

FEDERAL JUDICIARY IN CHICAGO GEARING UP FOR PATENT PILOT PROGRAM

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The Northern District of Illinois judiciary is gearing up for implementation of the newly-announced “[Patent Pilot Program](#).” Last month, the Office of the Federal Judiciary announced that fourteen federal trial courts, including the Northern District of Illinois (sitting in both Chicago and Rockford), would participate in a pilot program for patent cases.

Patent cases will be filed initially as they always have been. In the Pilot courts, judges will “opt-in” to the program by indicating a willingness to take on patent cases. So, if a “non-patent judge” is designated for assignment, that judge will have the option of declining the case. When this happens, litigants will be notified and the case reassigned to one of the patent judges. This serves the dual goals of transparency to the public and ease of recordkeeping and fair distribution of cases for the court.

An implementation date in July had been expected, but a later date now seems likely. Chief Judge Holderman has circulated formal requests for participation by sitting judges and behind-the-scenes formalities should be completed in the coming weeks. Presently, there is no indication that the Federal Judiciary Center has its webpage to “assist the patent pilot courts” up and running. Court officials indicated that implementation of the program in Chicago will likely be announced by a press release.

- Michael La Porte

Michael La Porte is a member of Flachsbart & Greenspoon. This alert and other articles and resources are available at http://www.fg-law.com/news_fg-law.html.