

Starting a Self Help Center for the Self Represented: 12 Core Resources

By Madelynn Herman, National Center for State Courts
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Hough, Bonnie and Bob James. [Test Your Court's Self-Representation Quotient](#).

An 18-question quiz/checklist to determine how well a court is doing in providing services to self represented litigants. Web links to various helpful resources are also provided.

Paik, Julie and Mary Viviano. [Pro Se Project Checklist](#). California Courts. This document provides 7 helpful checklists for starting a self help center: 1) Getting people on board; 2) Ascertaining the need; 3) Securing funding; 4) Create/re-create service delivery methods; 5) Evaluation/re-evaluation; 6) Pro per access checklist; and 7) Implementation of a self help center.

[Case for...Self Help Programs: A Court-Based Solution for the Problems of the Self Represented](#) (Self Represented Litigation Network, May 2006). This 2-page document provides answers to these questions: What is a self help Program? Why start a self help program? What can a self help program include? And What are the keys to starting an effective self help center? Benefits for judges, court staff, attorneys, and other stakeholders are outlined.

[Best Practices for Programs to Assist Self Represented Litigants in Family Law Matters](#). (Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Family Administration, January 24, 2005). The Maryland Judiciary adopted these best practices to guide the Maryland courts in developing and operating programs to assist self represented litigants in family law matters. Information/recommendations are provided on: needs assessment; service delivery; program outreach; access, language, and literacy; program staff; and quality assurance.

[Self Help Program Management](#) (Selfhelpsupport.org, March 22, 2007). In this webinar presentation, Susan Ledray and Deborah Chase discuss: 1) Pre-opening planning; 2) Operations issues; 3) Ethics for attorneys, non-attorneys, volunteers, etc. and 4) Growth and integration. Both the recorded webinar and the PPT are accessible through selfhelpsupport.org.

Moore, Wayne, Bonnie Hough, Richard Zorza, et al. [Opening Technology Supported Help Centers for the Self-Represented in Courts and Communities](#) (Selfhelpsupport.org/Self Represented Litigation Network, May 2006). Discusses how to get started; operational issues; and the use of technology, partnerships and volunteers.

Zorza, Richard. [The Self-Help Friendly Court: Designed from the Ground Up to Work for People Without Lawyers](#) (National Center for State Courts, 2002). This monograph discusses: 1) Vision, barriers, and approaches; 2) Redesigning the physical and technological environment; 3) Rethinking the process step-by-step; 4) Meeting the needs of uncontested and 'mixed' cases; 5) Building a broad self-help court team; and 6) Perspectives for the long view. See especially Chapter 3: The Overall Approach to Creating Self Help Friendly Environments.

[Best Practices in Court Based Programs for the Self Represented: Concepts, Attributes, and Issues for Exploration](#) (Self Represented Litigation Network, 2006). The concept of self help centers, along with 16 best practice attributes are discussed in Part I, section 3.

[Model Self Help Center Pilot Program Executive Summary](#). (California Judicial Council, Center for Families, Children, and Courts, March 2005). This Ex. Summary is part of their Model

Self Help Center Pilot Program: Report to the Legislature, March 2005. This report provides the findings of a comprehensive evaluation of the strategies they had designed and implemented. The key findings reported in this summary provide an excellent case for buy-in from key stakeholders when starting a self help program.

[Self Represented Litigants: Self Help Centers. Making the Case to the Bench and Bar.](#) John Greacen, Bonnie Hough, and Susan Ledray presented at the July 2006 National Association of Court Management meeting in Florida. They discussed 1) Reasons to have a self help program; 2) Objections to starting a self help program (and responses). See:

Herman, Madelynn. **[Self Help Services at the 4th Judicial District Court in Hennepin County MN: Network Call Notes](#)** (Selfhelpsupport.org, 2005). In this April 20, 2005 network conference call, Susan Ledray, Pro Se Services Manager from the 4th Judicial District Court in Hennepin County presents an overview of the services at the two self-help centers she manages, discusses future plans, and then takes questions from the audience, including how their self help center began and developed, and program specifics such as record keeping, program evaluation, buy-in from attorneys, etc.

[Directory of Court Based Self Help Programs](#) (Selfhelpsupport.org/National Center for State Courts, 2006). Based on the first national survey of court-based self help programs, this directory provides program information on over 100 court-based self help programs around the country. The mentor version of this directory is available through selfhelpsupport.org.

Additional materials on starting or developing self help programs can be found in the Selfhelpsupport.org library; <http://www.selfhelpsupport.org> under 'Program Development and Administration'. A free membership website, Selfhelpsupport.org serves as a clearinghouse for information on self help programs for courts and legal service providers.

Madelynn Herman can be reached at mherman@ncsc.dni.us or 757-259-1549.