

The Downstate Illinois Innocence Project provides investigative and legal research services to attorneys representing inmates who the attorneys and the Project have good reason to believe did not commit the crimes for which they were convicted. The Project involves degree seeking undergraduate students, under the supervision of the inmate's attorney and Project faculty and/or a criminal investigator, in providing these services. The Project does not provide legal representation directly to defendants or inmates.

Our resources are limited and we are able to assist only a very few inmates at a time. As a result, to receive the assistance of the Innocence Project your case must meet all of these guidelines:

- You must be seeking to establish your actual innocence of the crime(s) for which you are incarcerated. More specifically, we take those case in which there appears to be a significant chance that substantial evidence can be found to prove one innocent. Further, once we have agreed to work on a case, we reserve the right to withdraw for any reason, including an inability to prove your claim of actual innocence.
- You must be represented by an attorney, who also seeks the assistance of the Project in handling your case. Your attorney must be willing to have the Project work with him/her, assign tasks to students, and supervise the work/work products of those students.
- You must have been convicted of a felony crime committed in downstate Illinois (counties below Interstate 80).
- You must be incarcerated and have at least 48 months remaining on your sentence. The substantial amount of time involved in investigation and follow-up activity makes it impractical to provide assistance on cases where the remaining prison time is less than that.
- Finally, the Project does not provide assistance to individuals who are awaiting trial or who are only claiming that his or her rights were violated. The program usually cannot help in the following situations: (1) where a defendant admits to killing or assaulting someone, but claims that it was done in self-defense; (2) where a defendant admits to sexual contact with a person, but claims that the person consented to the contact; (3) where a defendant was convicted as an accessory (or as a party-to-the-crime) and seeks to show that he or she did not play a major role in the crime.

If you believe your case meets all of these guidelines and would like your attorney to seek the assistance of the Downstate Illinois Innocence Project, please ask your attorney to get in contact with the Project by phone or by completing the enclosed "Attorney Request for Assistance" form and returning it to us. Your attorney can call us at 217-206-6258 or send the form to this address:

Downstate Illinois Innocence Project
Institute for Legal, Administrative, and Policy Studies
University of Illinois at Springfield

One University Plaza, MS PAC 451
Springfield, IL. 62703-5407.

After we have heard from your attorney, we will get back in touch with you. Be aware however that because the projects is working at capacity, it may be awhile before new cases can be accepted.

Sincerely,
The Downstate Illinois Innocence Project