

Self-Help Resources for the Self-Represented Litigant

By the United States Courts Library, Eighth Circuit Librarians

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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* (<http://www.aallnet.org/>) 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 (<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>)

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri: click on Self-Help in the top menu
<http://www.moed.uscourts.gov/>

Pro Se Handbook: The Manual for the Litigant Filing Without Counsel, May 1997, Idaho U.S. District Court (<http://www.id.uscourts.gov/pro-se.htm>)

Federal Rules of Court: Federal Rulemaking (<http://www.uscourts.gov/rules/newrules4.html>);
Local Federal Rules of Court (<http://www.uscourts.gov/rules/newrules8.html>)

U.S. Courts Library Fifth Circuit Internet Site
(<http://www.lb5.uscourts.gov/Publications/Netrep>)

U.S. Courts Northern District of California Handbook
(<http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS71138>)

U.S. Bankruptcy Courts and Resources (<http://www.uscourts.gov/bankruptcycourts.html>)

NON-COURT SITES:

AJS (American Judicature Society) Pro Se Forum (<http://www.ajs.org/prose/home.asp>)

Pine Tree Legal Assistance Pro Se Links (<http://www.ptla.org/ptlasite/links/pro-se.htm>)

LSC Resource Library Pro Se Page (<http://lri.lsc.gov/sitepages/ps/ps.htm>)

National Federation of Paralegal Associations (<http://www.paralegals.org/>)

The Jailhouse Lawyer=s Pro Se Self-Help and Legal Research Center
(<http://www.angelfire.com/az/sthurston/research.html>)

NON-COURT SITES CON'T:

Selfhelpsupport.org (Self-help Support) (<http://www.selfhelpsupport.org/>)

Name Change Center (choose your state)

(<http://www.namechangelaw.com/index.asp>)

Name Change Information (<http://newlastname.org/>)

Findlaw.com (<http://public.findlaw.com/>)

ABA FindLegalHelp.com

(http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/findlegalhelp/faq_selfhelp.cfm)

ABA Pro Se Law Center (<http://www.pro-selaw.org/pro-selaw/index.asp>)

ABA Public Information Website (<http://www.abanet.org/rppt/public/home.html>)

LegalHelp.org Pro-se Legal Resources (<http://www.legalhelp.org/index.php>)

Legal Information Institute LII (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/>)

LII Categories (WEX) List

(http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/index.php?title=Special:Categories&article=Main_Page)

Law Help (<http://www.lawhelp.org/>)

DOCUMENT RESOURCES:

U.S. Constitution (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/constitution/index.html>)

U.S. Code (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html>)

Congressional Legislative Information: Thomas (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>)

Code of Federal Regulations (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>)

List of CFR Sections Affected (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/lssa/index.html>)

Federal Register (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>)

Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/index.html>)

Federal Citizen Consumer Information Center (<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/>)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (<http://www.eeoc.gov/>)

Federal Bulletin Board (<http://fedbbs.access.gpo.gov/>)

II. State Law Resources (Eighth Circuit States)

Minnesota Judiciary (<http://www.mncourts.gov/default.aspx>)

LawMoose Legal Reference Library Pro Bono and Pro Se

(<http://www.lawmoose.com/index.cfm?Action=Library.&Topic=MN102097>)

Minnesota State Library Internet Legal Resources

(<http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/mnlr.html>)

Minnesota Statutes (<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/pubs/>)

Minnesota Court Rules (<http://www.mncourts.gov/default.aspx?page=511>)

Minnesota Rules (Administrative Code) (<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/rules/>)

North Dakota Judiciary (<http://www.ndcourts.gov/>)

N. Dakota **Constitution and Code**

(<http://www.legis.nd.gov/information/statutes/const-laws.html>)

N. Dakota **Court Rules** (<http://www.ndcourts.com/court/rules/frameset.htm>)

N. Dakota **Administrative Code**

(<http://www.legis.nd.gov/information/rules/admincode.html>)

State Law Resources (Eighth Circuit States) CON'T

South Dakota Judiciary (<http://www.sdjudicial.com/>)

S. Dakota Codified Laws (<http://legis.state.sd.us/statutes/index.aspx>)

S. Dakota Court Rules (<http://www.sdjudicial.com/sc/scrules.aspx>)

S. Dakota Administrative Rules (<http://legis.state.sd.us/rules/index.aspx>)

A Guide to Representing Yourself, 3rd Circuit Court, S. Dakota

(<http://www.sdjudicial.com/cc/ThirdCircuit/RepresentingYourself.aspx>)

Nebraska Judiciary (<http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/index.shtml>)

Nebraska Laws (<http://uniweb.legislature.ne.gov/laws/laws.php>)

Nebraska Local Court Rules

(<http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/rules/trial-court-rules.shtml?sub3>)

Nebraska Supreme Court (<http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/supreme-court/index.shtml?sub1>)

Nebraska Supreme Court Rules (<http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/rules/index.shtml?sub1>)

Nebraska Supreme Court Opinions

(<http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/opinions/index.shtml?sub1>)

Nebraska Rules and Regulations (<http://www.sos.ne.gov/dyindex.html#boxingName>)

Nebraska Self Help (<http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/self-help/>)

Iowa Judiciary (<http://www.iowacourts.gov/>)

Iowa Code (<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/IACODE/>)

Iowa Court Rules (<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Rules2.html>)

Iowa Administrative Code (<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/IAC.html>)

Missouri Judiciary (<http://www.courts.mo.gov/page.asp?id=23>)

Missouri Revised Statutes (<http://www.moga.mo.gov/statutesearch/>)

Missouri Court Rules (<http://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=46>)

Missouri Administrative Rules (<http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/>)

& Code of State Regulations (<http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/csr.asp>)

Arkansas Judiciary (<http://courts.state.ar.us/>)

Arkansas Code (<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/SearchCenter/Pages/arkansascode.aspx>)

Arkansas Court Rules (<http://courts.state.ar.us/rules/>)

Arkansas Administrative Code

(http://www.sosweb.state.ar.us/rules_and_regs/index.php/rules/search/new)

III. Materials: Publishers, Publications and Book Resources

Be sure and check out your local public library.

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

(<http://www.nolo.com/>)

Represent Yourself in Court: How to Prepare and Try a Winning Case 6th 2008

Lawsuit Survival Guide 2001

Nolo Estate Planning Basics 5th 2009

Nolo's Simple Will Book 7th 2007

Nolo's Pocket Guide to Family Law 4th 1996 available through Amazon

(<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0873373227/102-5037966-6604912?v=glance&n=283155&n=507846&s=books&v=glance>)

Materials: Publishers, Publications and Book Resources CON'T

Specific Issues:

Nolo's Bankruptcy page (articles, glossary, directories)

Nolo's The New Bankruptcy 3d 2009

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**

(<http://www.aallnet.org/sis/lisp/research.htm>)

Oceana's Law for the Layperson: Self-Help Legal Almanac Series: **listing**

(http://www.oceanalaw.com/main_Subject_list.asp?ID=28)

ABA's Guide to Wills and Estates 2nd, (**ABA**) (<http://www.abanet.org/abastore/index.cfm>)
2004 (search **AWills and Estates@**)

Patents Guides (<http://www.uspto.gov/web/patents/guides.htm>) by **U.S. Dept. of Commerce**
(<http://www.commerce.gov/>)

United States Patent and Trademark Office

(<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/doc/general/index.html>)

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

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

Baywater Publishing (<http://www.baywaterpublishing.com/products.htm>)

Family Lawyer software from **Parsons Technology**. Available from **Broderbund**

(<http://www.broderbund.com/>)

Practical Divorce Solutions by **Ed Sherman, Esq.** **Nolo Press Occidental**

(<http://www.nolotech.com/>) 1994 available through **Amazon.com**

(<http://www.amazon.com/Practical-Divorce-Solutions-National-ed/dp/0944508138>)

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**

(http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-35305761_ITM)

***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.**