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Courthouse creates legal self-help center

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The Madison County judiciary is planning to open a self-help center at the courthouse where people can get information about the legal system.

Chief Judge Ann Callis said the center will provide information for people appearing in court without a lawyer. The center will be located in the law library at the courthouse.

The center will have two computers where people can get information and forms, as well as general tips for going to court. A staff member will be available about 15 hours per week to guide people to the available resources.

The county's judiciary is working with Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation, the circuit clerk's office, the Madison County Bar Association, the Illinois Coalition for Equal Justice and Illinois Legal Aid Online to develop the center.

The center will be funded in part by a grant from Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, a nonprofit that distributes funds to legal aid providers. The foundation's goals include increasing access to courts and to legal information for the public. Madison County is one of seven counties in Illinois that received funding this year from the foundation to develop self-help centers at courthouses.

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