

Section I – Application Form Court Navigator Network 2022-2023

Applicant Jurisdiction Information

Judicial Circuit/Appellate District	Nineteenth Judicial Circuit
County served (if multiple counties in a Circuit, please list each one that will be served by Member)	Lake County
Chief Judge/Presiding Justice	Chief Judge Mark L. Levitt
Presiding Judge (if applicable)	
Circuit/Appellate Clerk Name	Erin Cartwright Weinstein

Court Navigator Network Member Information (if requesting grant funds, this is the person who will attend trainings, oversee the grant project, and report to the ATJ Commission and AOIC)

Name	Frances Paparigian		
Job Title	Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator		
Employer	Nineteenth Judicial Circuit		
Street Address	18 N County Street		
City, State, Zip Code	Waukegan, IL 60085		
Phone Number	847-377-3829	Email Address	fpaparigian@lakecountyl.gov
Request	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant funds & network membership <input type="checkbox"/> Network only*		
Will you still work on the project if you are awarded partial or no grant funds?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you interested in participating in the Court Navigator Network even if you are not awarded any grant funds?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

*If you are requesting to participating in the network without requesting grant funds, you only need to complete this section of the application.

Additional Contact Information (if additional staff members should be included on communication about the Network, please include their information here. If additional space needed, please submit on an additional page)

Name	Elizabeth Howlett Bogie		
Job Title	Principal Staff Attorney		
Employer	Nineteenth Judicial Circuit		
Street Address	18 N County Street		
City, State, Zip Code	Waukegan, IL 60085		
Phone Number	847-377-3810	Email Address	ebogie@lakecountyl.gov

Section II - Program Narrative

- a) *What is your proposed project or program? Please describe the project or program for which you are requesting grant funds.*

The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit proposes three main uses of the grant funds for the 2022-23 grant cycle: 1) Funds to continue the Early Resolution Program; 2) Funds to continue the chat feature on the circuit court's website; 3) Funds to continue to provide incentives for eviction mediators

- 1) The Early Resolution Program has been held remotely for the past two years through the use of Zoom, email, and DocuSign. The Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator altered the in-person procedures with the assistance of the contracted Prairie State Legal Services attorney to accommodate remote consultations and review of paperwork. The program successfully proved up 61 cases (122 SRLs) over 9 program dates between July 2021 and May 2022 with an average of 7 cases per program. Additional cases are expected to prove up through the program in June. The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit values the Early Resolution Program as an integral component of SRL Courtroom goals.

The Program initiates contact with SRLs by mailing letters and brochures (created via Canva) to qualifying cases. Parties interested in finalizing their divorce quickly and efficiently are instructed to contact the Coordinator who provides the necessary documents along with procedural information. A Zoom meeting is then scheduled between the litigants, the Coordinator, and an attorney from Prairie State Legal Services. The attorney assists the parties to finalize their documents and ensure that there are no outstanding legal issues. The Coordinator manages the documents to completion and signature. These cases are then scheduled for a prove-up via Zoom on a monthly basis. From start to finish, the process is entirely remote, but requests for in-person assistance can be accommodated. The grant funds received would support the continuation of this program by maintaining the indispensable partnership with Prairie State Legal Services and by funding the annual DocuSign subscription that facilitates electronic signatures. It would also allow for the creation of new brochures and signage with a Canva account.

- 2) The installation of a chat platform on the circuit court website became an immediate necessity due to the pandemic as a way to share resources and information with litigants remotely, but it quickly became apparent that this service will remain a helpful tool for litigants in a post-pandemic world. Through this feature, it was confirmed that litigants with questions about court visit the circuit court website to seek answers and that having a way for them to communicate with a representative is a successful method for providing information.

Four representatives: the SRL Coordinator, Justice Corps Fellow, and two Law Library staff monitor the chat and respond to inquiries. Court users are instructed to leave a

message with their question, and a representative will email them the answer. When staff is available, the feature allowing for live chat conversations is enabled. From July 2021 to present, 2,134 messages have been answered, and from March through May of 2022, 405 live chat conversations occurred. Typical inquiries relate to remote court access, where to obtain forms and how to submit paperwork. The Nineteenth Circuit is committed to the continuation of this service.

- 3) The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Eviction Mediation Program has been in place for several years and has a consistently high resolution/success rate. The mediators are volunteer attorneys that would previously come in person on days when SRL cases were scheduled to conduct mediation between the parties in a conference room. One mediator typically completed two or three mediations per court session.

With the rise in eviction cases that followed the end of the pandemic-era moratoria, two or three mediations per court session is not nearly enough. In order to manage the increased caseload, on the first court date the case is continued for 30 days. This gives the self-represented parties time to contact a mediator and schedule a mediation prior to their next court date which allows the mediators to conduct far more mediations. Consequently, the volunteer attorney mediator's workload has been vastly increased. With this grant in addition to seeking other funding sources, we hope to be able to offer a small monetary compensation per mediation session (\$50) as an incentive for mediators to continue to volunteer for this program despite the increased workload.

b) What are your goals for the project or program? Please list specific objectives and any steps that will be taken to achieve them.

- 1) The goal for the Early Resolution Program is to continue remote access and maintain the positive feedback from participants gathered via surveys. The original program goals will be preserved:
 - Establish a simplified process
 - Reduce the number of court appearances
 - Reduce the number of post-case motions and hearings
 - Increase education for court users
 - Increase public trust and confidence
 - Increase user satisfaction
 - Provide meaningful access to the judicial system.
- 2) The goal for the LiveChat feature on the website is to maintain the staffing level of four trained representatives. With this amount of representatives, the live chatting feature can be enabled for certain predetermined time periods throughout the week with the leave a message function enabled at all other times.

- 3) The goal for the Eviction Mediation Program is to assist the increased number of self-represented litigants to reach a resolution outside of the courtroom by providing incentives for mediators to volunteer.

- c) *Who will partner with your Coordinator to achieve these goals? Please describe any proposed partnerships that will enhance the work of the Coordinator. This should include court-based partners (e.g., circuit clerks, IL JusticeCorps) and external partners (e.g., bar associations, public libraries).*

These goals could not be met without the cooperation of court partners. Namely, Prairie State Legal Services, JusticeCorps, the Law Library, the Lake County Bar Association, the Circuit Clerk's office, and the Arbitration Center.

Previous grant funding allowed for the partnership with Prairie State Legal Services to grow, and this relationship will be sustained with any new grant funds. The Nineteenth Circuit is fortunate to have a JusticeCorps Fellow stationed in the Law Library to provide SRLs with assistance both remotely and in person in addition to monitoring chat inquiries. The Law Library staff will continue to assist SRLs with Zoom and provide paperwork. The Lake County Bar Association is supportive of the SRL Program and exchanges information and resources with the Coordinator. The office of the Circuit Clerk has supported the Early Resolution Program by scheduling cases for the designated prove-up date, accommodating SRLs with scheduling conflicts, and quickly processing e-filed documents of program participants. The Arbitration Center will continue to coordinate with volunteer mediators and maintain their schedules.

- d) *How will the Coordinator evaluate the effectiveness of their work? Please include a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the Coordinator's initiatives. Evaluations should consider the impact on both litigants and court staff.*

Evaluations are essential as the SRL program continues to navigate remote services and pilot new programs. Online evaluations tailored to SRLs will be sent via email following each Early Resolution Program date. The Coordinator will continue to evaluate the Early Resolution Program by tracking data including the number of cases that are proved-up through the Early Resolution Program, the number of days between filing and resolution of those cases, and the total number of court appearances for each case. The JusticeCorps fellow will continue to track their total number of patrons assisted and the type of assistance provided. The LiveChat program is equipped with data tracking tools that provide information about number of messages received in any given period and at what time of day messages are most frequent. The live setting allows patrons to rate the chat experience as well. The Arbitration Center will track the frequency and success rate of the eviction mediation sessions.

- e) *For current grant fund recipients only, if applying for additional funding for your current project: Please describe any steps you have taken towards developing a sustainable path forward for your current project and the reason for needing additional grant funds.*

Adding a dedicated Coordinator was supported by the Lake County Board in 2019 and has been incorporated as a regular position within the Circuit Court's annual budget going forward. The Coordinator is committed to maintaining current projects in addition to improving upon them and establishing new ones. Previous grant funds established a dedicated SRL space in the Law Library and purchased equipment for the Coordinator and the JusticeCorps Fellow. These additions continue to provide stability for the program moving forward, and we plan to continue to improve upon them as our needs change. The Coordinator will be able to preserve the current level of service via LiveChat with the assistance of the law library staff, a JusticeCorps fellow, a summer intern, and a part-time volunteer.

Section III – Statement of Interest & Resume

This section should be completed by the proposed Coordinator who will oversee the implementation of the grant program. The statement of interest should detail their interest in the role and any relevant experience or qualifications. The proposed Coordinator should also state their interest in participating in more statewide conversations and training. Please attach the Coordinator's resume or brief bio with the statement of interest.

These past two years as Self Represented Coordinator for the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit have been an extremely rewarding experience. I had the honor not only of being the first person solely dedicated to that title in this circuit, but I was also able to guide the program through the pandemic by converting previous programming to a remote platform. I also had the chance to implement and oversee additional remote services including the chat feature on our website. Now that we are in a “post-pandemic” era, I am looking forward to combining best practices of remote assistance with our ability to offer in-person services again.

Beginning this role in a pandemic was challenging but also allowed me to be on the forefront of best remote practices as it pertains to SRLs. Lake County has been extremely supportive of these endeavors which has allowed our program to excel. Consequently, I was asked to speak at conferences and webinars about the Nineteenth Circuit’s remote procedures. I served as a faculty member for the Illinois Judicial College and spoke at the Judicial Educational Conferences regarding remote SRL proceedings.

Though our program excels, I acknowledge that there is always room for growth and development. In order to continue to gather ideas to improve services, I attend state and nationwide webinars pertaining to SRLs and previously was a member of the National Center for State Courts Implementation Lab to network, share ideas, and troubleshoot any issues. I also attend the monthly Illinois coordinator network meetings and trainings which have proven to be an invaluable resource. In addition to national and statewide networks, I am committed to maintaining the relationships I have formed with local community organizations as well as partners within the court system so that our program can continue to grow. We will continue to work with JusticeCorps and are grateful for our fellows without whom we could not reach as many self-represented litigants in need. I am constantly seeking other options for growing our program and was recently able to hire a summer intern as well as a part-time volunteer in pursuit of this goal.

Through this journey, my passion for access to justice has only grown, and I am eager to use that passion to continue to improve upon services for self-represented litigants in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit.

Frances Paparigian

18 N County St, Waukegan, IL 60085

fpaparigian@lakecountyil.gov • 847-377-3829

OBJECTIVE

Create, improve, and expand access to justice programs for self-represented litigants in the 19th Judicial Circuit Court

WORK EXPERIENCE

- **Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator**, 19th Judicial Circuit *March 2020- Present*
- **Crime Victim Advocate**, New Beginnings *May 2018- March 2020*
Advocated on behalf of victims of crime by supporting them through civil and criminal court cases and providing case management
- **Legal Advocate**, Mutual Ground *September 2017-May 2018*
Advocated on behalf of domestic violence survivors and provided support through legal matters
- **Court Interpreter**, 18th Judicial Circuit *January 2016- October 2017*
Provided accurate Spanish-English interpretations in the court room

EDUCATION

- **Bachelor of Arts** *January 2015*
Summa Cum Laude, Departmental Honors in Spanish
Carthage College, Kenosha, WI
- **Legal Translation Course** *December 2015*
Waubonsee Community College, Aurora, IL

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Fluent: English and Spanish
- Literate: French and Italian
- Conversational: Chinese

CERTIFICATIONS

- Illinois domestic violence and sexual assault advocate certification (60 hour training)
- Registered Spanish interpreter with the AOIC, 2016-2019

Section IV - Letters of Support

Please see attached.

The Chambers of
Mark L. Levitt
Chief Judge



18 North County Street
Waukegan, Illinois 60085
847-377-4500

**CIRCUIT COURT
NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

June 15, 2022

Honorable Mary K. Rochford, Chair
Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice
222 N. LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Justice Rochford and ATJ Advisory Committee:

I write in support of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's grant application to continue and expand the work we are doing in the Family Division's, Early Resolution Program (ERP), and with the chat feature on the court's website.

Litigants representing themselves in divorce cases continue to need guidance through the court system, and forms, to resolve even uncontested matters. The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's program has proven to be successful by ensuring that all required paperwork is completed prior to the court hearing, which avoids the need for a continuance. Remote assistance is available as an option for litigants in an effort to increase access to justice in a post pandemic world.

The chat feature on the court's website has been widely used from its inception. Most inquiries revolve around remote court access, forms, and filing paperwork. The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit sees the chat feature on our website as an essential component of SRL access to the courts. The continuation and expansion of this virtual one-on-one help resource is a priority.

Our Eviction Mediation Program, administered through our Alternative Dispute Resolution Center, is more important than ever since the end of the moratorium. Being able to provide incentives to the mediators has helped the program to be fully staffed and successful.

We are pleased to pursue the opportunity for continued work and expansion of services to our Early Resolution Program, the chat feature on our website, as well as the Eviction Mediation Program.

Very Truly Yours,

Mark L. Levitt
Chief Judge, Nineteenth Judicial Circuit



June 1, 2022

Justice Mary K. Rochford,
Chair of the Illinois Supreme Court
Commission on Access to Justice

Dear Justice Rochford:

This letter is to express Prairie State Legal Services' continuing support for the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's application for renewed funding for its Early Resolution Program (ERP) under the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice and the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts' Self-Represented Litigant (SRL) grant program.

Prairie State Legal Services is a not-for-profit law firm that offers civil legal services at no charge for low-income and elderly clients. Prairie State staff attorney Amy Weiss has provided legal support for self-represented litigants in the ERP since its inception.

The ERP is one of the successful tools the 19th Judicial Circuit uses to improve litigants' interactions with the court system. The ERP coordinator reviews dissolution petitions and selects parties with minimal issues to participate in the program. Once a month, the selected parties meet with Ms. Weiss to resolve any disputes and to complete paperwork. Self-represented litigants then proceed to the courtroom for prove up and entry of a judgment of dissolution.

Prairie State is committed to continued participation in the Early Resolution Program. We support the court's efforts to help self-represented litigants achieve meaningful legal relief.

Sincerely,

Samuel J. DiGrino
Managing Attorney

PURSUING JUSTICE. RESTORING HOPE.

WAUKEGAN OFFICE
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Samuel J. DiGrino **MANAGING ATTORNEY**

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for Equal Justice
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

**United
Way**
Community Partner

The Chicago Bar Foundation
321 South Plymouth Court, Suite 3B
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 554-1204
www.chicagobarfoundation.org



June 14, 2022

Honorable Mary K. Rochford, Chair
Supreme Court's Commission on Access to Justice
22 N. LaSalle St., 13th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Justice Rochford and SRL Coordinator Grant Selection Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's application for a grant from the Supreme Court's Commission on Access to Justice to fund the services and programs provided to Self Represented Litigants (SRLs) for another year. I currently work at The Chicago Bar Foundation as Program Manager for Illinois JusticeCorps. Illinois JusticeCorps (ILJC) is an AmeriCorps service program that places college students and recent college graduates in courthouses throughout the state to help SRLs navigate the nuanced and complex legal system.

In the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit, each year the ILJC program places one fellow in that courthouse to volunteer full-time for an entire year helping SRLs in need. The ILJC fellow helps SRLs by providing legal information, assistance with completing court forms, and making referrals to additional services when needed. Each year, the ILJC fellow plays an integral role in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's various programs and initiatives that make the court more accessible for SRLs. Throughout the pandemic, the ILJC fellow has continued to help SRLs in accessing the court both remotely and physically in the courthouse. SRLs have continuously received the utmost care and attention in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit, despite the challenges the pandemic has brought.

In order to properly maintain the same level of service to SRLs in need now and beyond the pandemic, the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit is in need of grant support for another year from the Supreme Court's Commission on Access to Justice. The innovation and perseverance of the court staff who have provided essential services to SRLs in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit will never cease to amaze me. They understand how to use the resources available to them to better serve SRLs in need, including but not limited to utilizing funds and grants awarded to them each year as well as utilizing the time and energy of the ILJC fellow placed in that courthouse each year. The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit certainly deserves grant funding to continue its wonderful initiatives for yet another year, which is why I strongly support the Supreme Court's Commission on Access to Justice choosing the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit as one of the SRL Coordinator Grant recipients this year.

Sincerely,

Mercedes Boykin
Program Manager, Illinois JusticeCorps
The Chicago Bar Foundation



NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT LAKE COUNTY

MANDATORY ARBITRATION PROGRAM

415 W. Washington Street, Room 106
Waukegan, IL 60085
Phone: 847.377.3700
Fax: 847.263.7758
TDD: 847.360.2975

Mark L Levitt
Chief Judge

Donna-Jo Vorderstrasse
Associate Judge

Delta J. Hawkins
ADR Administrator

June 15, 2022

Justice Mary K. Rochford
Chair of the Illinois Supreme Court
Commission on Access to Justice

Dear Justice Rochford,

This letter is to support the 19th Judicial Circuit's application for renewed funding to the Eviction Mediation Program under the Illinois Supreme Court commission on Access to Justice and the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts' Self-Represented Litigant (SRL) grant program.

The 19th Judicial Circuit is committed to increasing Access to Justice to Self-Represented Litigants. In July of 2012 the ADR Center administered a mediation program for SRLs only in both Small Claims and Eviction Courts. The programs included volunteer mediators and was highly successful. Unfortunately, we unable to expand on the programs. The funding from last year allowed the 19th Judicial Circuit to expand the program to include all SRLs, including those who are in a case with an attorney representing the plaintiff in eviction cases.

The revamped eviction mediation program has been very successful. One hundred seventy-six eviction cases were mediated in Lake County from October 2021 – March 2022, and 70% of those cases resulted in a full agreement. While the tenant may not always want to or be able to stay in the home where they currently reside, they now can ask for things that would be helpful to them, such as longer time prior to move out or a reduced or eradicated back rent bill. This new eviction program would not have been possible without the funding. Any further funding that becomes available that could help support an employee that was dedicated to the eviction program would also be very beneficial.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Delta J Hawkins

Delta J. Hawkins, M.A.
19th Judicial Circuit Court, Lake County, IL
415 W. Washington St., Ste. 106
Waukegan, IL 60085

