

Introduction



In Illinois, court-annexed arbitration is a mandatory, non-binding, non-court procedure designed to resolve disputes by utilizing a neutral third party, called an arbitration panel. Mandatory arbitration uses rules of evidence and procedure that are less formal than those followed in trial courts, which usually leads to a faster, less expensive resolution of disputes. An arbitration panel can recommend, but not impose, a decision. In the sixteen jurisdictions approved by the Supreme Court to operate such programs, all civil cases in which the monetary damages being sought fall within the program's jurisdictional limit are subject to the arbitration process. These modest sized claims are amenable to closer management and faster resolution by using a less formal alternative process than a typical trial court proceeding.

In the exercise of its general administrative and supervisory authority over Illinois courts, the Supreme Court promulgates comprehensive rules (Supreme Court Rule 86, *et seq.*) that prescribe actions subject to mandatory arbitration. The rules address a range of operational procedures including: appointment, qualifications, and compensation of arbitrators; the scheduling of hearings; the discovery process; the conduct of hearings; absence of a party; award and judgment on an award; rejection of an award; and form of oath, award and notice of award.

The State Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report summarizes the activity of court-annexed mandatory arbitration from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. The report includes an overview of mandatory arbitration in Illinois and contains statistical data as reported by each arbitration program. Aggregate statewide statistics are provided as an overview of Illinois' sixteen court-annexed mandatory arbitration programs. The final section of the report provides a brief narrative and data profile for each of the court-annexed mandatory arbitration programs. To view a history of mandatory arbitration, which began in 1987, please reference the State Fiscal Year 2004 Court-Annexed Mandatory Arbitration Annual Report located on the Supreme Court's website at www.state.il.us/court.