



Supreme Court of Illinois

Joseph R. Tybor
Director of Communications

222 North LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Telephone (312) 793-2323
Mobile (312) 636-0479
Fax (312) 793-0871
jtybor@illinoiscourts.gov

June 23, 2014

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT RAISES REGISTRATION FEES FOR ATTORNEYS

The Illinois Supreme Court announced on Monday an increase in the annual registration fee for attorneys practicing in Illinois. The increased funds will be directed to the regulatory body that disciplines attorneys and the Supreme Court Commission established to increase civility among lawyers.

Under amended Supreme Court Rule 756, the annual registration fee will increase from \$342 to \$382. That amounts to an increase of 11 cents per day for attorneys who are in active status for more than three years. The \$40 increase will be remitted to the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (ARDC), which will receive \$30; and the Commission on Professionalism, which will receive \$10.

Attorneys in active status for less than three years; inactive status attorneys; as well as out of state attorneys eligible to practice in Illinois, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 707, will see attorney registration fees rise from \$105 to \$121. The entire \$16 increase will be remitted to the ARDC.

Even with the increase in fees, Illinois, which has the fifth largest lawyer population with approximately 94,000 licensed attorneys, ranks 21st of the states and the District of Columbia in the amount it assesses in mandatory licensing fees and dues for active status attorneys.

The Supreme Court also announced that active attorneys over the age of 75 will no longer be exempt from paying the attorney license registration fee.

The ARDC recommended to the Court elimination of the fee exempting the 1,608 lawyers in Illinois who have reached the age of 75, saying the cost of the regulatory system should be shared by all practicing lawyers. By eliminating the exemption, it is estimated that over \$320,000 in additional funding would be available annually to the ARDC and over \$228,000 for the remaining agencies supported by registration fees.

Retired status lawyers may continue to provide *pro bono* services without paying the registration fee, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 756(a)(6).

MORE

Registration Fees for Attorneys Raised Add One

The rule changes are effective immediately. The new registration fee takes effect with the 2015 attorney registration year, starting January 1, 2015.

In the 41 years since the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (ARDC) was established, registration fees earmarked for ARDC operations have been raised seven times, with the last increase taking effect for the 2007 registration year.

"The timing and amount of the ARDC's fee increase request takes into account the economic challenges facing many lawyers," said ARDC Administrator Jerome Larkin. "Our fee has not been raised in eight years – twice its projected lifespan. The ARDC has acted prudently to extend the life of that fee in response to the Court's directive for fiscal restraint during the economic downturn.

"The amount of the increase for the ARDC is an historic low on a percentage basis. The additional funds will allow the ARDC to continue its educational, remedial, and disciplinary work."

The increased revenue will be used to undertake new and expanded responsibilities in education of the profession, particularly in support of the updated Supreme Court Rules of Professional Conduct that went into effect in 2010; to fund the regulatory and disciplinary authority of out of state attorneys who practice in Illinois under Rule 707; and to upgrade technology in following the Supreme Court's lead in e-business initiatives.

The ARDC operates under the authority of the Supreme Court, which regulates the admission and discipline of lawyers in Illinois. The Commissioners establish ARDC policies, appoint members of the ARDC Hearing and Inquiry Boards, and the Commission's administrator, subject to the approval of the Supreme Court. There are seven Commissioners, three of whom are non-lawyers.

Justice Lloyd A. Karmeier serves as Supreme Court liaison to the ARDC.

--0--

With the increased revenue, the Commission on Professionalism will assist providers in developing innovative and interactive professional responsibility continuing legal education (CLE) courses; continue to expand its successful statewide lawyer-to-lawyer mentoring program; and increase its social media presence to educate and inspire lawyers.

The Commission's mentoring program has grown since its inception in 2012 to include over 75 law firms, bar associations and other organizations as sponsoring organizations and over 1,300 new lawyers and mentors have participated in the program, earning professional responsibility CLE credits in the process.

More recently, the Commission launched an interactive website (www.2civility.org) and social media campaign to better reach lawyers across generations and across the state. Staff, commissioners, and guests discuss professionalism issues on these online platforms.

MORE

Registration Fees for Attorneys Raised Add Two

“I am thrilled about the opportunity to work in even more creative and proactive ways on behalf of our profession,” said Executive Director Jayne Reardon. “Technology is rapidly changing our profession, including both the very nature and the delivery of legal services. Our efforts to promote professionalism are more important than ever.

"We are grateful for the support of the Court and that so many people are joining the professionalism movement."

The Commission on Professionalism was established by the Supreme Court in 2005 to promote among the lawyers and judges of Illinois the principles of integrity, professionalism, and civility; to foster commitment to the elimination of bias and divisiveness within the legal and judicial systems; and to ensure that those systems provide equitable, effective and efficient resolution of problems and disputes for the people of Illinois through collaboration with a broad array of organizations, including law schools, bar associations, courts, and others.

The Commission is an outgrowth of the Committee on Professionalism, first established by the Supreme Court in 2001 as the Committee on Civility.

There are 15 Commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the Supreme Court. In addition, the Director of the Minimum Continuing Legal Education Program and the Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission serve as *ex-officio* members of the Commission.

Justice Robert R. Thomas serves as Supreme Court liaison to the Commission on Professionalism.

--30--

(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, director of communications to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323 or Dawn Frison Cook, senior communications specialist to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.0870)