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New Website Connects People to Help When They Can’t Afford a Lawyer

CHICAGO, IL – August 3, 2016 - Yesterday Illinois Legal Aid Online (ILAO) launched a completely new and upgraded version of its award-winning website, IlliniosLegalAid.org. For millions of people who can’t afford to hire a lawyer to solve their legal problems, this new self-help resource will change the way they navigate a confusing legal system.

The new website was designed with the user in mind. According to ILAO’s Technical Director, Gwen Daniels, “the new IlliniosLegalAid.org is built around the goals of increasing user engagement and better responding to the needs of people who may not even know that their problem is a legal one.” Over 3 million visitors are expected this year, with over half accessing the site from a mobile device.

The site provides information about common legal matters that lower-income people face, including divorce, eviction, criminal records expungement, consumer debt, and more. The information is arranged in easy-to-understand categories and presented in plain language. Interactive court forms simplify the preparation of legal documents, similar to Turbo Tax for legal forms.

An important new feature of the website is a triage system that helps people easily find the help they need, whether they are looking for a lawyer, forms or legal information. The system directs users to the best available service for their problem and location, and connects people to legal aid programs, the private bar, and self-help resources.

IlliniosLegalAid.org also provides online legal resources and practice support for legal aid advocates and pro bono attorneys, and supports judges, court administrators, and law librarians who are managing an increasing number of pro se litigants.

The launch of this website not only marks the end of a nearly two year project, but according to Executive Director Lisa Colpoys, “it’s the beginning of a new era in which technology is leveraged in new ways so that everyone can successfully solve their legal problems, regardless of how much money they make, where they live, or what level of education they’ve achieved.”

About Illinois Legal Aid Online: ILAO is an award-winning nonprofit that uses technology to lower barriers to the law so that people can understand their legal options, make informed decisions, and represent themselves in court when they can’t afford a lawyer. ILAO puts the law within reach for all Illinois residents, regardless of their location, income and education, by simplifying our complex legal system and connecting people to legal information and assistance.