



# Supreme Court of Illinois

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## **SUPREME COURT AMENDS RULES ON ATTORNEY REGISTRATION**

Chief Justice Rita B. Garman and the Illinois Supreme Court announced on Wednesday changes to a rule that will now require attorneys to register online each year.

Under Amended Supreme Court Rule 756, attorneys will also have to provide specific practice-related information to the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (ARDC).

The amendments to Rule 756, which governs the annual attorney registration process, will make Illinois one of at least seven states that will require the online submission of registration data by next year. At least a handful of states already mandate lawyers to do so.

ARDC Administrator Jerome Larkin said while 81 percent of Illinois' approximate 95,000 attorneys registered online this year, the rule's mandate for online registration will allow the ARDC to collect practice-related information from all lawyers, not just those who provide it voluntarily.

Historically, lawyers have been required to provide an address and telephone number for inclusion on their public listing on the Master Roll. With the amendments, an attorney will also have to furnish to the ARDC a residential address; the name of all other states in which he or she is licensed to practice law; the type of entity at which the attorney practices; the number of lawyers working there; the areas of law the lawyer primarily practices; and whether that organization has created a written succession plan.

"The disclosure of practice-related demographic information will allow us [the ARDC] to better understand lawyers' practices," Mr. Larkin said. "We'll be able to target our educational and regulatory resources to lawyers and assess whether those approaches are working."

As an example, Mr. Larkin pointed to the United Kingdom and Australia, where he said the incorporation of regulatory approaches based on practice-related data collected has shown to be effective in assisting firms practice more efficiently and reducing the number of complaints.

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## **SC Amends Rules on Attorney Registration Add One**

The ARDC will keep the data collected under the rule confidential, with the exception of the contact information provided in an attorney's listing on the Master Roll of lawyers. Such contact information, however, will be deemed confidential for lawyers on inactive or retirement status and those already exempt under the rule, like judges.

Mr. Larkin said attorneys who have already registered online have found it to be a quicker and better experience and noted that the ARDC feels the same way.

For instance, Mr. Larkin said, when an attorney omits information while registering on paper, the ARDC has to reach out to him or her down to provide the missing information. The online registration process, however, simply doesn't allow an attorney to move forward without completing each requirement.

The amended rule also makes explicit that lawyers will be deemed not registered for the year if he or she has not paid all required fees and provided all information required under the rule. It also allows the ARDC to remove lawyers who have not registered for that year on or after February 1, as opposed to requiring removal from the state's Master Roll of attorneys on that date.

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