



The Probate Division hears proceedings regarding:

- Estates, wills, settlements, withdrawals, guardian-ships and testamentary instruments;
- Claims against an estate arising in contract, tort, or otherwise;
- Administration of estates of decedents, disabled persons, minors, and wards;
- Petitions to sell or assign annuity contracts; and
- Problems that arise under the Illinois Power of Attorney Act.

Other Services:

The Clerk's Office offers Passport Services in the Probate Division. Interested persons may complete passport applications.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### What is Guardianship?

- Guardianship involves the appointment by a court of a legally responsible individual or agency on behalf of a person who is not able to independently manage his or her affairs due to a disability or minor status (person under the age of 18).

#### How does guardianship differ from adoption?

- With adoption, birth parents give up all rights and responsibilities for the child. With guardianship, parents keep some of their rights and responsibilities. For instance, with guardianship, parents can visit the child or challenge the guardian's power and they can get custody back by going to court. Also, if able, the parents must contribute money to support the child. The guardian can seek this support in Child Support Court.

#### How does someone become a guardian?

- A petition for guardianship must be filed in the Clerk's Office. Once guardianship papers (the Petition) are filed with the court, parties appear in court in about three (3) to six (6) weeks. This time is used to let the parents (or interested party) know what is going on. The judge reviews the petition and, for guardianship of a minor, a background check is conducted on all potential guardians. Finally, a judge will make the determination of who will be appointed guardian.
- For further assistance, contact:
  - The Guardianship Assistance Desk for Minors: 69 W. Washington, Room 1020 Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 603-0135.
  - The Adult Guardianship Assistance Desk: 205 W. Randolph Street, Suite 1610, Chicago, IL 60606 (312) 376-1880.

#### My mother has passed away. How do I open a Probate Estate?

- To open a Probate Estate, you need to hire an attorney. Copies of court forms and a listing of free and low-cost legal help are available in the Probate Division.

#### My husband passed away and left a will. Do I need to file it with the court?

- Yes. Please deliver it to the Probate Division in person or mail it using tracking or certified mail. Include the date of death and a self-addressed stamped envelope to receive a Will Receipt for your records. If you want a certified copy of the will, enclose a check for \$2.00 for the first page, \$.25 for pages 2-20, and \$.50 each for additional pages, plus a certification fee of \$2.00.

#### My father's will was filed with your office in 1999 and I need a certified copy of the will to make a claim with the State Treasurer's Office. How can I get this and how much will it cost?

- You may request a certified copy of a will that was filed with the Probate Division by writing us or visiting our office. To expedite this request, it would be helpful to provide either the Probate case number or the name of the decedent and the date/year of death (if this information is available).
- The fees for this service are: Photocopies \$2.00 for the first page, \$.25 for pages 2-20, and \$.50 each for additional pages. Certification \$2.00 per document certified.
- If making your request by mail, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope, otherwise a mailing fee and a fee for postage will be charged.

## Frequently Asked Questions Continued

### What are the fees for a passport and may I use a credit card to pay them?

We accept the following methods of payment: cash, personal check, company check, or money order. Passport fees are set by the Department of State., effective January 2023 are as follows:

## Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County



### **FEES FOR U.S. PASSPORT (Form DS-11) These fees are non-refundable.**

### Fees for U.S. Passport (Form DS-11) These fees are non-refundable

Age	Passport Fee	Processing Fee	Total Fee
	<i>Check or money order payable to: Passport Services</i>	<i>Cash or check payable to: Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County</i>	
16 and over	\$130	\$35	\$165
Under 16	\$100	\$35	\$135

After submitting your application , you will receive your passport within 6 weeks

### Fees for Passport Renewal (Form DS-82)

This fee is non-refundable.

Total Fee  
\$130

### You may renew your passport via mail only if you:

1. Already have a passport that is not damaged;
2. Received it within the past 15 years;
3. Were over age 16 when it was issued; and
4. Still have the same name as in your passport (or you can legally document your name change).

### You must apply for your U.S. passport in person if:

1. You are applying for a U.S. passport for the first time.
2. Your previous U.S. passport was lost, stolen, or damaged.
3. Your previous U.S. passport has expired and was issued more than 15 years ago.

4. Your previous passport has expired and it was issued when you were under the age of 16.
5. Your name has changed since your passport was issued and you do not have a legal document formally changing your name.

### **Expedited Service**

1. Cost, in addition to regular application fees, is \$60 per application plus overnight delivery costs.
2. Two-way overnight delivery is strongly suggested. If you mail-in, clearly mark Expedited on the envelope.

If scheduled international departure is in less than 14 days, or a passport is needed for foreign visas, application at a Regional Passport Agency is advised. An appointment is required. Visit [www.travel.state.gov/passport](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport) for more information on passport requirements and applications.

Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County  
Probate Division  
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Hours of Operation:  
Monday - Friday  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Excluding Court Holidays

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[www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org](http://www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org)

This handout is not a substitute for professional legal advice.