

# What the Circuit Clerk can and cannot do for you.

## Legal advice

Court personnel **CANNOT** give you legal advice or recommend a specific course of legal action. Legal advice includes, but is not limited to, answering questions that ask whether a specific law or case applies to your current situation. For example, court personnel cannot answer questions like *“Should I ask for joint custody of my children?”*

## Legal Research

Court personnel **CANNOT** do legal research and they **CANNOT** interpret the meaning of laws or cases for you. For example, court personnel **CANNOT** answer questions like *“Are there cases in Illinois that discuss the sale of used cars?”*



## Before your trial



Court personnel **CANNOT** recommend specific types of claims or arguments to make at your hearing or who to make them against. They **CANNOT** recommend what damages to ask for in your lawsuit. For example, court personnel **CANNOT** answer questions like *“Should I ask for court costs or legal fees in my petition?”*

Court personnel **CAN** provide copies of routinely followed court rules and provide information about the court docket or calendar. Court personnel **CAN** help you understand the process for requesting a hearing, how much it costs to file a particular form or lawsuit, and the process for filing a form.

## During your trial



Court personnel **CANNOT** tell you how to present evidence at trial or what objections to raise or how to raise them. They **CANNOT** tell you how to subpoena witnesses or documents, how to examine witnesses, or how to present your case. For example, court personnel **CANNOT** answer questions like *“How do I get a estimate submitted as evidence?”*.

Court personnel **CAN** tell you how to dress for court and whether a particular judge starts or stops at a particular time. Court personnel **CAN** tell you whether a judge will accept requests by phone or fax and where your hearing will be held.

## After your trial



Court personnel **CANNOT** recommend whether to settle a dispute or whether you should file an appeal. Court personnel **CANNOT** tell you how to file an appeal to a higher court or what issues may be appealed. Court personnel **CANNOT** describe a judge's decision to you, predict how a judge will decide a particular case, or what will happen if you win or lose your case. Court personnel **CANNOT** tell you what the time limit is to file a motion to reconsider or an appeal. For example, court personnel **CANNOT** answer questions like *“Can I appeal the judge's ruling in my case?”*

Court personnel **CAN** help you get a copy of a judgment or any part of your case file.

Court personnel **CANNOT** recommend whether to file a particular form, suggest how to fill out a form, or even tell you what phrase to use in a form.

## Legal Forms



Court personnel **CAN** identify and provide forms that are routinely used in certain kinds of lawsuits or actions and that have been created for people to use without an attorney. Court personnel **CAN** tell you whether a judge will accept a form that is printed or submitted improperly.

## Assistance

**Will County Bar Association at 815-726-0383**

***Will County Legal Assistance, Inc. at (815) 727-5123; or Local Law Library***