

Circuit Clerk

PRESENTED BY THE ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS AND COMMISSIONERS

Primary Duties

The Clerk of the Circuit Court is the official record keeper for the courts. The circuit clerk is an integral part of the entire county governmental process and is endowed with certain authority to aid and promote the judicial process. The circuit clerk is not an official of local government but a state constitutional officer.

The primary duty of the circuit clerk is to assist the Circuit Court judge in the execution of their judicial duties by preparing and maintaining court records, collecting fees and fines, and processing paperwork. The circuit clerk issues all processes such as citations, notices and summons for service to the sheriff and subpoenas all witnesses in trials of matters. The clerk must be present at all court sessions and keep complete records of the proceedings and determinations of that court.

The circuit clerk keeps the following books:

- A general docket book, upon which is entered all suits in the order in which they are commenced.
- Proper books of record, indexed to show the names of all parties to a suit.
- Judgment and execution docket, in which all final judgments are minuted.
- Two well bound books, known as Plaintiff's Index to Court Records and Defendant's Index to Court Records, which include all information concerning all cases commenced and decided by the Court.
- A fee book, in which is set down the title of the suit, cost of each suit, and witness fees.
- Such other books of record and entry as may be required by law.



In order to efficiently manage these duties, the areas of responsibility are most commonly divided into four divisions which are Civil, Criminal, Family, and Traffic. The circuit clerk assigns a chief deputy to each division to help facilitate communication between the circuit clerk and deputy clerks. The **Civil Division** deals with a variety of cases including personal injury, probate (wills), small claims and product liability just to name a few. The **Criminal Division** is where all felony charges are processed. Charges filed here are initiated by either the State's Attorney, Attorney General, or the grand jury on behalf of law enforcement agencies and range from homicide and armed robbery to felony drug charges and juvenile delinquency. The **Family Division** processes payment records for divorces, child adoptions, orders of protection for victims of abuse, paternity suits and maintains payment records for all child support cases. The **Traffic Division** usually handles the highest volume of cases which include traffic violations, DUIs, and misdemeanors.

Other Responsibilities

The circuit clerk also manages the Courts's docket and juries. The circuit clerk furnishes the county clerk a list of all persons who have served as jurors and draws the names for jury service as needed.

Training

The office of Clerk of Circuit Court is open to lay persons. The circuit clerk has many different constituencies to serve including judges, the states attorney, the county board, law enforcement, social service agencies, witnesses and jurors. To maintain this high level of professionalism, circuit clerks continually review law, technology, policies and procedures to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Term

Clerk of the Circuit Court is an elected office serving a four-year term.