



**ILLINOIS JUDICIAL COLLEGE
COMMITTEE ON CIRCUIT COURT CLERK EDUCATION**

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION PLAN

August 1, 2018

Supreme Court of Illinois Judicial College
Comprehensive Education Plan for Illinois Circuit Court Clerks

I. STANDING COMMITTEE ON CIRCUIT COURT CLERK EDUCATION STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

a. Charge

Under the direction of the Illinois Judicial College Board of Trustees, the Committee on Circuit Court Clerk Education shall coordinate and deliver continuing education for Circuit Court Clerks and on a continuous basis identify and expand upon its programming to enhance the effective and efficient administration of justice in a way that promotes public integrity, trust and confidence. The Committee on Circuit Court Clerk Education will seek to coordinate continuing education programs with the Illinois Association of Court Clerks.

b. Committee Projects and Priorities

- (1) Design and implement an education program, including curriculum development, program development and delivery, faculty selection and training, and publications for Circuit Court Clerks, in coordination with the Illinois Association of Court Clerks.
- (2) Uphold the educational standards established by the Illinois Judicial College;
- (3) Ensure programming is responsive to the needs of the Circuit Court Clerks;
- (4) Evaluate potential educational programs for inclusion in the CCCE curriculum;
- (5) Establish methods of delivery of education programs that are most effective and appropriate;
- (6) Ensure that program faculty is equipped, prepared and able to deliver education programs;
- (7) Maintain a three year academic calendar outlining training for Circuit Court Clerks;
- (8) Ensuring the accurate collection and reporting of data;
- (9) Identify, collaborate and coordinate with appropriate Illinois Judicial Conference Committees, Supreme Court Committees and Commissions;
- (10) Consult and comply with applicable Supreme Court Rules and Statutes;
- (11) Provide information and make recommendations to the Illinois Judicial College Board of Trustees regarding curriculum and continuing education; and
- (12) Conduct Needs Assessments as needed.

c. Membership

Except where otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees, the CCCE shall include 14 members. Members shall consist of:

- (1) Five permanent Circuit Court Clerks, or a designee (permanent);

- (2) Three Trial Court Administrators;
- (3) One Appellate Court Clerk;
- (4) Five judges, at least one of which is a Chief Judge;

d. Leadership

At the time of appointment, the CCCE shall be governed by the Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair shall preside over all meetings. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall preside. The Chair shall be a Circuit Court Clerk. The Vice Chair shall be a judge. CCCE may create Workgroups as needed for planning purposes.

II. PURPOSE AND GOAL

To identify core functions of Circuit Court Clerks and develop skills for professional development, to effectively communicate and collaborate with other justice partners, and to promote the administration of justice consistent with the core values of the judicial branch.

III. COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

In order to ensure the performance of Circuit Court Clerks at the highest level of competency, the Circuit Court Clerk Education Committee recognizes the need for a comprehensive curriculum to maximize professional development and foster communication and collaboration with all justice partners. The curriculum will accommodate the different levels of court experience, knowledge and education of Circuit Court Clerks, and provide specialized education for those in management or supervisory roles.

The curriculum should keep the learner engaged with strategies such as interactive learning, implementing technology, moderating round table discussions, and the introduction of assessment tools, to determine the effectiveness of training or placement. Upon demonstration of basic knowledge of core competencies, the participant will be able to take intermediate then master level courses. Circuit Court Clerks will earn continuing education certification (CEC).

When appropriate, multidisciplinary curriculum may be planned and delivered in collaboration with other Illinois Judicial College Committees, Non-Judicial College Supreme Court Committees or Commissions, justice partners and other entities or providers.

Method of Delivery

Training delivery and methods will take into account the regional differences across the state, at the same time, incorporating adult learning principles. While professional competencies are not affected by geographical boundaries, local resources as well as cultural, social and economic issues range widely across the state. Therefore, there is a necessity to have a multi-pronged training delivery approach including: in-person state-wide and regional trainings as well as web-based trainings. Curriculum delivery methods will be both web-based and in-person.

IV. TARGET AUDIENCE

There are three primary target audiences: Circuit Court Clerks, Management staff, and Deputy Clerks. Currently the Illinois Association of Circuit Court Clerks (IACC), in conjunction with the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC), directs and delivers continuing education to the target audience. Circuit Court Clerks have specialized educational needs and with the partnership of the Judicial College, CCCE envisions expanding current training and delivery methods to include joint training sessions with appropriate justice partners.

Secondary audiences may include members of the Judiciary, Court Administration, Probation Officers, Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, Public Defenders, private attorneys, other elected officials, and appropriate state agencies whenever possible.

V. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

As our charge indicates, the Committee on Circuit Court Clerk Education shall coordinate and deliver continuing education for Circuit Court Clerks and staff to enhance their professional competencies in a way that promotes public integrity, trust, confidence, diversity, and equal access. The overall curriculum will include the importance of respect, empathy, civility, and fairness in each educational level.

Competencies for Circuit Court Clerks and Management Staff include:

1. Know the relevant legal terminology, local rules statutes, and Supreme Court Rules.
2. Understand internal policies of the Circuit Court, including the skillful implementation of policies in the areas of labor relations and human resources.
3. Exhibit professional conduct in fulfilling the duties of the Circuit Court Clerk.
4. Develop professional and effective relationships with court personnel, staff, local officials and community leaders.
5. Recognize and minimize barriers to self-represented litigants.

Relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes have been identified to provide the foundation for Circuit Court Clerks, and their staff, in the essential areas of:

- Knowledge of the law including Supreme Court Rules, Policies, Standards, and decisions, Appellate Court decisions, local rules, and courtroom procedures;
- Recordkeeping;
- Fines and Fees;
- Jury management; and
- E-business policies and programs.

Building upon this basis, advanced courses will be developed for:

- Human resources and office management;

- Leadership development;
- Americans with Disabilities Act/FMLA/Labor negotiations;
- Interacting with local officials and community leaders; and
- New developments and emerging trends such as social media.

Competencies for Deputy Clerks include:

1. Know the relevant legal terminology, local rules statutes, and Supreme Court Rules.
2. Exhibit professional conduct in fulfilling the duties of the Circuit Court Clerk.
3. Develop professional and effective relationships with court personnel, staff, local officials and community leaders.
4. Recognize and minimize barriers to self-represented litigants.
5. Effective performance in all relevant computer programs, including electronic filing, ensuring that all transactions are handled according to established local and Supreme Court Rules, statutes, and policies.
6. Communicate effectively with litigants who have limited English and/or technical proficiency, including the ability to differentiate between providing assistance and providing legal advice to self-represented litigants.

Clerk Staff will also have a core foundation that will serve as the basis for education throughout their professional development. Essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes include:

- Instruction on interactions and assistance to self-represented litigants;
- How to differentiate between legal advice and assistance as well as administration and processing of standardized forms;
- Communicating with those having limited English and technical proficiency;
- Information on computer skills supporting electronic business processes, such as electronic filing, will be addressed to ensure all submission transactions are handled according to established local and Supreme Court Rules, statutes, and policies; and
- Courses targeted to various positions or specific assignments within the Clerk's Office to emphasize professional competency in the areas of courtroom decorum, customer service, legal terminology, communication, and how to navigate court procedures.

Both the core competencies and the training topics are contained in Attachment A.

In conclusion, the Committee on Circuit Court Clerk Education recognizes that the curriculum phase is a fluid process and that some of the topics or concepts above may be adjusted as necessary.

Attachment A:
Professional Competencies
and Suggested Courses

1. Know the relevant legal terminology, local rules, statutes, and Supreme Court Rules.

Curriculum	Circuit Court Clerk	Management Staff	Deputy Clerks
Frequently used legal terminology	X	X	X
Clerks of Courts Act	X	X	X
Supreme Court Rules	X	X	X
Supreme and Appellate Court decisions	X	X	X
Recordkeeping	X	X	X
Fines and Fees	X	X	X
E-business Policies and Programs	X	X	X
Jury Management	X	X	

2. Understand internal policies of the Circuit Court, including the skillful implementation of policies in the areas of labor relations and human resources.

Curriculum	Circuit Court Clerk	Management Staff	Deputy Clerks
Development of comprehensive internal policies	X	X	
Best practices for labor negotiations	X	X	
Navigation of grievances	X	X	
FMLA	X	X	
Effective interviewing/hiring	X	X	
Efficient termination	X	X	
Social Media	X	X	X
Harassment	X	X	X
American with Disabilities Act	X	X	
Budgeting	X	X	
Staff/facility management	X	X	
Leadership development	X	X	

3. Exhibit professional conduct in fulfilling the duties of the Circuit Court Clerk.			
Curriculum	Circuit Court Clerk	Management Staff	Deputy Clerks
Courtroom procedure and decorum	X	X	X
Communication	X	X	X
Computer skills	X	X	X
Ethical duties & conflicts	X	X	X

4. Develop professional and effective relationships with court personnel, staff, local officials, and community leaders.			
Curriculum	Circuit Court Clerk	Management Staff	Deputy Clerks
Listening	X	X	X
Problem solving	X	X	X
Critical Analysis	X	X	
Written and oral communication	X	X	X
Resolving/de-escalating conflicts	X	X	X
Interaction with local officials and community leaders	X		
Customer service	X	X	X

5. Recognize and reduce barriers for self-represented litigants.			
Course	Circuit Court Clerk	Management Staff	Deputy Clerks
SAFE Harbor Policy	X	X	X
Language and Technical Barriers	X	X	X
Standardized Forms	X	X	X
Civility	X	X	X
E-Business Policies and Programs	X	X	X

VI. FACULTY ELIGIBILITY, PROFESSIONAL FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, AND FACULTY CREDIT

Faculty Eligibility

Current Court Clerks of the circuit and reviewing courts as well as professionals qualified by subject matter expertise or academic experience are eligible to serve as faculty.

- The Circuit Court Clerk Education Committee shall be responsible for recommendations of faculty. Recommendations shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees for final decision. The Administrative Office and the Illinois Association of Court Clerks Oversight Board for Continuing Education shall be consulted regarding the appropriate vetting of potential faculty or entities where concerns are raised regarding qualifications.

Professional Faculty Development

Preference will be given to the selection of faculty who have attended at least one Illinois Judicial College Faculty Development training within a two-year period, and who have expressed a willingness to continue faculty development training as recommended. Continuing education credits shall not be earned for participation in faculty development.

Faculty Credit Hours

Faculty shall earn continuing education credit for courses approved by the Illinois Judicial College, unless specified otherwise.

Circuit Court Clerks serving as faculty shall earn three times the length of actual presentation time for an initial presentation of a course in the same educational forum and one time the length of actual presentation time for a repeat presentation of the same course in that educational forum.

VII. PARTICIPANT MINIMUM CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS

Recommended Illinois Supreme Court Judicial College Continuing Education Programs

New Circuit Court Clerk Training

All newly appointed and elected Circuit Court Clerks are strongly encouraged to attend the first available New Circuit Court Clerk Training presented by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts following the oath of office. Note: New Circuit Court Clerk faculty, current mentors, Illinois Association of Court Clerk's Executive Board, and Oversight Board for Continuing Education earn credit for teaching and/or attending new circuit court clerk training. See Section VI for calculation of faculty credit hours. The maximum continuing education hours earned while attending New Circuit Court Clerk Training is limited to then (10) hours .

Education Conference

All Illinois Circuit Court Clerks are strongly encouraged to attend any multiple disciplinary sessions offered by the Illinois Judicial College at the Education Conference held biennially in even-numbered years.

Mandatory Continuing Education Hours for elected Circuit Court Clerks

Every elected Illinois Circuit Court Clerk shall earn twenty (20) hours of continuing education credit during each two-year reporting period, and five (5) of the twenty (20) hours shall be professional development hours as detailed below. Hours may be earned through approved courses offered in-person or through distance learning.

Credit hours meeting the mandatory 20-hour biennial requirement may be satisfied as follows:

- a maximum of fifteen (15) credit hours shall be earned for attending education sessions offered at any Illinois Association of Court Clerks Conference;
- up to fifteen (15) credit hours may be earned through participation in any Illinois Judicial College course approved for a circuit court clerk audience;

Professional Development

Professional development shall include courses related to professionalism and civility, legal ethics, problem solving and critical thinking, communications, and Access to Justice in each two-year reporting period.

Say something about deputy clerks and management staff not getting credit?

The Reporting Period

For purposes of the calculation of continuing education credit hours, the reporting period shall be two years beginning July 1 of odd-numbered years and ending June 30 of odd-numbered years, e.g., July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021.

VIII. CONTINUING EDUCATION PROVIDERS

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, on behalf of the Illinois Judicial College, is a presumptive provider of continuing education courses and activities. The Circuit Court Clerk Education Committee shall recommend additional providers of continuing education to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Co-Providers of Continuing Education

Co-Providers of continuing education courses are those entities that collaborate with the Committee on Judicial Education in the planning, development and/or delivery of programs that target or include a circuit court clerk audience. Co-providers may be Judicial College Committees, non-Judicial College Supreme Court Committees and Commissions, or other entities approved by the Board of Trustees to collaborate with the Circuit Court Clerk Education Committee to plan, develop and/or deliver continuing education courses or programs. The specific courses flowing from this collaboration do not need further approval.

Providers of Continuing Education

Providers of continuing education courses are those entities that provide continuing education, developed by the named entity, without the benefit of Judicial College Committee collaboration in the planning, development and delivery of its programs that target or include a circuit court clerk audience. Providers may be given presumptive approval of all courses and activities based upon the criteria below, or the individual courses of a provider may be approved on a case-by-case basis where presumptive approval criteria is not met. Courses should be periodically reviewed to ensure criteria for approval is met.

Criteria for Assessing Providers and Provider Courses and Activities

Presumptive approval of a provider of continuing education shall constitute approval of all courses and activities offered by the provider. The Committee on Circuit Court Clerk Education, in determining whether to recommend a provider for presumptive status shall consider the following criteria:

Criteria for Approval of Presumptive Provider Status

- Whether the provider is a recognized entity with an established reputation of consistently providing needs-based and competency-based educational programs for circuit court clerks.
- See Appendix A for Presumptive Providers.

Criteria for Approval of Provider Courses

Courses, or series of courses, offered by providers who do not meet presumptive provider status, should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The criteria below should be used to evaluate the suitability of a provider course(s):

- whether the course(s) learning objectives meet one or more of the core competencies of circuit court clerks outlined in this Plan; and
- whether the course faculty are qualified by practical or academic experience in the area of discipline to teach the course offered; and
- whether the circuit court clerk is in compliance with mandatory continuing education hours as outlined in the Plan.

Appendix A: Approved Presumptive Providers

Appendix A

Approved Presumptive Providers

The providers below are presumptively approved for circuit court clerk attendance based upon the criteria noted in this Plan but remain subject to periodic review by the Board of Trustees.

Illinois Appellate Defenders Office

Illinois Appellate Prosecutors Office

Illinois Association of Court Clerks Oversight Board on Education

Illinois Attorney General's Office

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Illinois Secretary of State

Illinois State Archives

Illinois State Police

Illinois Treasurers Office