

Maria Valdez
United States Magistrate Judge
United States District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

The Honorable Maria Valdez was appointed Magistrate Judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in May of 2005. She served as the Presiding Magistrate Judge for the district from 2016 through 2020.

In her role as a Magistrate Judge, Judge Valdez has worked as a mediator assisting thousands of parties to resolve all aspects of federal civil litigation, including intellectual property cases, contract disputes, employment matters, and civil rights issues, among others.

Prior to becoming a federal Magistrate Judge, Judge Valdez served as the Chicago Regional Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), concentrating her trial and appellate practice in the areas of constitutional law and the federal Voting Rights Act. Judge Valdez received her undergraduate degree from the University of California at Los Angeles, and her law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. She began her legal career in 1988 as a federal public defender in Los Angeles, and later worked in private practice specializing in federal civil rights litigation.