



37W777 IL RT 38
St. Charles, IL 60175
630.406.7126
kclawlibrary.org

**Nomination for the Liberty Bell Award:
Aurora Public Library District's Court Support and Access Initiatives**

Promote a Better Understanding of the Law: The Aurora Public Library District (Library) is a vital participant in a statewide pilot program of Court Access Library Centers. These Centers are designed to enhance access to the legal system for self-represented litigants in Illinois. Through dedicated training, librarians provide essential legal information and guidance, allowing individuals unfamiliar with the legal process to better navigate the legal system. Additionally, the main branch of the Aurora Public Library District, the Santori Library, is in its third year of a partnership with the Kane County Law Library & Self Help Legal Center to provide a Lawyer in the Public Library service. Attendees to this once-a-month evening program are able to briefly speak with volunteering attorneys about their Kane County legal issues free of charge. These programs complement existing library services and empower people to understand their rights and responsibilities in legal matters.

Encourages Greater Respect for the Law and the Courts: By enabling residents to access dedicated equipment for remote court appearances, offering assistance with e-filing court documents, and the opportunity to speak briefly with an attorney within their own community free of charge, the Aurora Public Library District inspires respect for the legal system. The Court Access Library Center initiative, established through a partnership between the Illinois Secretary of State, the Illinois Supreme Court's Commission on Access to Justice, and The Chicago Bar Foundation, along with the Lawyer in the Public Library partnership with the Kane County Law Library significantly strengthens the community's engagement with the judicial process.

Stimulates a Sense of Civic Responsibility: The Library's Court Access Library Center along with the Lawyer in the Public Library program directly address barriers faced by community members—such as limited technology access and transportation challenges—ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, can participate in their legal proceedings. This approach not only serves the immediate needs of patrons but also cultivates a broader sense of civic engagement and responsibility.

Contribute to Good Government within the Community: The initiative to enhance court access through public libraries underscores the importance of accessible and equitable justice. By providing training for librarians to become certified Court Library Navigators in addition to providing free attorney consultations through the Lawyer in the Public Library program, the Aurora Public Library District ensures that specific legal issues—such as divorce, domestic violence, and housing—are effectively addressed. This commitment exemplifies an innovative approach to governance that prioritizes meeting community needs within the community itself and promotes positive experiences with the court system.

In summary, the Aurora Public Library District's Court Support services, combined with its active role in the Court Access Library Center's pilot program and partnership with the Kane County Law Library & Self Help in the Lawyer in the Public Library program, showcases its dedication to improving access to justice for individuals in Kane County. The Library not only enhances understanding of the law and encourages respect for the courts but also serves as a cornerstone for good governance and civic responsibility within the community. This aligns perfectly with the mission of the Liberty Bell Award, making the Aurora Public Library District a strong candidate for recognition by our legal community.