

Self-Help Resources for the Self-Represented Litigant

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The Latin terms, *pro se* (meaning 'for self') and *pro per* (meaning 'for one's own person'), are used in the legal profession to identify people who represent themselves in court proceedings. However, it is generally recommended that, other than in small claims courts, it is best to have a lawyer.

In a 2005 [AALL](#) panel presentation, the Honorable Chief Judge Edward Toussaint, Jr., Minnesota Court of Appeals, noted that there are two major elements important in litigation: first, knowledge about procedural issues and, second, persuasion techniques. Failure in these two areas will translate into poor results for the litigant. A misunderstanding of procedure may even make an appeal impossible to grant. (Toussaint, 2005)*

That said, libraries are aware that a lawyer is not always an option for a litigant. For that reason the following sites are being provided to assist self-represented litigants.

I. General Sites and Federal Law Resources

FEDERAL COURT SITES:

U.S. Supreme Court [Website](#)

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri: click on [Self-Help Tools](#) in the top menu

[Pro Se Handbook](#): The Manual for the Litigant Filing Without Counsel, May 1997, Idaho

U.S. District Court

Federal Rules of Court: [Federal Rulemaking](#); [Local Federal Rules of Court](#)

U.S. Courts Library Fifth Circuit [Internet Site](#)

U.S. Courts Northern District of California [Handbook](#)

[U.S. Bankruptcy Courts and Resources](#)

NON-COURT SITES:

AJS (American Judicature Society) [Pro Se Forum](#)

Pine Tree Legal Assistance [Pro Se Links](#)

LSC Resource Library [Pro Se Page](#)

[National Federation of Paralegal Associations](#)

The Jailhouse Lawyer's [Pro Se Self-Help and Legal Research Center](#)

[Selfhelpsupport.org](#) (Self-help Support)

[Name Change Center](#) (choose your state)

[Name Change Information](#)

[Findlaw.com](#)

ABA [FindLegalHelp.com](#)

ABA [Pro Se Law Center](#)

ABA [Public Information Website](#)

[Legalhelp.org](#) Pro-se Legal Resources

Legal Information Institute [LII](#)

LII Categories (WEX) [List](#)

[Law Help](#)

DOCUMENT RESOURCES:

[U.S. Constitution](#)

[U.S. Code](#)

Congressional Legislative Information: [Thomas](#)

[Code of Federal Regulations](#)

[List of CFR Sections Affected](#)

[Federal Register](#)

[Library of Congress](#)

Federal Citizen Consumer [Information Center](#)

[Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

[Federal Bulletin Board](#)

II. State Law Resources (Eighth Circuit States)

Minnesota Judiciary

LawMoose Legal Reference Library [Pro Bono and Pro Se](#)

[Minnesota State Library Internet Legal Resources](#)

[Minnesota Statutes](#)

[Minnesota Court Rules](#)

Minnesota [Rules \(Administrative Code\)](#)

North Dakota Judiciary

[N. Dakota Constitution and Code](#)

[N. Dakota Court Rules](#)

[N. Dakota Administrative Code](#)

South Dakota Judiciary

[S. Dakota Codified Laws](#)

S. Dakota Court Rules

[S. Dakota Administrative Rules](#)

[A Guide to Representing Yourself, 3rd Circuit Court, S. Dakota](#)

Nebraska Judiciary

Nebraska [Laws](#)

Nebraska [Local Court Rules](#)

Nebraska [Supreme Court](#)

Nebraska [Supreme Court Rules](#)

Nebraska [Supreme Court Opinions](#)

Nebraska [Rules and Regulations](#)

Nebraska [Self Help](#)

Iowa Judiciary

Iowa [Code](#)

Iowa [Court Rules](#)

Iowa [Administrative Code](#)

Missouri Judiciary

Missouri Revised [Statutes](#)

[Missouri Court Rules](#)

Missouri [Administrative Rules](#) & [Code of State Regulations](#)

Arkansas [Judiciary](#)

[Arkansas Code](#)

Arkansas [Court Rules](#)

Arkansas [Administrative Code](#)

III. Materials: Publishers, Publications and Book Resources

Be sure to check out your local public library.

[Nolo.com](#) (Self described provider of do-it-yourself legal solutions) Publishers of:

[Represent Yourself in Court: How to Prepare and Try a Winning Case](#) 2008

[Lawsuit Survival Guide](#) 2001

[Nolo Estate Planning Basics](#) 2009, 5th ed.

[Nolo's Simple Will Book](#) 2007, 7th ed.

[Nolo's Pocket Guide to Family Law](#) 4th 1996 available through [Amazon](#)

Specific Issues

[Nolo's Bankruptcy page](#) (articles, glossary, directories)

[Nolo's The New Bankruptcy](#) 2009, 3d ed.

[Nolo's Chapter 7](#) 16th 2009

[Nolo's Chapter 13](#) 9th 2008

How to Research a Legal Problem: A Guide for Non-Lawyers from [AALL](#)

Oceana's Law for the Layperson: Self-Help Legal Almanac Series: [listing](#)

ABA's Guide to Wills and Estates 2nd, ([ABA](#)) 2004 (search "Wills and Estates")

[Patents Guides](#) by [U.S. Dept. of Commerce](#)

[United States Patent and Trademark Office](#)

Patent Pro Se: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Provisional Patent Applications

(Updated for 2006 – Audio & Data CD's included) by John Ferrell, Esq.

[Baywater Publishing](#) (available from [Amazon](#))

Family Lawyer software from Parsons Technology. Available from [Broderbund](#)

Practical Divorce Solutions by Ed Sherman, Esq. [Nolo Press Occidental](#) 1994 available

through [Amazon.com](#)

Best Practices in Court-Based Self Help Programs for the Self Represented: Concepts, Attributes and Issues for Exploration (National Center for State Courts, 2006);

http://www.ncsconline.org/WC/Publications/KIS_ProSeBestPracticesSRLN.pdf

IV. Miscellaneous

Equal Access Project : a California state program to assist self-represented litigants.

<http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/>

"Evaluating Free Online Legal Information" by George H. Pike. [Online Magazine](#), Sept/Oct 2008 (32:5). See [Access my Library](#)

*May It Please the Court: Strategies for Discovering SRL Services Judges Crave," Program A3, Sunday, July 17, 2005, 10a.m. - 11:30a.m., a panel with the Hon. Thomas T. C. Campbell; the Honorable Dan R. Price II; the Honorable Edward Toussaint, Jr.; D. Jason Raymond, Moderator. AALL Conference, San Antonio, Texas.