

RESOLUTION - SUPERMAJORITY

Resolution to Convert the Self-Help Center Navigation to Full-Time to Expand Services, and to Approve an Emergency Appropriation and Use of Law Library Fund Balance for the FY26 Law Library Budget (42)

WHEREAS, the 22nd Judicial Circuit Court of McHenry County maintains a Self-Help Center within the Judicial Center to assist members of the public who appear in court without legal representation; and

WHEREAS, the Judicial Center serves as a central location where members of the public interact with the justice system and access a wide range of court-related services; and
WHEREAS, a significant number of individuals who appear before the court are experiencing challenges related to housing instability, financial hardship, substance use disorders, mental health concerns, or other social service needs that may affect their ability to successfully navigate the court process; and

WHEREAS, the Self-Help Center assists individuals by providing guidance on court procedures, locating court forms, explaining filing requirements, and directing individuals to appropriate court resources; and

WHEREAS, the Self-Help Center Navigator position provides an important point of contact for individuals seeking assistance and can serve as a resource to connect individuals with appropriate community-based services such as housing assistance, rent and utility assistance programs, substance abuse treatment providers, and mental health services; and

WHEREAS, the number of individuals visiting the Judicial Center continues to grow, with 327,407 visitors in 2023, 335,097 visitors in 2024, and 347,971 visitors in 2025, reflecting the increasing demand for assistance and services within the courthouse; and

WHEREAS, expanding the Self-Help Center Navigator position to full-time status will allow the Court to enhance the availability of services for self-represented litigants and members of the public while also strengthening the Court's ability to connect individuals with community resources that may help address underlying issues affecting court involvement; and

WHEREAS, providing timely guidance and connecting individuals with appropriate resources helps litigants better navigate the court system, improves the efficiency of court operations, and supports broader access to justice for members of the community; and

WHEREAS, the conversion of the Self-Help Center Navigator position to full-time status is supported by the Chief Circuit Judge and the Trial Court Administrator; and

WHEREAS, an emergency appropriation is necessary for the FY 26 Law Library Fund Budget to the following line items.

Main Account	Depart	Division	Fund	Amount
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Revenue	099100	42	4200	375	\$34,393
Expense	Regular Salaries Non Union-Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$12,931
Expense	Holiday Pay Non Union-Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$1,533
Expense	Soc Sec Medicare/Cnty Contrib. Non Union Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$2,178
Expense	IL Municipal Retirement Non Union-Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$2,027
Expense	Health Insurance/Cnty Contrib. Non Union Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$15,724

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the McHenry County Board hereby authorizes the conversion of the Self-Help Center Navigator position within the Court Administration office of the 22nd Judicial Circuit from part-time to full-time status; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the McHenry County Board hereby authorizes an Emergency Appropriation and Fund Balance Utilization of Law Library Fund Balance to the Law Library Fiscal Year 2026 Budget to the following line items:

	Main Account	Depart	Division	Fund	Amount
Revenue	099100	42	4200	375	\$34,393
Expense	Regular Salaries Non Union-Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$12,931
Expense	Holiday Pay Non Union-Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$1,533
Expense	Soc Sec Medicare/Cnty Contrib. Non Union Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$2,178
Expense	IL Municipal Retirement Non Union-Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$2,027
Expense	Health Insurance/Cnty Contrib. Non Union Court Administration	42	4200	375	\$15,724

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk is hereby authorized to distribute a certified copy of this Resolution to the Chief Judge, Trial Court Administrator, the Chief Financial Officer, Director of Human Resources and the County Administrator.

DATED at Woodstock, Illinois, this 21 day of April, A.D., 2026.

Michael Buehler, Chairman
McHenry County Board

ATTEST:

Joseph J. Tirio, County Clerk

RESOLUTION

SUBJECT: Resolution to Convert the Self-Help Center Navigation to Full-Time to Expand Services, and to Approve an Emergency Appropriation and Use of Law Library Fund Balance for the FY26 Law Library Budget (42)

Board / Committee Action Requested:

Approve the Self Help Navigator position to full time and an emergency appropriation to the FY26 Law Library Fund Budget, utilizing Fund Balance as the revenue.

Background and Discussion:

The Self-Help Center located within the McHenry County Judicial Center provides an important resource for individuals navigating the court system without the assistance of an attorney. Self-represented litigants frequently seek guidance in understanding court procedures, locating appropriate forms, and completing filings required to move their cases forward. The Self-Help Center Navigator plays a key role in assisting these individuals by providing procedural guidance and directing court users to appropriate resources.

In recent years, the role of the courthouse has evolved. While the Judicial Center continues to serve as the central location for court proceedings, it has also become a focal point of the community where individuals seek assistance in addressing challenges that often intersect with legal issues. Many individuals who come to the courthouse are facing housing instability, financial hardship, substance use disorders, mental health concerns, or other circumstances that contribute to their involvement with the court system. As a result, the Self-Help Center is well positioned to assist individuals not only in navigating court procedures, but also in connecting them with appropriate community resources that may help address the circumstances contributing to their involvement with the court. Expanding the role of the Self-Help Center Navigator will allow the Court to provide better linkages to available services within the community, including housing assistance, rent and utility assistance programs, substance abuse treatment providers, and mental health services.

Even with the use of Zoom for remote court proceedings, demand for services within the Judicial Center continues to increase. Visitor data shows that 327,407 individuals entered the Judicial Center in 2023, 335,097 in 2024, and 347,971 in 2025, reflecting the growing number of individuals interacting with the court system and seeking assistance.

Converting the Self-Help Center Navigator position to full-time status will allow the Court to expand assistance available to self-represented litigants and members of the public while strengthening the Court's ability to connect individuals with community resources. By helping individuals better understand court procedures and access appropriate services, the Self-Help

Center supports improved access to justice while also helping court proceedings operate more efficiently.

Funding for the current part time position is funded via fees collected upon filing of certain case types. The Law Library Fund Balance is healthy and can absorb the increase in cost for the foreseeable future. The proposed conversion of the position will enhance the Court's ability to better serve the public and is supported by the Chief Circuit Judge and the Trial Court Administrator.

Impact on Human Resources:

The current part time position will expand from part time to full time.

Impact on Budget (Revenue; Expenses, Fringe Benefits):

This was discussed at the time of the budget process; however, the Court was not prepared to move forward at that time and was still discussing the expansion of services being offered. The increase in expenditure will be paid from the Law Library Fund Balance and will not impact on the general fund. The fund balance of the Law Library grew last year by \$42,690, which is more than the projected increase in expenditure to make the Self Help Navigator position full-time. The calculated fund balance at the end of FY 2025 is \$255,322. Presently, the actual FY26 revenue is exceeding the original FY26 budgeted revenue amount. Presently, \$71,009 has been paid into the Law Library Fund and based upon the budgeted amount of \$195,000, divided by twelve months (budgeted monthly revenue amount of \$16,250), multiplied by three months thus far in FY26, the difference in anticipated income and actual income is \$48,750.00.

Position Reclassification or Regrade, please address the following:

HR was consulted, however this position is not being reclassified and is only moving from part time to full time status.

Impact on Capital Expenditures:

None.

Impact on Physical Space:

None.

Impact on Other County Departments or Outside Agencies:

None.

Conformity to Board Ordinances, Policies and Strategic Plan:

Yes.