

**Chicago Council of Lawyers Cook County Circuit Court Clerk
Questionnaire**

- **Please state your name and residence address.**

Dorothy Brown
8816 S. Constance Ave.
Chicago, IL 60617

- **Please provide a biography including**

--your educational background beginning with your undergraduate college education.

I am a certified public accountant, an MBA and an attorney. My educational background is as follows:

- Southern University, Bachelor's Degree – Accounting/Computer Science, Baton Rouge, LA, 1975
- Certified Public Accountant, February 1977
- DePaul University, Master of Business Administration – Finance, 1981
- Chicago-Kent College of Law, Juris Doctorate, 1995

--your previous experience in political office, if any, including dates, offices held, and for each position, a description of the duties that you were charged with completing.

Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, 2000—present—Official record keeper of the Circuit Court of Cook County, 1st Judicial Sub-circuit of the State of Illinois

--your previous legal experience, if any, including dates, firms, description of the practice, and a description of any experience you have had litigating cases generally and in the Circuit Court of Cook County specifically.

My work experience has been in management and auditing, as noted below:

- General Auditor – Chicago Transit Authority 1991—2000
- Senior Manager – Odell Hicks and Company (CPAs) 1984—1991
- Manager and Senior Auditor – First National Bank of Chicago 1981—1984
- Auditor – Arthur Anderson & Co. (CPAs) 1977—1980
- Accountant – Commonwealth Edison Company 1975—1977

I do not have any experience in litigating cases directly, but I have experience directing the litigation strategy in the Circuit Court of Cook County, and the Federal Court, in any circumstances where the Clerk's Office is a party to a case.

Please note that litigating cases in the court room, and the operations behind the scene, are hugely different. Although my being an attorney is useful in making sure that the statutes, Illinois Supreme Court and Circuit Court rules are adhered to, I use my background as a Certified Public Accountant, my Masters and my experience as an external and internal auditor to run the Clerk's Office. My background helps me to both understand and run the financial aspects of the office, and the complex business processes and systems of the office.

- ***How will you improve efficiency and cost effectiveness in the Clerk's Office?***

I will improve efficiency and cost effectiveness in the Clerk's Office by continuing to implement my strategic technology plan. I have already made great strides toward making the Clerk's Office efficient and cost effective. First of all, I have implemented electronic filing in all but one of the civil case types, and we are currently in the process of implementing electronic filing for that division, the County Division. In 2016, and early 2017, we will be implementing electronic filing for the criminal and traffic case types. In addition, we already have an imaging and document management system that captures an electronic image of all documents that are not electronically filed. We have captured almost 200 millions electronic images since we commenced this effort. Both electronic filing and the imaging system make the court more efficient and cost effective. With the recent order issued by the Illinois Supreme, making electronic filing mandatory by January 1, 2018, the progress I have made will become even more efficient and effective.

Following are other initiatives that I have planned to make the court more efficient and cost effective:

- Purchase a state-of-the-art case management system that will be integrated with other justice agencies. The system will provide the Clerk's Office and justice partners with upgraded management reports, permit general electronic filing for both attorneys and individuals, permit attorneys to file electronic draft orders and motions directly with judges, as well as permit judges to review orders and motions and rule on them electronically. The new system will expedite the administration of justice. Responses to a Request for Proposal that went out in the spring of 2015 are already in the process of being evaluated by a committee. We will commence implementation of this system in late 2016/2017.
- Work with the Chief Judge to make all courtrooms e-Courtrooms. This would enable judges, attorneys, parties to cases, and jurors to see electronic images of documents, evidence and exhibits on large screens and computers. There would be computers on attorney desks and a portable electronic podium for attorneys to see images while standing in front of the judge, or addressing the juror of examining or

cross examine witnesses. I already have the commitment from a technology equipment supplier to retrofit and pilot three e-Courtrooms. We are currently waiting on the Chief Judge to provide us with the court rooms he would like to include in the pilot.

- Expand the Interactive Order System (IOS), which is currently in a pilot phase. This is a system built by the Clerk's Office using the specs of the judiciary. The IOS allows criminal court judges to enter court orders directly into a computer to produce electronic court dispositions for the Clerk's electronic docket and various official court documents, such as half-sheets, bonding and warrant documents and orders. The judges sign and stamp the documents electronically. The system also permits the States Attorney and the Public Defender to draft orders for judges' review and approval.
- Request that the Illinois Supreme Court make the electronic record the official court record. This will permit court cases to move forward expeditiously and provide great access to justice. In addition, this would save the County money because we would no longer have to maintain the paper, nor invest in brick and mortar for warehousing paper files. Currently, the Illinois Supreme Court requires paper files for electronically filed documents.
- The Clerk's Office has the technology to permit single electronic images of court records of cases to be shown over the internet. In order to do so, the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court must issue a rule allowing the Clerk's Office to show images to the attorney of record and the parties to the case. Also, the Illinois Supreme Court must issue a special exemption to the Clerk's Office from the Electronic Access Policy to show images to attorneys who are not of record to a case. I will work to obtain these approvals so that attorneys and self-represented litigants can view civil case type court records of other cases over the Internet.
- ***What is your view on the current status of electronic filing in Cook County? In light of the recent Illinois Supreme Court mandate, what are your plans for improving and expanding the current system?***

E-filing is one of my biggest accomplishments in the Clerk's Office. Under my leadership, Cook County was one of the five original counties selected to pilot e-filing. In October 2012, the Supreme Court approved e-filing for all 102 counties in Illinois, based on the success of the pilot programs. As of today, there are only 15 Illinois counties with electronic filing systems for civil cases, including Cook County.

Working with local bar associations and other parties, the Clerk's Office has implemented e-filing in the Chancery, Child Support, Civil, Domestic Relations, Law and Probate Divisions, pursuant to the Circuit Court of Cook County's General Administrative Order No. 2013-07, Electronic Filing (e-filing) of Court Documents. More than 300,000 filings have been processed and more than

50,000 motions have been spindled. E-filing is available 24/7 and new users have access to 24 hour online webinars.

There are more than 30,000 registered users of e-filing. Most registered users are attorneys. They represent a majority of the potential pool of attorneys in Cook County. As of October 2013, there were 45,306 active and inactive attorneys registered in the First Judicial District (Cook County) of Illinois.¹ I will continue to promote the availability of e-filing to increase the number of registered users for civil cases.

In light of the recent mandate by the Illinois Supreme Court, making electronic filing mandatory, commencing January 1, 2018, my plan is to finalize electronic filing in our last remaining civil case type area, the County Division, making e-filing 100% in civil cases for Cook County. In addition, during 2016 and early 2017, I plan to implement electronic filing for both criminal and traffic case types. I will work with the Chief Judge on possible funding scenarios that could make e-filing free.

Under my leadership, the Clerk's Office has partnered with 16 law enforcement agencies to date, to automate the transfer of traffic-stop citations from the squad car directly to the Clerk's Office database.. As of October 2015, more than 56,000 e-tickets have been filed and more than 48,000 warnings have been processed. I will continue to partner with suburban agencies to expand the number of participating municipalities in this initiative.

Under my leadership, the Clerk's Office has developed and implemented *E-plea*, an online traffic ticket system that has enabled plaintiffs and defendants to conduct business successfully without having to come to the courthouse. As of October 2015,

- more than 108,00 customers have been able to enter guilty pleas;
- more than 163,000 requests for Traffic Safety School have been processed; and
- litigants have made more than 31,000 court hearing requests.

Also, citizens can conduct online searches of their traffic cases on the Clerk's Office's website and on, or mobile app. Searches can be conducted by traffic ticket number or driver's license number. I will continue to promote these traffic case management services as needed.

On September 16, 2014, the Illinois Supreme Court amended its rules to permit e-filing in criminal and traffic cases. Until then, only civil cases could be e-filed in the Circuit Courts. To implement criminal case e-filing, the Chief Judges and the Clerks of the Circuit Courts in Illinois must engage local bar association(s), the state's attorney and the public defender in the planning and development process for criminal case types. In 2016, I will work with the partner agencies to implement e-filing in criminal and traffic cases.

¹Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, Annual Report of 2013, Chart 4: Registered Active and Inactive Attorneys by County for 2012-2013

As chair of the Cook County Integrated Criminal Justice Information Systems Committee (CCICJIS), I am proud to have led the long and complex effort to integrate communication systems between justice agencies. In December 2015, the Cook County Board approved purchase of an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) to facilitate communications between software applications used by the Chief Judge, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Public Defender, Sheriff, State's Attorney and the Bureau of Technology. I will diligently oversee implementation of this critical piece of integrated technology in the coming months.

- ***In addition to electronic filing, what are your priorities for modernizing the process for filing and reviewing court records and forms?***

The current electronic filing system has as one of its feature, a judicial module that permits attorneys and individuals representing themselves to e-file draft orders to a judge. Since this system directly involves the judiciary, implementation must be approved by the Chief Judge. I have requested, for several years, that we be permitted to implement this system on behalf of the judges. There is no cost to implement the judicial module of e-filing, because it, like the general e-filing system, is free. I will either implement the judicial module already included in the current e-filing system, or I will make sure the same type of process is included in the new state of the art case management system to be implemented in 2016/2017.

I will also request that the Illinois Supreme Court make the electronic record the official court record. This will permit court cases to move forward expeditiously because there would not be any papers files to bring to court.

The Clerk's Office has the technology that could permit single electronic records of court cases to be shown over the internet. In order to do so, the Clerk's Office needs:

- A local court rule authorizing me to show the images to the attorney of record for a case and the party to the case. Currently, the Clerk's Office has a request in to the Chief Judge to issue this rule; and
- A special exemption from the Electronic Access Policy of the Illinois Supreme Court to show images to attorneys who are not of record to a case. The Clerk's Office has requested that the Chief Judge jointly sign a letter with me, requesting such an exemption.

Long ago, I recognized the challenges in ensuring the completeness of civil, traffic and criminal case files. The only way to ensure complete records are always available is through imaging all documents when they are filed. This is why I implemented the Imaging and Document Management system (IDMS) to digitally capture documents not electronically filed.

This system enables the Clerk's Office to image every document that is filed over the counter or in the court room, thus enabling the Clerk's Office to produce another original of the document as needed. The imaged document is inserted

into the electronic docket to create a seamless web of complete information about a court case. With this system, the judiciary, the attorneys, parties to a case, and the public all have access to digital images of court documents. In 2015, I installed a new and easy searching capability for the electronic docket and images.

We currently have almost 200 million electronic images of court records through both the Imaging and Document Management System (IDMS) and the Electronic Filing System (e-filing). These documents can already be viewed online on the digital access terminals at the courthouses, in accordance with the Illinois Supreme Court Public Access Policy.

- ***What is your view on the current status of how the Clerk's Office collects and disseminates court management statistics? How would you plan to improve this process?***

The Clerk's Office provides statistics upon request to the judiciary and the public. Data is collected with each court filing. A request from the public goes to the Chief Judge for approval, and then upon approval, the statistics are prepared and distributed. Requests from the judiciary come directly to the Clerk's Office, and are handled accordingly. A request number is assigned to each request, and then the request are fulfilled according to a priority established by the Management Information Systems Department based on all requests and the availability of programmers. The process of distribution of statistics to the public is based upon a General Administrative Order from the Chief Judge.

- ***What court management statistics should be collected and how should they be utilized?***

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has identified ten effective and easy-to-use measurements for trial courts. The 10 measurements are:²

1. Access and fairness—This measurement shows how litigants rate their experience in court in terms of fairness, equality and respect. Research has shown that litigants evaluate how they are treated in court and their perception of the fairness of decision making processes. These expectations can be measured with survey data
2. Clearance rate for cases—This measurement shows the number of outgoing cases as a percentage of incoming cases. It can be used to manage or prevent backlogs from developing by cases type. This statistic can be easily obtained. The case management system would simply count the number of incoming and outgoing cases during a time period.
3. Time to disposition—This measurement shows the length of time a trial court takes to process cases from initiation to final disposition. It can be benchmarked against national standards for similar case types. NCSC has

²See <http://www.courttools.org/Trial-Court-Performance-Measures.aspx>

documented model time standard for felony case processing nationwide. The standard for felony cases are: 75% within 90 days; 90% within 180 days; and 98% within 365 days.³

4. Age of active pending caseload—This measurement looks at the amount of time a case has been pending before the court. By differentiating the age of cases by case type, the courts can allocate more resources to bringing cases to conclusion within the standards appropriate by case type.
5. Trial date certainty- This measurement looks at the number of times cases disposed by trial are scheduled for a hearing. It can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of calendaring and continuance practices for jury and bench trials.
6. Reliability and integrity of case files - These measurement looks at the organization, accuracy and completeness of documents in cases files, as well as the timeliness of retrieving files for court. Typical measurements include:
 - a. Does every document-related entry on the case file summary have a corresponding document in the case file?
 - b. Is every document in the case file listed as an entry on the case file summary system?
 - c. Are case documents found within certain time intervals, e.g. 0 – 15 minutes 16-30 minutes 31-60 minutes 61+ minutes or not found?
 - d. Other criteria might include whether the documents filed with the court have been submitted and processed correctly (e.g., correctly captioned) and ordered according to the jurisdiction’s specifications for case files (e.g., confidential documents properly identified and sealed).
7. Collection of monetary penalties in criminal cases- NCSC notes that there is “intense public interest” in restitution for crime victims in enforcement of monetary penalties imposed on offenders are issues of intense public interest and concern. The focus of this measure is on the extent to which a court takes responsibility for the enforcement of orders requiring payment of monetary penalties.
8. Effective use of jurors – This measurement looks at the effort by the courts to identify, select and use qualified jurors. Two measurements are most used: (a) Juror yield, which is the number of citizens selected who are qualified and available to serve and is expressed as a percentage of all citizens summoned for jury service, and (b) Juror utilization, which measures the percentage of citizens who were summoned to service who actually served as jurors. The data can be acquired using computation worksheets that are readily available.

³http://www.courttools.org/~media/Microsites/Files/CourTools/courttools_Trial_measure3_Time_To_Disposition_.pdf.ashx

9. Court employee satisfaction – Based on survey data, this measurement can help managers know how employees view the work environment, facilitate process improvement plans and improve organizational development.
10. Cost per case – This measurement helps court personnel manage resources efficiently. The measurement looks at total court expenditures, case dispositions (or filings) by major case type and all judicial officers and court staff. Based on an analysis of case types, court managers can reallocate personnel as needed, as well as determine which processes and technologies need improvement.

I support adoption of the ten measurements.

- ***What court management statistics should be made available on a regular basis to the judiciary?***

The judiciary should have access to all of the ten measurements listed above.

- ***What court management statistics should be made available on a regular basis to bar associations and/or the general public, and in what ways?***

Bar associations and the general public should have access to the statistics listed above that relates to the general public and not to the reports needed for managing the circuit court operations. Such data as case filing statistics, court costs, number of users of the court system, etc. should be made available. This information should be provided electronically.

- ***Does the Clerk's office have a role in providing information and better access to justice for pro se litigants in the Circuit Court? If yes, what would you do as Clerk to do this?***

The Clerk of the Circuit Court does not give legal advice. For pro-se litigants, our mission is to provide basic information about court operations and processes to ensure better access to justice This will ensure equal justice for all, the guarantee in the 14th amendment. We have produced brochures and an online Self Help Center for pro se litigants to obtain the following information:

- Finding an Attorney
- Going to Court
- Waiving Court Costs
- Court Forms
- Wills, Estates and Guardianships
- Family & Juvenile Court, including divorce, child support, visitation, custody, domestic violence, paternity and guardianship
- Lawsuits, Injuries, Money & Debt

- Criminal and Traffic felonies, misdemeanors, expungement, sealing, DUI, speeding, and traffic tickets
- Housing court, including eviction, tenants' rights, security deposits, public housing and foreclosure
- Small Claims

I will continue to provide basic information on court processes to pro se litigants in my next term. Also, I will ensure that pro se litigants are trained on our systems such as efilng, and other technology in the office available to customers.

- ***In no more than 500 words, tell us why voters should choose you for this office and what are your goals, if elected?***

Voters should choose me to continue to serve in this office. In these very serious times, especially for our criminal justice system, it's important that we have a person in the Clerk of Court position, like me, who is dedicated to fulfilling our nation's promise of "justice for all." I have dedicated my life to ensuring justice and fairness for all people, so I take very seriously what I teach my staff—that every case file represents the fate or fortune of a person's life.

The Clerk of the Court has to possess unique qualifications, as I have to effectively run one of the largest court systems in the world, a multi-million dollar entity. As an attorney, Certified Public Accountant and MBA, I can manage the legal, technological and financial aspects of the office. With my background in technology, internal, and external auditing, I have a keen understanding of the Office's complex business processes and systems. My academic credentials and my work experience makes me uniquely qualified to be the Clerk of the Court.

As the Clerk of Court, I converted a historically antiquated system, where two areas were still using pen and paper to record the results of court cases, into a highly functioning, progressive 21st Century Office. Today, the Clerk's Office has electronic filing, almost 200 million digitized documents, Digital Access Terminals, and automated services such as Electronic Case Management Notices. I am one of three Clerks of Courts in the entire country that has created a mobile app. Now, the public can search civil and traffic case information while on the go. Also, I have several convenient online services, including:

- **Online Traffic Ticket System** for pleading or paying traffic tickets or scheduling Traffic Safety School;
- **Online Order of Protection** forms to prepare applications for protective orders;
- **Mortgage Foreclosure Surplus Search**, which allows individuals to learn whether they have money due from a property previously lost to foreclosure; and

- **Unclaimed Child Support Search** that enables custodial parents to search for child support payments they may not have received.

Yes, I have had some challenges of late, but I am not concerned because I know that I have handled things properly, with honesty and integrity, and will continue to do so.

My plans for the Clerk of Court include: installing a new state of the art electronic Case Management System; making all courtrooms Electronic Courtrooms, to project the electronic images we; promoting access to electronic images of cases via the Internet; and having the electronic record deemed the Official Court Record to establish a paperless environment.

I have a heart for service and will continue to provide the best service possible. I want to partner with a legal aid agency to create an Expungement Center that will help people clear their criminal record and receive comprehensive services to turn their lives around. Also, I want to create a Task Force on Child Support Collection to fix the system once and for all for parents.