

WELCOME TO THE SELF-HELP PROGRAM
10th Judicial Circuit
(Polk, Highlands, and Hardee Counties)
www.jud10.flcourts.org

Purpose

The Self-Help Program of the Tenth Judicial Circuit was implemented in 1995, pursuant to Supreme Court mandate, requiring all circuits to provide assistance to the *pro se* (self-represented) litigants, in gaining access to the court in family matters of domestic relations, including but not limited to **Dissolution of Marriage, Paternity, Step-Parent Adoption, Name Changes, modifications, and enforcement of such matters.**

Notice of Limitation of Services Provided

THE PERSONNEL IN THIS SELF-HELP PROGRAM ARE NOT ACTING AS YOUR LAWYER OR PROVIDING LEGAL ADVICE TO YOU. THE PERSONNEL IN THIS SELF-HELP PROGRAM CANNOT TELL YOU WHAT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS OR REMEDIES ARE, REPRESENT YOU IN COURT OR TELL YOU HOW TO TESTIFY IN COURT. SELF-HELP SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL PERSONS, UNLESS LIMITED BY STATUTE, WHO ARE OR WILL BE PARTIES TO A FAMILY CASE. THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE TO AND RECEIVE FROM SELF-HELP PERSONNEL IS NOT CONFIDENTIAL AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE AT A LATER DATE. IF ANOTHER PERSON INVOLVED IN YOUR CASE SEEKS ASSISTANCE FROM THIS SELF-HELP PROGRAM, HE OR SHE WILL BE GIVEN THE SAME TYPE OF ASSISTANCE THAT YOU RECEIVE. IN ALL CASES, IT IS BEST TO CONSULT WITH YOUR OWN ATTORNEY, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR CASE PRESENTS SIGNIFICANT ISSUES REGARDING CHILDREN, CHILD SUPPORT, ALIMONY, RETIREMENT OR PENSION BENEFITS, ASSETS, OR LIABILITIES.

**YOU ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED TO SEEK LEGAL
ADVICE BEFORE PROCEEDING AS A
SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT.**

FORMS

Family law forms which have been approved for use by the Florida Supreme Court may be downloaded from www.flcourts.org. Packets may also be purchased from the Clerk of Court in Bartow, Lakeland, and Winter Haven. Helpful *checklists* for different types of filings are available at www.jud10.flcourts.org (Program and Services/Self-Help Program). **Note:** Some forms may not be available for certain situations. Information regarding fees and costs for filing your lawsuit may be obtained from the Clerk of Court (Family Law Division).

REQUIREMENTS (F.S. 61)

It is the responsibility of the self-represented litigant to meet all requirements set forth by the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. Instructions accompanying the Florida Supreme Court forms should be reviewed carefully. Upon filing your documents, please be sure to obtain your assigned case number (DR). Litigants may check with the Clerk of Court (Family Law Division) at any time to verify the receipt, docketing, and scanning of documents.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A HEARING

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT TO **CALL (863) 534-4015** FOR A REVIEW OF THEIR PENDING LAWSUIT. A court specialist will verify if all criteria have been met or additional documents are needed. Court dates are not given over the phone; however, when approved, an **Order Scheduling Hearing** will be issued to all parties involved. (It is extremely important to keep your address current with the Clerk of Court. The Court does not rely on changes made with the postal service). *In cases where there has been no proof of service (120 days after filing) or no record activity for 6 months, the pending action may be subject to **dismissal**.

***Faxed documents are prohibited unless authorized by the Court.**

Office hours:

**8:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
(Closed on weekends and most official holidays)**

CLERK OF COURT BRANCHES

255 North Broadway, 1st Floor, Bartow, FL 33830
Call Center: (863) 534-4000

930 East Parker Street, Room 240, Lakeland, FL 33801
Call Center: (863) 534-4000

3425 Lake Alfred Road, Suite 7, Winter Haven, FL 33881
Call Center: (863) 534-4000

Highlands County Clerk of Court (Sebring)
(863) 402-6564

Hardee County Clerk of Court (Wauchula)
(863) 773-4174

**FAMILY MEDIATION &
POSITIVE CO-PARENTING COURSE**
(863) 534-4698

POLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Court Process (863) 534-6202
Fingerprinting (863) 298-6242

**DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
(CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT)**
115 S. Missouri Avenue, Suite 102
Lakeland, FL 33815-4601
(850) 488-KIDS (5437)

FLORIDA BAR LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE
(800) 342-8011



**Tenth Judicial Circuit of Florida
Family Court of Polk County
Self-Help Program
Post Office Box 9000, Drawer J139
Bartow, FL 33831-9000
Phone: (863) 534-4015
Fax: (863) 534-4492
www.jud10.flcourts.org**

Helpful Links @ www.flcourts.org

- Search for Self-Help Centers
- Family Law Rules and Opinions
- Family Law Forms
- Free or Low-Cost Legal Aid
- Lawyer Referral
- Mediators....and more!

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