be prompted to input information regarding all plaintiffs and defendants associated with your case, including how many plaintiffs and defendants you have entered for the case. If the number you enter does not match the party information you entered, the eFiling System will not allow you to proceed. This process was built in to ensure the accuracy of the information entered.

SYSTEM TIME-OUT

Please be aware that you will be logged off the eFiling System if the program remains in idle status for one hour or more. Any information not submitted at the time will be LOST.

EXPLANATION OF AD DAMNUM AMOUNT

Ad Damnum is a declaration which contains a statement of the plaintiff's money loss, or the damages which he or she claims. If the Ad Damnum amount is known, please state the amount when prompted during the eFiling process. If you do not know the exact amount of the damages being sought, but you can certify that it is in excess of \$30,000 (if filing in the Law Division), or in excess of \$100,000 (if filing in one of the Suburban Districts) please leave the Ad Damnum amount blank and click on the button that states the Ad Damnum amount exceeds either \$30,000 or \$100,000. If you are E-Filing for a Suburban case, the system will automatically change to reflect a button that states the Ad Damnum amount exceeds \$100,000.

TIME OF FILING, ACCEPTANCE BY THE CLERK'S OFFICE

Any document submitted electronically shall be considered filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court as of the time of electronic submission upon review and acceptance by the Clerk. The transmission shall be endorsed with the Clerk's electronic file stamp setting forth both date and time. Any document submitted electronically to the Clerk's Office on a day or at a time when the Clerk's Office is not open for business shall, unless rejected by the Clerk, be file stamped as filed at the next period for which the Clerk's Office is open to receive conventional filings. This file stamp shall be merged with the electronic document and shall be visible when the document is printed and viewed online. Electronically filed documents so endorsed shall have the same force and effect as documents file stamped in the conventional manner.

REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN SIGNED ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

Any filer electronically filing a document that requires an original signature certifies that the original signed document exists in the filer's possession by so filing. The filer filing the document must maintain and preserve all documents bearing an original signature. The signed original documents shall be made available for inspection by the court, the Clerk's Office or by counsel/self-represented litigant to the case upon reasonable written notice or as ordered by the court. In instances where the Clerk's Office or the court require the filing individual to produce for inspection the document bearing the original signature, the document shall be provided within three business days or as ordered by the court. All electronically filed documents that the filer is required to maintain and preserve shall be kept for one year after the appellate review period has been completed.

STATUTORY FEES AND CHARGES

All statutory fees and charges will apply when the electronically filed document requires the payment of such statutory filing fees. In addition, for the use of the eFiling System, there will be eFiling fees assessed per transaction, which are non-refundable, unless otherwise stated. For any

filings submitted with a **granted** Application and Affidavit to Sue or Defend as an Indigent Person, the statutory filing fees and the eFiling fees will be waived. The eFiling Fees may be subject to change.

ELECTRONIC-FILING RECEIPT

After completing your transaction, your payment and eFile receipt will appear on the screen. Please save and print this information for your records. You will also receive an e-mail confirmation stating that your documents have been transmitted to the Clerk's Office. After the Clerk's Office has accepted the filing, another e-mail confirmation will be sent to your designated e-mail(s) confirming that your document has been filed. This e-mail confirmation of your filed documents will indicate the case number and the date and time of acceptance and will include an attachment of your filed documents bearing the Clerk's Office file stamp. If the documents are rejected, you will be informed of such rejection and the reasons for such action. For any and all individual calendar cases, you will receive notice detailing your courtroom information. The notice will include the case number, the date, time, and location of your court hearing.

EXPLANATION OF BILLING REFERENCE INFORMATION

The billing reference allows you to create a personal index reference for the specified transaction, making it easy for you to refer to it in the future. The description can be up to 100 characters and using this option allows you to remember the transaction as well as the client to bill, if applicable. Your billing reference will be listed in your account history.

HOW TO OBTAIN YOUR ACCOUNT HISTORY INFORMATION

To obtain your account history information, please proceed to "My Account." Once you have gone into the "My Account" section, you will find a link labeled "My Filings." "My Filings" will allow you to search by party name or case number, all the filings you have submitted under your account.

Additionally, the dashboard that appears under the Home Section on the eFiling System also provides information on previous filings. On the dashboard, you will see a "+" sign to the left. If you click on the sign, the documents filed for each of the last five cases under your account will be displayed.

SUMMONS

Registered users of the eFiling System will have the option of having the Clerk's Office deliver the electronically filed Summons and Complaints to the Sheriff's Office for service. In step 4 of the section labeled "Case Initiation" where you are prompted to add Defendant information, you will see a label for "Service Type." If you choose the "Sheriff" option in the drop down menu for "Service Type," the eFiling System will prompt you to indicate whether the summons to be delivered to the Sheriff will be done by the "Clerk" or the "Filer." If you choose the "Filer" option, you will be responsible for delivering copies of the Summons and Complaint to the

Sheriff's Office for service. A sealed copy of the Summons and Complaint bearing the Clerk's Office file stamp will be e-mailed back to you once your electronic filing has been accepted and filed by the Clerk's Office. If you choose the "Clerk" option, the Clerk's Office will deliver the Summons and Complaint to the Sheriff's Office for service. If you choose this option, you will be assessed the statutory copying fees charged by the Clerk's Office as well as the appropriate fees for the Sheriff's services. An explanation of the fees can be found by clicking the "Additional Fees" link provided for you when you are choosing between the "Clerk" and "Filer" option. After the Clerk's Office has delivered the Summons and Complaints to the Sheriff's Office, and once the Clerk's Office receives confirmation of the Summons receipt by the Sheriff's Office, the electronic docket will reflect that the Clerk's Office delivered the Summons to the Sheriff's Office.

MOTION SPINDLING

The eFiling System allows motion spindling on motions that have been electronically filed in the eFiling System. If you conventionally file a motion, you cannot spindle that motion electronically. Motions can only be spindled on the eFiling system during Clerk's Office Business hours of 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, excluding court holidays.

Motion spindling on the eFiling System can be found on the Home Page. After you have logged-in to the eFiling System, you are taken to the Home Page where the Dashboard will appear. Above the Dashboard, you will see an option to click on "Motion", after which a drop down menu will appear with an option to "Spindle a Motion".

Instructions on motion spindling on the eFiling system can be found on the End User Guide, which can be accessed on the eFiling System. You may also view the Webinar on motion spindling. To view the Webinar, please go to the Clerk's Office website at www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org and click on eFiling Training. You will then be directed to a list of available Webinars, including the Webinar on motion spindling.

APPLICATION AND AFFIDAVIT TO SUE OR DEFEND AS AN INDIGENT PERSON

Applications and Affidavits to Sue or Defend as an Indigent Person ("298 Petition"), cannot be electronically filed. In order to file a 298 Petition, please come to the Law Division in Room 801 of the Daley Center, 50 W. Washington Street, Chicago, IL, 60602 or one of the Suburban Districts where you are filing your case. If you have an order granting a 298 Petition for a case, you have the option of filing your documents for that case conventionally or submitting them through the eFiling System. Your 298 Petition must be granted for the case *before* you can file your documents through the eFiling System and have your filing fees waived. When you are in step 7 of the case initiation process labeled "Review Filing Fees," there will be options below the listing of fees where you will be able to indicate that you have a granted 298 Petition form. If you choose this option, the system will allow you to complete your transaction for the case without the payment of fees, including the eFiling fee. Once the Clerk's Office has received your documents, we will verify that there is a granted 298 Petition associated with your case. If the Clerk's Office cannot verify that there is a granted 298 Petition associated with your case, you will receive an e-mail notice stating that your documents have not been accepted and filed.

At such time, you will have 7 business days to respond to the notice. If you believe the information is incorrect and you can verify that you have a 298 Petition that was granted before you attempted to electronically file the documents in the case, you must come in person to the Law Division of the Clerk's Office, or to the Suburban District where you are filing your case within 7 business days of the notice with the proper documentation. After 7 business days, your filings will be rejected unless you can verify that a granted 298 Petition exists for your case or you pay the statutory filing fees. If your filing is rejected, you may re-file the case after obtaining a granted 298 petition or paying the required filing fees.

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

If you are a Civil Legal Service Provider ("CLSP"), you will be able to electronically file your documents without the payment of statutory filing fees. Your eFiling fees will also be waived. When you are in step 7 of the case initiation process labeled, "Review Filing Fees," there will be options below the listing of fees where you will be able to indicate that you are a CLSP. Once you have clicked on the option labeling you as a CLSP, the eFiling system will allow you to complete your transaction without the payment of fees, including the eFiling fee. When filing any documents in the eFiling System as a CLSP, you must file a copy of a signed CLSP affidavit, attesting that you are a CLSP. The affidavit must be attached and filed with the documents you are filing, in order to have your fees waived. To see the rules on qualifying as a CLSP, please see 735 ILCS 5/5-105.5.

THE SUPPORT FORUM

The Support Forum contains several topics to assist the user in navigating through the eFiling System, including information about logging in, tracking and monitoring cases, and other functions of the eFiling System. The forum also allows the user to post messages, questions, or comments, allowing for exchange of support-related messages between users. Users will see the comments posted by other users and offer answers or make other comments on the questions posted. This Forum allows for the flow of information between users, not only regarding questions about the eFiling System, but tips and suggestions a user may want to offer. The Clerk's Office staff will monitor the Forum from time to time to ensure that all issues and questions are addressed. In order to access the Support Forum, please click on the link "Support Forum" posted on the upper right corner of the Login page.

ONLINE SERVICES PORTAL

The Online Services Portal contains information designed to assist the user in becoming more familiar with the eFiling System. The Portal contains Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQ's"), and a video tutorial allowing users to watch a video guide on the use of the eFiling System. In order to access the Online Services Portal, please go to the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County's website at www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org and click on the link labeled "Online Services Portal."

ELECTRONIC FILING OF COURT DOCUMENTS - GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER. Please click here: [General Administrative Order](#)

The terms of the Clerk's Office E-Filing Project are governed by the General Administrative Order issued by the Office of the Chief Judge.