

Court Information Release



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New State-of-the-Art Federal Probation Office Saves \$1.4 Million in Annual Rent Costs
Chief Judge Castillo Cuts Ribbon to New Mobile Workspace at Kluczynski Federal Building

Chicago, Ill. - Today at a ceremony dedicating the new U.S. Probation Office for the Northern District of Illinois, Chief Judge of the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois Rubén Castillo cut the ribbon to the new modern workspace on the 34th floor of the Kluczynski Federal Building. The new office is projected to save the Judiciary \$1.4 million in annual rent costs.

“We in the District Court for Northern District of Illinois take very seriously our responsibilities as stewards of public resources and the Judicial Conference’s national plan to reduce rent and space,” said Chief Judge Rubén Castillo.

“We are proud of what this move has accomplished - greater mobility of officers to better protect the public, a state-of-the art workplace for federal probation officers, and tremendous space reduction and rental savings for the Judiciary that helps save jobs. This remarkable savings will continue to pay off year after year,” added Chief Judge Rubén Castillo.

Rent is one of the largest components of the U.S. Courts’ budget. The Judiciary pays over \$1 billion in annual rent to the General Services Administration (GSA). In 2013 the Judicial Conference endorsed a national plan to reduce the Judiciary’s space by three percent by the end of fiscal year 2018 in order to avoid staffing reduction.

The U.S. Probation Office officially made the move to the new 22,000 square foot office on November 19, 2015, for an estimated space savings of 59%. Accessible to the Dirksen U.S.

Courthouse via underground tunnel, the new office occupies one floor and incorporates an open design. The bright and modern workplace features “touchdown” stations where officers can log in via a laptop or tablet, open work lounges with wireless connectivity, and enclosed “huddle” and interview rooms with videoconference features for meetings with clients and private phone conversations. Officers, including the chief, went from having their own offices to an open workspace, with individual lockers to store personal belongings and eliminate clutter.

“The new design aptly reflects where our field is headed as officers are spending more time in the community and less in the office,” said Jeanne Walsh, Chief U.S. Probation Officer for the Northern District of Illinois. “Since moving into our new space, the feedback from officers has been extremely positive,” Walsh added.

The new workspace was designed recognizing that U.S. Probation Officers are an increasingly mobile workforce; officers work in the community, visiting the homes, workplaces and treatment providers of convicted offenders who are reentering society under supervision. With mobile technology allowing officers to work via mobile phones and tablets, officers are spending more time in the field. Throughout the project’s development, designers and architects consulted with U.S. Probation staff to solicit input to custom design the space and technology.

To further reduce its space needs, the U.S. Probation Office also converted its paper records to electronic files, going “paperless” in less than six months.

In 2012, then Chief Probation Officer Kristine Phillips initiated discussions with the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts about the possibility of a move and redesign, which eventually became the pilot project of the Judiciary’s Integrated Workplace Initiative (IWI). With the goal of integrating technology to enable seamless work inside and outside the office, the project was funded by the Judiciary Space Reduction Program and by the GSA Total Workplace Initiative.

Judge D. Brooks Smith, Chair of the Judicial Conference Committee on Space and Facilities; John Cooke, Regional Commissioner, Great Lakes Region, General Services Administration; and Michael Culver, Deputy Facilities and Security Office, Administrative Office of U.S. Courts also praised the cost and space savings at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

From 1994 until November 2015, the U.S. Probation Office was housed in a 53,000 square feet leased commercial space in the Mid-Continental Plaza at 55 East Monroe in Chicago. As federal probation work became increasingly mobile, the private offices and cubicles, spread over two floors, would sit empty while officers worked in the field.

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Chief Judge Rubén Castillo, Chief U.S. Probation Officer Jeanne Walsh, Deputy Chief U.S. Probation Officer Mark Neff and Assistant Deputy Chief U.S. Probation Officer Aimee Callanan cut ribbon to new U.S. Probation Office for the Northern District of Illinois.



Chief U.S. Probation Officer Jeanne Walsh; Judge D. Brooks Smith, Chair of the Judicial Conference Committee on Space and Facilities; Chief Judge Rubén Castillo, District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.