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**ILLINOIS LEGAL AID ONLINE RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD FOR ITS
INNOVATIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO DELIVER LEGAL SERVICES**

Virtual Legal Self-Help Center Recognized by the Foundation for the Improvement of Justice

CHICAGO, IL, September 27, 2010 – At its annual awards banquet in Atlanta on September 25, the Foundation for the Improvement of Justice, Inc. named Illinois Legal Aid Online (ILAO) as a recipient of the 2010 Paul H. Chapman Award. This award, given out annually on a nation-wide basis since 1986, honors effective and innovative individuals, programs and organizations whose efforts have made positive influential differences in the U.S. criminal and civil justice arenas.

The Foundation honored ILAO for being a national leader in combining technology with legal information to deliver legal services to the poor. ILAO was recognized in the categories of “speeding the process” and “lowering the cost” for its *Virtual Legal Self-Help Center*, which uses technology to bridge gaps in the delivery of legal services by coordinating and supporting bricks and mortar legal self-help centers across Illinois and providing comprehensive online legal information and self-help resources.

The backbone of the *Virtual Legal Self-Help Center* is www.IllinoisLegalAid.org, an innovative website that provides those seeking legal help with online, user-friendly information and interactive forms in 30 areas of law. Created in 2001, the website is visited over 90,000 times each month.

In October 2009 ILAO added a live chat feature to IllinoisLegalAid.org, which allows visitors to communicate directly with trained law student volunteer operators who provide online navigation assistance. This “LiveHelp” service supplements the legal self-help centers that ILAO has helped establish in courthouses and public libraries in 51 Illinois counties outside of Chicago.

ILAO is one of six 2010 awardees from a pool of 72 nominees. Teri Ross, Program Director for Illinois Legal Aid Online, accepted the Paul H. Chapman Award on behalf of the organization. The award consisted of a gold medal, certificate of appreciation, commendation bar pin, and check for \$10,000.

The Foundation for Improvement of Justice, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization based in Atlanta that was created for the purpose of improving local, state and federal systems of justice. Paul Chapman, after whom the award is named, developed the concept for the foundation and its awards. The foundation was established in 1984 by an endowment of the Chapman family.

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