

SELF-HELP, REIMAGINED

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UCI Law



Access to Professionalized Knowledge

In the U.S. *pro se* or self-help materials is the dominant form of assistance received by low-income individuals seeking help with legal matters.

There is no problem of access to self-help materials for a person needing legal information.

There is a difference between:

Access



Deployment

"All your motions are denied, Mr. Campbell. Your case is dismissed."



Deployment

Lay consumers are expected to deploy (put into use) expert knowledge on everything from retirement savings to health plans to household electronics.

Consumer Self-help Materials

Medical information ...

What if I have a complaint?

If you have a complaint about your provider, you may contact the Department of Health. This includes, for example, if your provider:

- Misled you or lied about the services or instrument dispensed, rescission rights, the care you received, or the financial aspects of your evaluation and fitting.
- Treated you while they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Abused or mistreated you in any way.
- Released information without your consent.
- Was negligent in your treatment.

What happens after I file a complaint?

The Board of Hearing and Speech can discipline fitter/dispensers, audiologists, and speech-language pathologists. They are disciplined if they are found to have violated Washington State laws and rules related to hearing and speech. All complaints are reviewed. If needed, an investigation may include reviewing the client records. The department may interview all persons involved. A decision is based on the information from the investigation. If the provider is found in violation, there are several actions which the board may take. If the provider is not found in violation, no action will be taken and the complaint will be closed.



Additional Information

For additional information on the Board of Hearing and Speech, visit the Department of Health web site at www.doh.wa.gov.

The laws and rules governing hearing and speech are Chapter 18.35 RCW and Chapter 246-828 WAC.

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Board of Hearing and Speech
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This publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request.

DOH 654-057 (REV 6/2009)

BOARD OF HEARING & SPEECH

Consumer Rights Brochure

Washington State
Department of Health
Board of Hearing and Speech
PO Box 47852
Olympia, WA 98504-7852

Investing information...

Equity Franchise

The Multi-Asset Franchise is also responsible for managing the Core Equity Franchise. They have worked together for years and leverage off each other's strengths to create team synergies evidenced in their fund performance.

The Core Equity Franchise overlays their own research and convictions over the broader in-house equity research before making any buy or sell decisions. The research overlay focuses on causal drivers of earnings, cash flows and returns. They require analysts to provide extensive input into the key criteria that they believe are drivers of earnings, cash flows and returns.

They believe in the importance of anticipating economic cycles and determining which industries are best placed to benefit.

Fixed Interest Franchise

The Fixed Interest Team, which is headed up by Henk Viljoen, is highly qualified with extensive experience in the industry and has been working together for over 10 years. The Franchise houses the Money Market, Bonds, Income, Liability Driven Investments and Credit Teams.

Other fixed interest managers typically develop skills that allow for outperformance of their benchmark through predominantly one strategy. Individual strategies can result in outperformance from time to time but they may not do so consistently. The Fixed Interest Franchise aims to exploit multiple strategies on a continuous basis, to be better positioned to outperform during all phases of the market.

Listed Property Franchise

The Listed Property Franchise is a leading Listed Property

Global (Managed by Offshore Partners)

- Global Equities

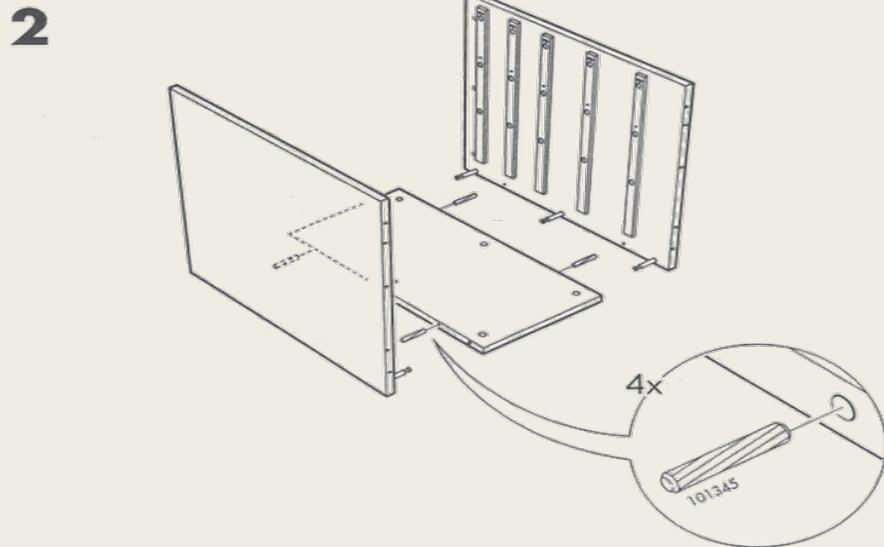
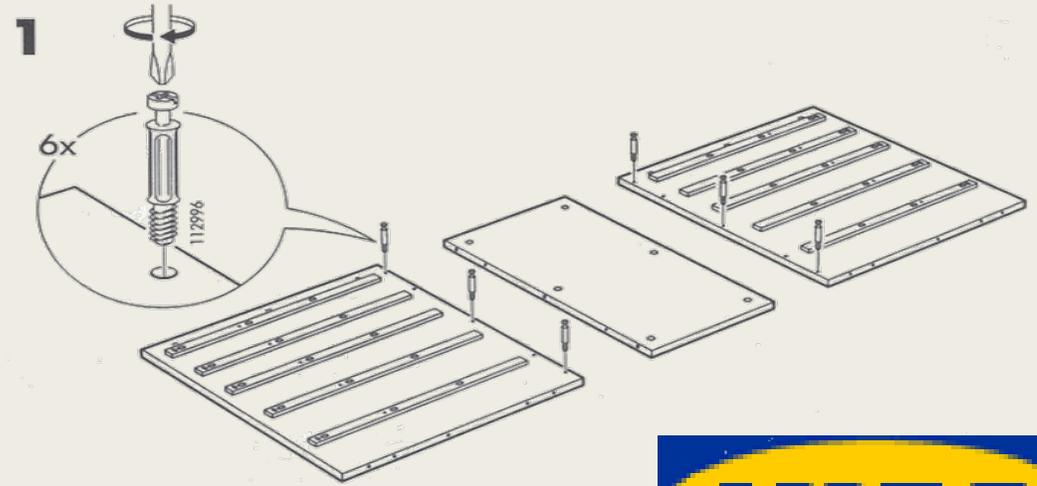
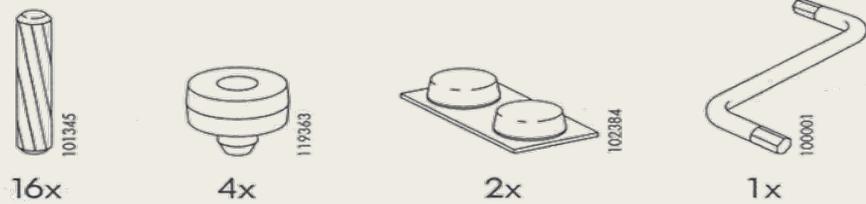
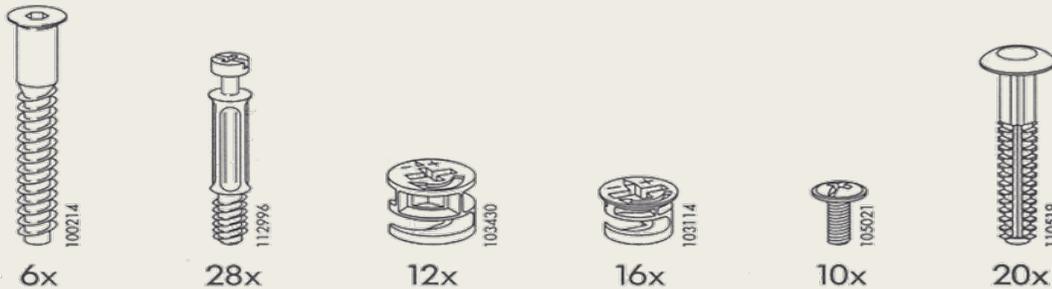
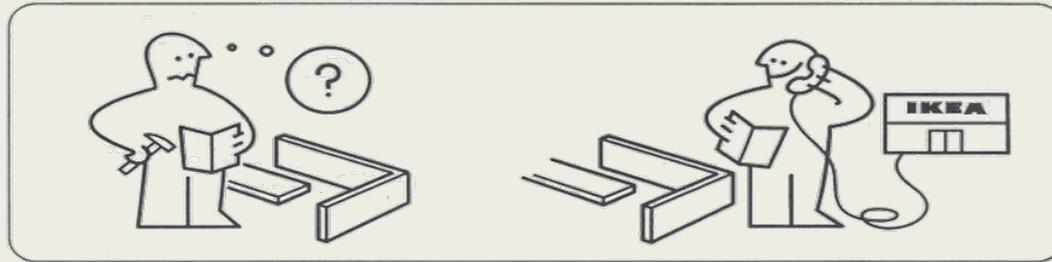
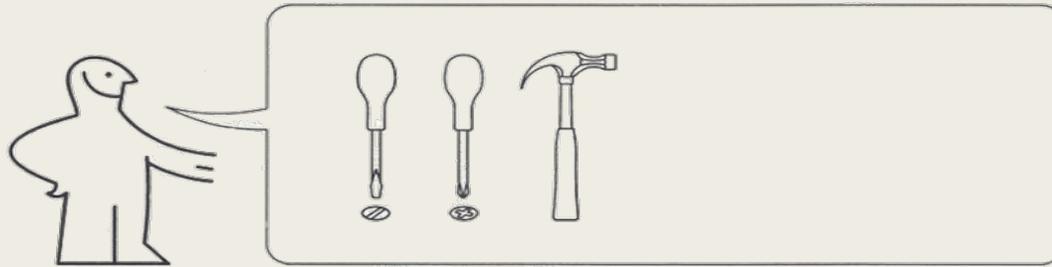
Founded in 1994, Threadneedle is an established global asset manager with assets under management of US\$150.1 billion with a compliment of over 160 investment professionals. Their sole focus is the active management of client assets across equities, fixed income, commodities, multi-asset exposures and property. Threadneedle offers emerging market exposure within a diversified global portfolio of 70 – 110 stocks.

The Threadneedle investment process is driven primarily using bottom-up fundamental analysis, although some top-down analysis is applied in the context of the macro environment. Their investment style is market driven and the portfolio is not expected to display persistent style biases over different economic cycles – therefore style agnostic. Their strategy exploits value opportunities during value cycles and growth opportunities during growth cycles.

- Global Bonds

Founded in 1986, Brandywine Global Investment Management manages US\$63 billion in assets as at 31 December 2014. Core to their principles is seeking value not yet recognised by others. Brandywine applies a top-down, value-driven process when structuring global income portfolios. Real (inflation-adjusted) yield is their primary measure of value.

Currency valuation is next in importance, as the real yield must be captured in US dollars. They focus on appreciating, undervalued currencies and overvalued currencies that can be hedged. Inflation trends, political risks, monetary trends, and business cycle and liquidity measures are also considered. Brandywine typically concentrate investments in eight to 16 countries that appear to offer the best total return potential.



- **Current self-help materials:**
- use inaccessible legal jargon (*i.e.*, “vacating a default judgment”)
- are text heavy
- lack visual images
- lack organizers
- fail to provide guidance as to how to conduct a negotiation
- fail to set forth what to expect in court
- fail to help people overcome feelings of shame and guilt
- fail to recognize how people respond to stressful circumstances

- The state of the art in legal self-help must change.
- And we need rigorous evidence of what sorts of materials produce good results.

Study Question

- What helps consumers in financial distress improve their financial lives?

How do we design self-help materials that address & break down barriers to their deployment?



We have drawn on research in the fields of:

- Distance education
- Public health
- Behavioral economics
- Experimental psychology
- Cognitive psychology
- Sociology

Hypothesis

Individuals in financial distress will have trouble *deploying* professional legal knowledge as a result of a variety of barriers:

- *Cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and psychological challenges*
- *Debilitating feelings of shame, guilt, or hopelessness*
- *Lack of self-agency*
- *Failures in plan-making and plan-implementation*

When people are over-indebted, they face the barrier of shame and guilt

This is hard. But you are not alone. Lots of people have trouble paying their debts. And it doesn't mean you are a bad person.

Pick some words that describe you.

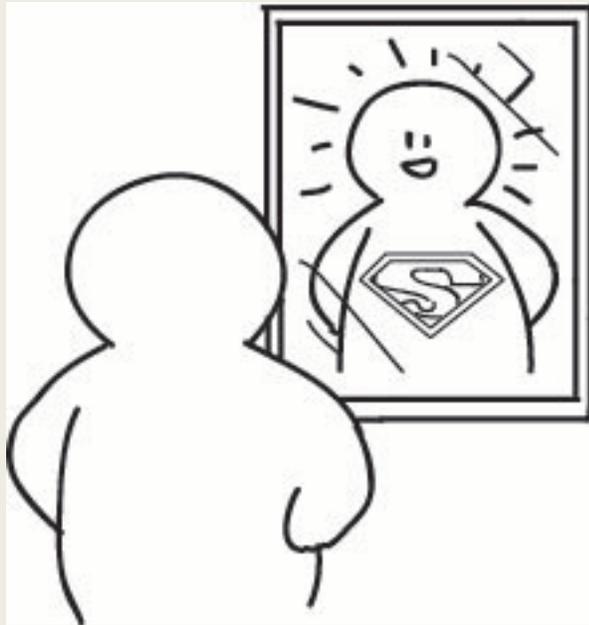
Maybe some of these:

- Kind
- Giving
- Fair
- Honest
- Hard-working

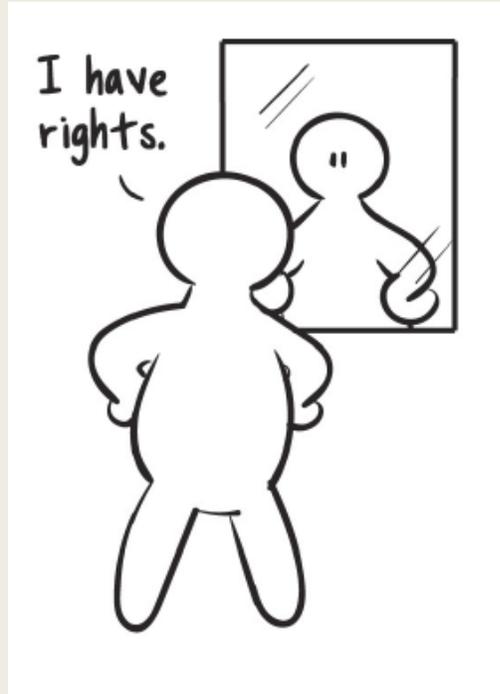


Self-Affirmation Theory

When people have to advocate for themselves before a figure of authority, they may face the barrier of a lack of agency



Barrier: people have to assert themselves in an unfamiliar and intimidating context



When people face the barrier of uncertainty about what to expect or what to do first in an unfamiliar context or environment

 State of Connecticut - Superior Court
Centralized Small Claims

RE: Docket# SCC -16-3210

Report to: SUPERIOR COURT, 122 Broad St., New London, CT
COURTROOM B

Hearing Date: 4/10/2017
Time: 2:00 PM

See opposite side for court directions:

Find the court date and time from the Notice.
Plan to be at the court for several hours!

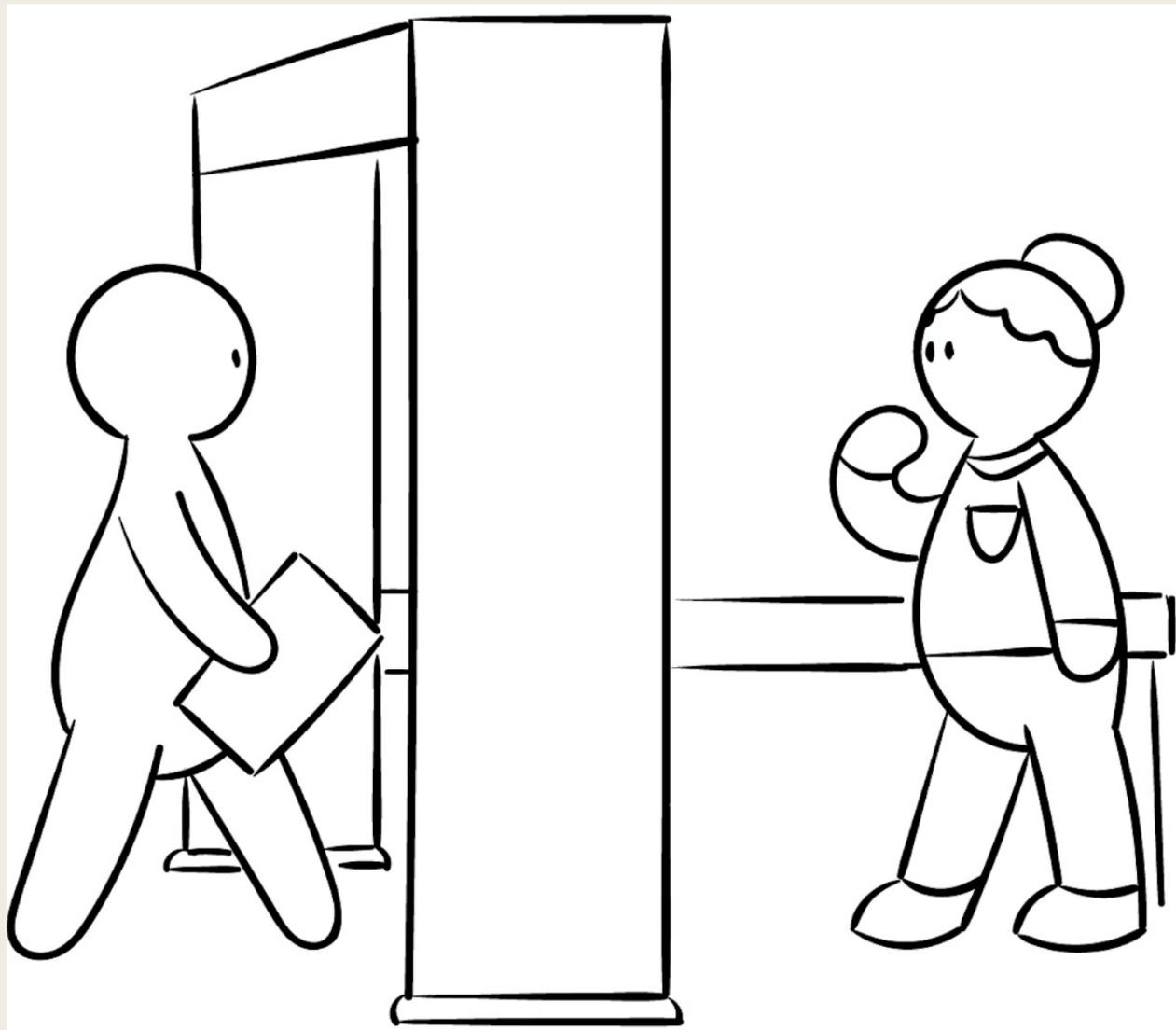
Find the court address.
Plan how to get to court early!

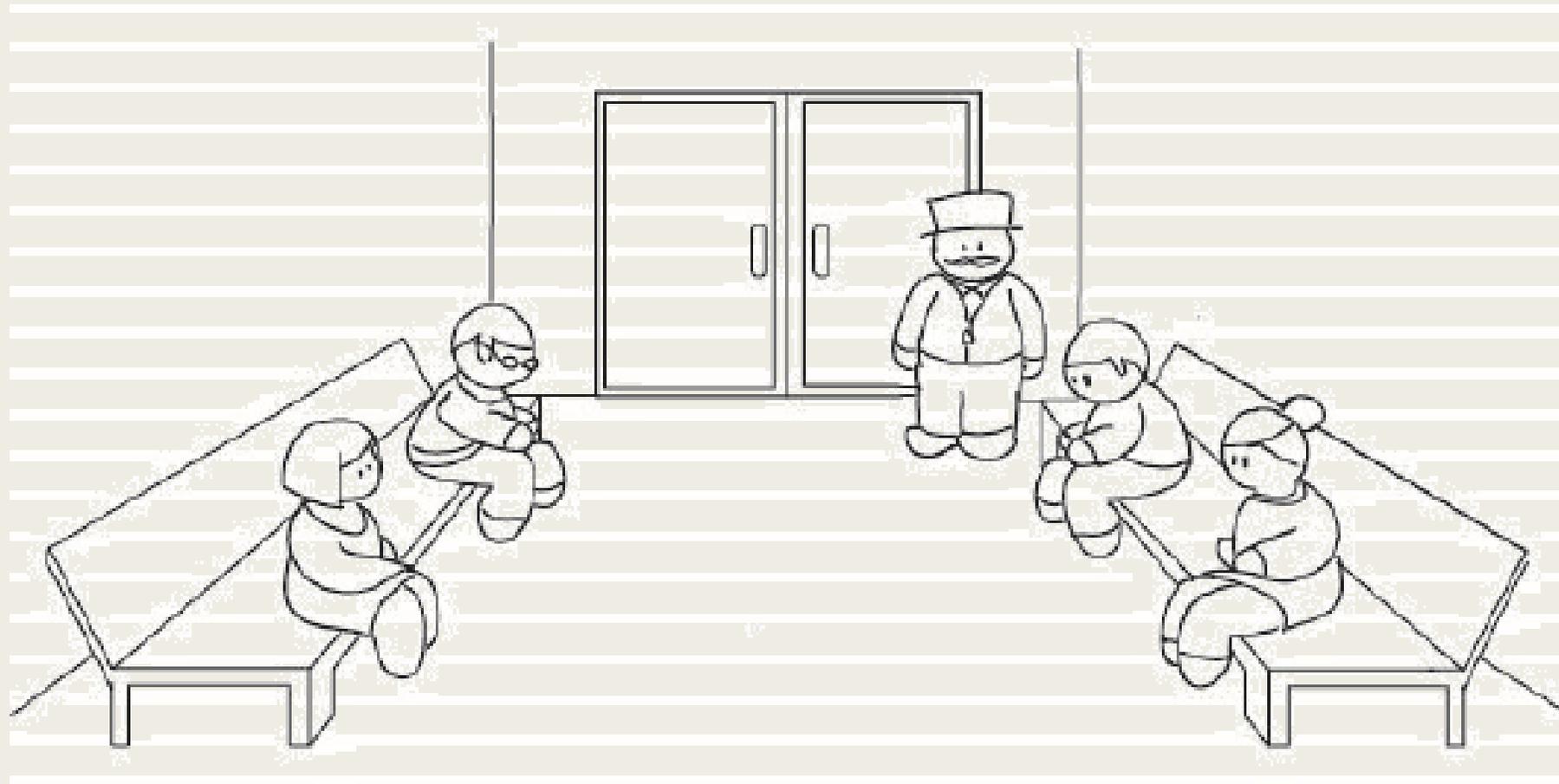
On the date listed on the *Notice of Small Claims Hearing* . . . go to court!!!

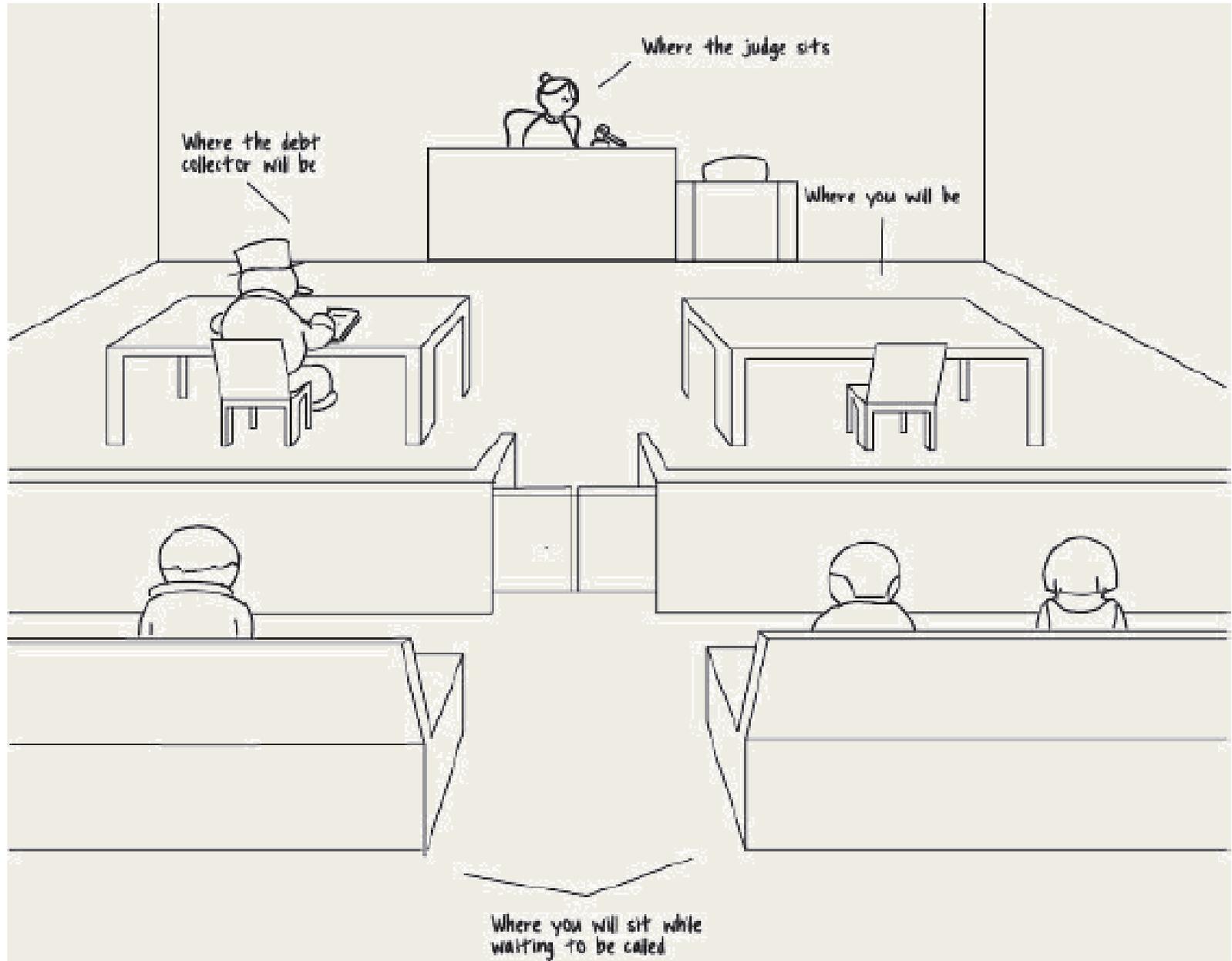


Welcome to
Court









If the information in the self-help materials fails me on the small things, how can I trust it on the big things?



Self-help users face the barrier of a lack of knowledge about details of how the formal legal system works

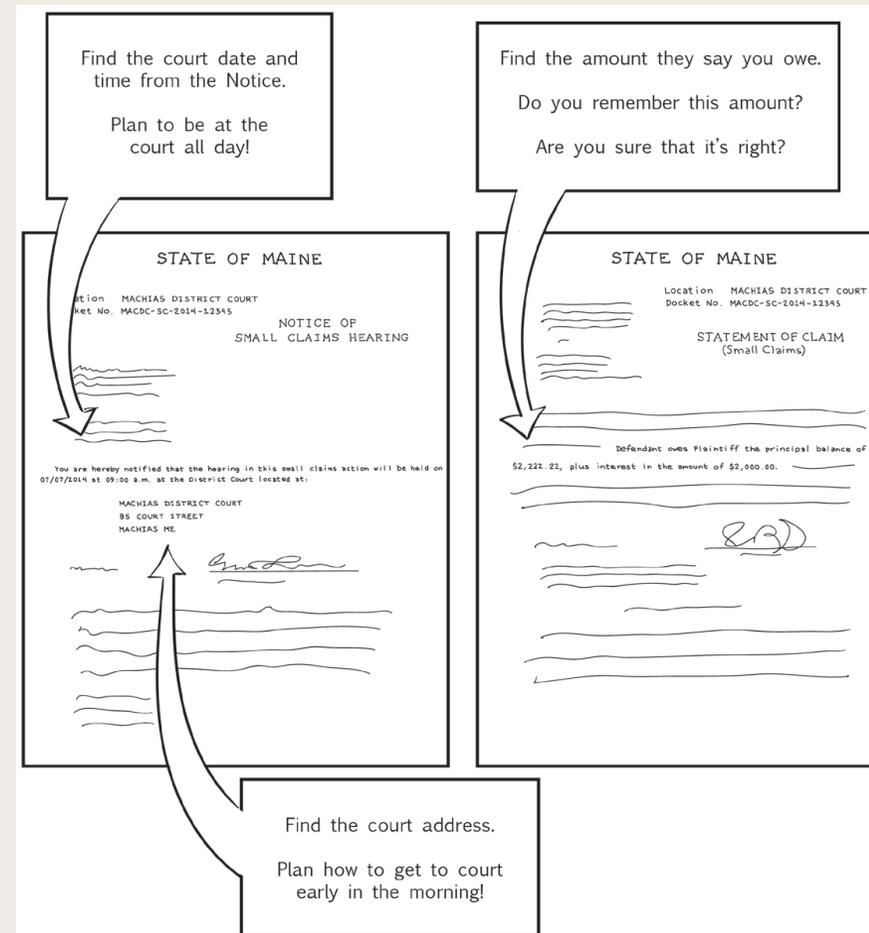
When do you go to court?

The court will mail you a letter telling you when to go.

So, watch for a letter from the court.

The letter will say “*Notice of Small Claims Hearing*” at the top.

When you get the paper that says “*Notice of Small Claims Hearing:*”

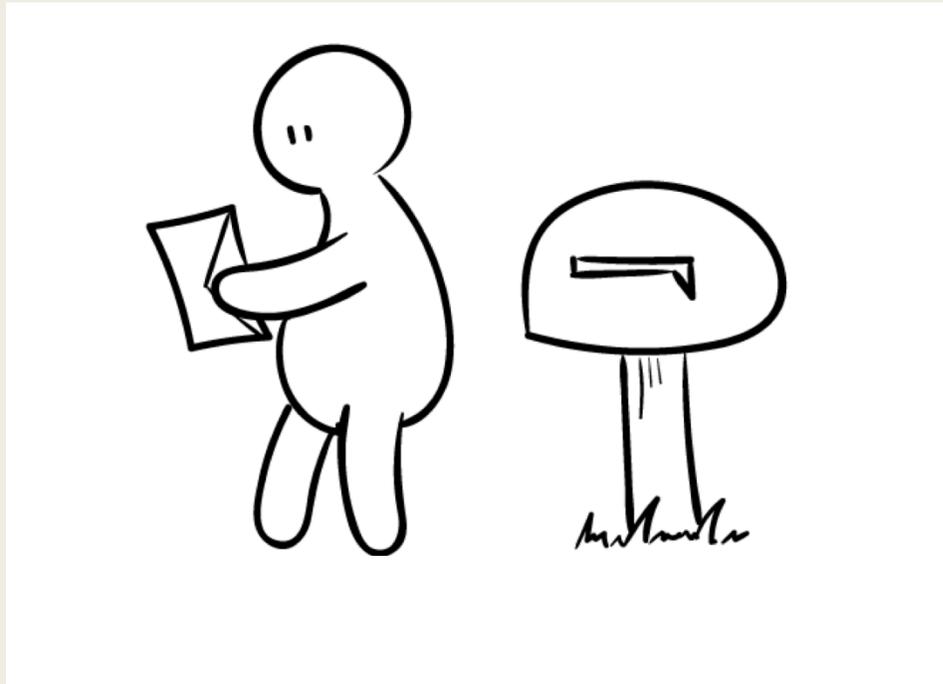


People in financial distress often face challenges with making plans and with goal setting

- Self-help materials should provide tools to help users make plans and set important goals.
- The advance commitment to a plan decreases the need for self-control in the face of temptation.



If I get a refund check from my taxes, I will put it in the bank rather than spend it.



If “X” happens, then I will do “Y.”

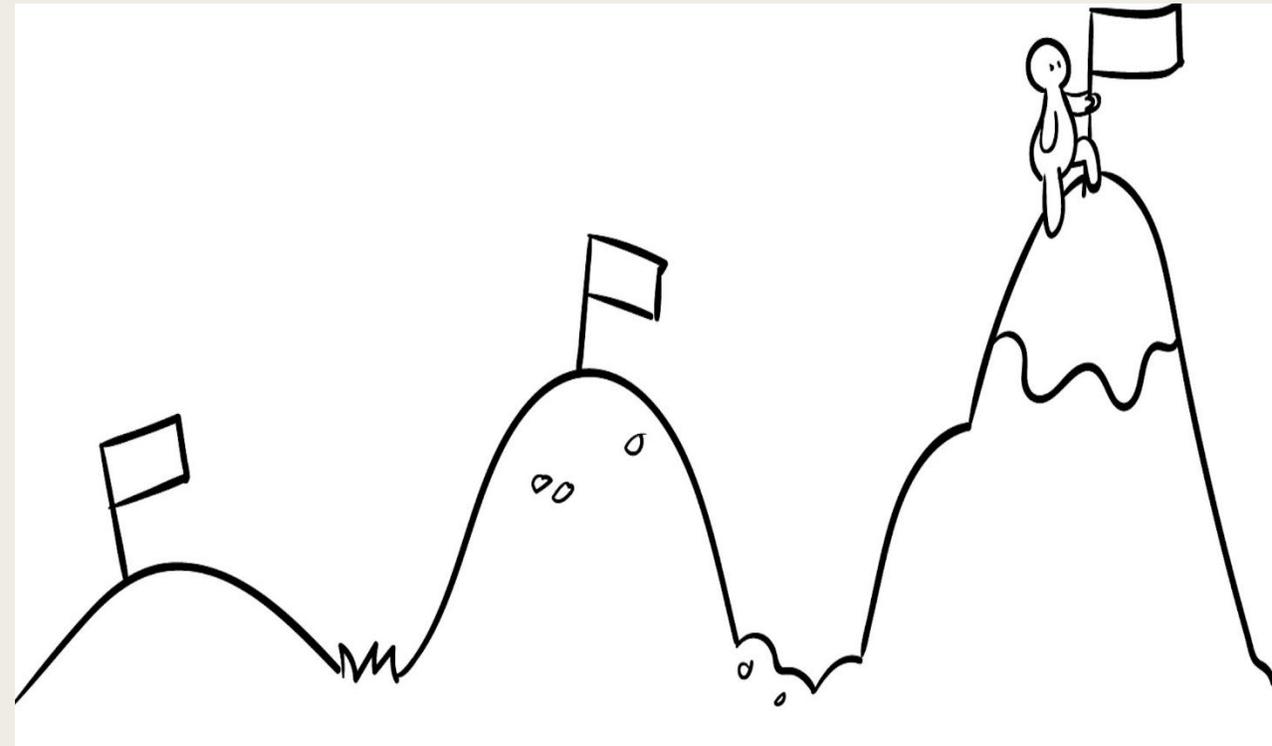
- Self-help materials can give examples of a person committing to responding to a specific circumstance in a particular way.
- Having a plan in place eliminates decision-making in the moment.

Planning Prompts



Self-help materials should include encouraging words or pictures to help people stay motivated through a difficult or lengthy process

You can do this!



Self-help materials should include relaxation exercises to lessen anxiety through a stressful process

A few minutes of deep breathing will help you feel calmer and less anxious



When people face the barrier of difficulty with information processing & learning

Conceptual Knowledge

- Understanding underlying principles
- Understanding ideas, connections & relationships
- Interpretation of concepts

When a person faces the barrier of difficulty with information processing & learning

Conceptual Knowledge

- Understanding underlying principles
- Understanding ideas, connections & relationships
- Interpretation of concepts

Procedural Knowledge

- Skills
- Procedures
- Action sequences

Self-help materials should provide the user with procedural information. Less “why” they have to do something and more “this is what you need to do.”

Step one: Gather all of your pay stubs, bank statements, and every other paper that has to do with the money you get or have. Then make a list of everything you own.

Step two: Fill out the court forms.
You can get the on line at www.court.xxx or you can go to the court and get the forms.

Step three: Send the forms to the Court. Here is the address:

100 Main Street
Anytown, 12345

Step four: Send a copy of your forms to your spouse.
You can do this by mail.
If you go to the post office, you can get a receipt and tracking number.

Self-help materials should provide the user with procedural information in the form of “scripts.”

We’ve written something you can read to the judge.

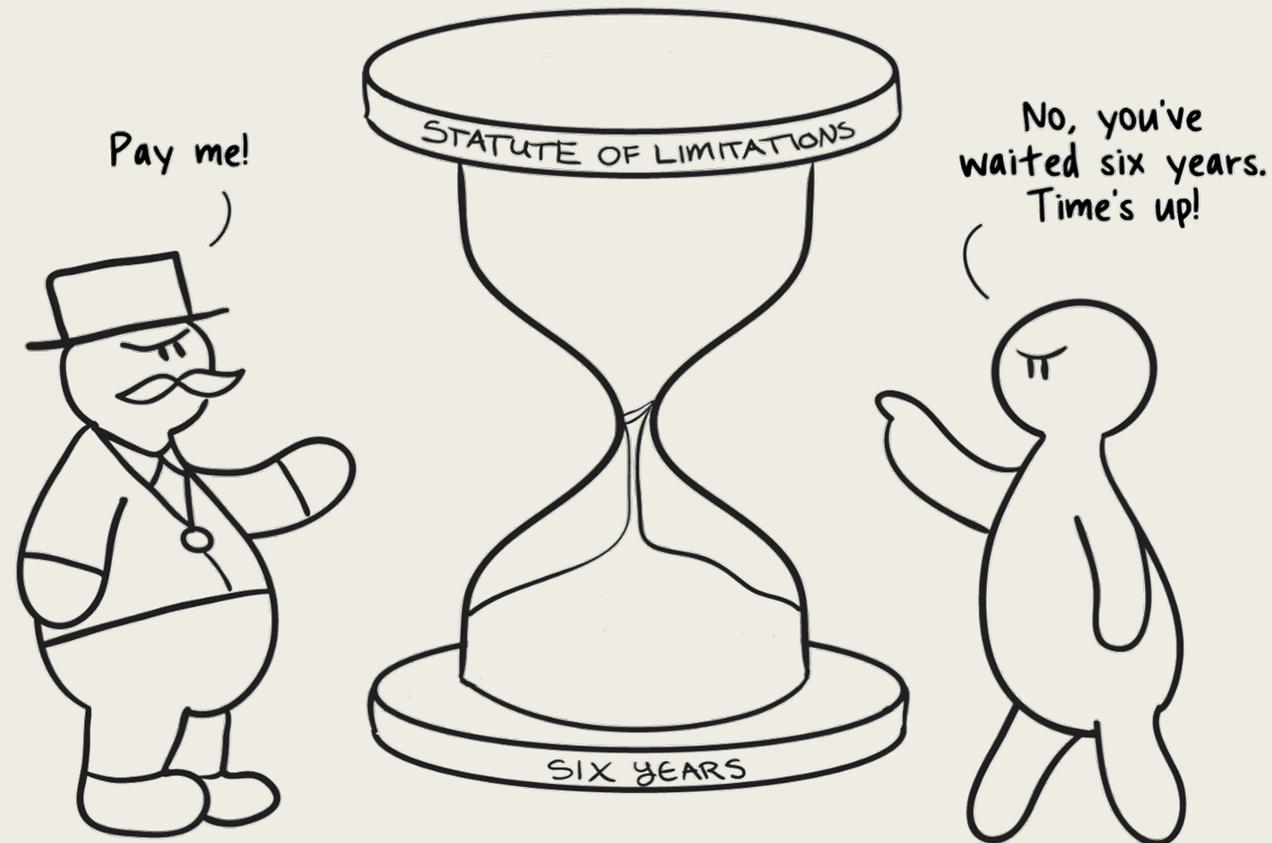
There are some legal words there that you may not understand.

That’s O.K.! The judge will understand.

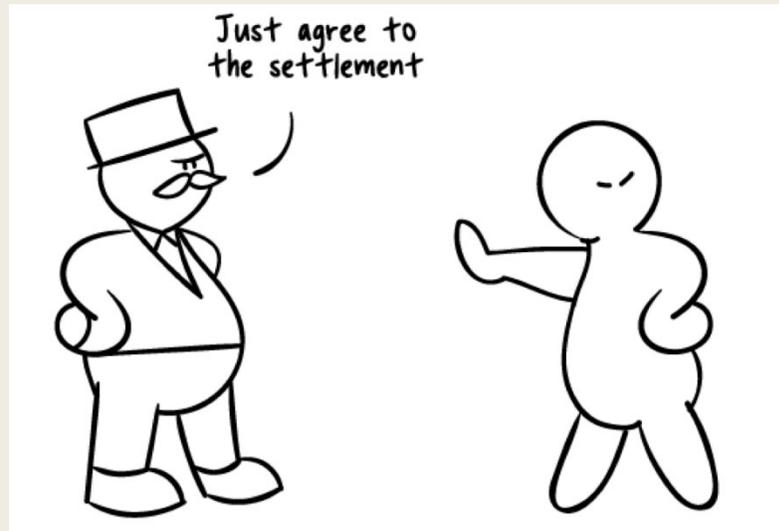
First, Your Honor, I ask that you dismiss this case with prejudice because I don't think the lawyer can prove anything. The lawyer needs to have a witness, or at least a sworn document. And the lawyer needs records from that company. Otherwise, none of the information is reliable. Nothing is based on personal knowledge. And the business records exception does not apply because there's no witness to say so.

When conceptual knowledge is necessary, self-help materials should use analogy & imagery

How to explain the statute of limitations



Imagery can be used to explain, direct and entertain the self-help user



This number is smaller than the one in 13. I should check the first box, box 14a.

12a. \$ 4,000

x 12

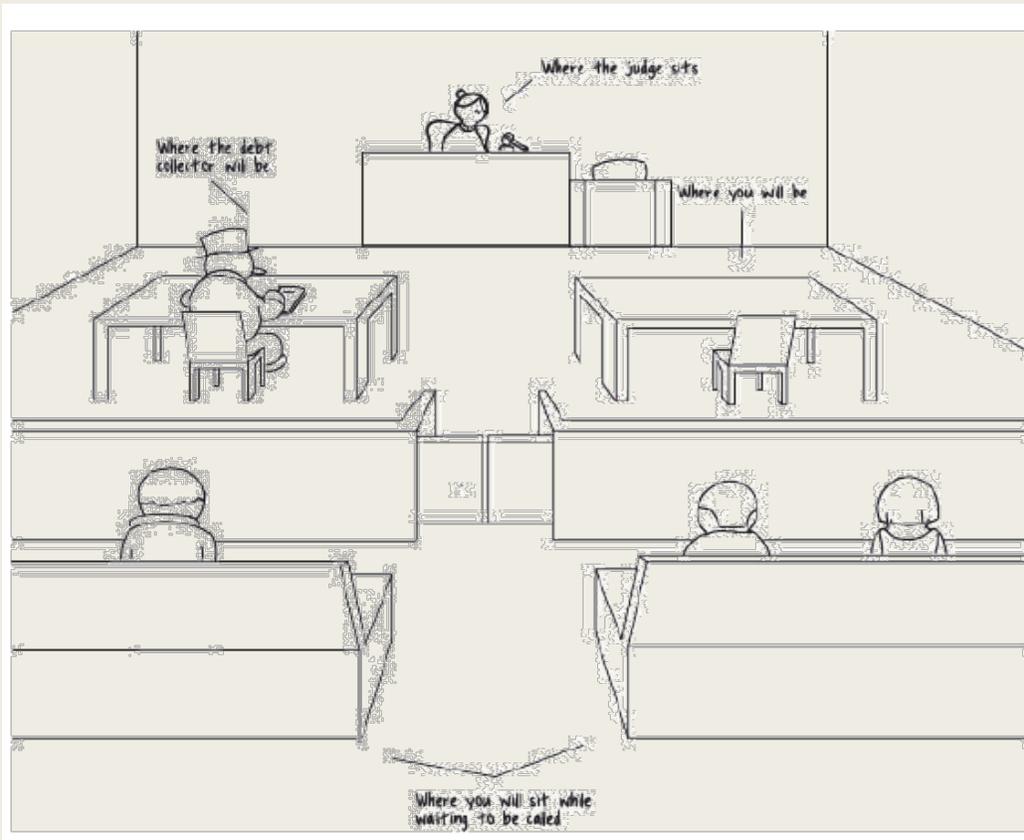
12b. \$ 48,000

13. \$ 61,527

A cartoon illustration of a stick figure pointing towards a form. The form contains three boxes labeled 12a, 12b, and 13. Box 12a contains "\$ 4,000", box 12b contains "\$ 48,000" (circled), and box 13 contains "\$ 61,527". Above the form, text reads: "This number is smaller than the one in 13. I should check the first box, box 14a." The stick figure has a speech bubble above it.



Stick figures should be used rather than detailed photographs or drawings



Self- help materials should use checklists to help users keep organized

Checklist

- Step one:** Gather your papers. Turn to page ___ to see what papers you need to find.
- Step two:** Fill out the court forms. Turn to page ___ to see how to get them and how to fill them out.
- Step three:** Once you have filled out all the forms, you need to make copies of all the forms. Turn to page ___ to see where you can make copies.
- Step four:** Give one copy to the court with a filing fee or a waiver form. Turn to page ___ to learn exactly how to do this.
- Step five:** Send one copy of all the forms to your spouse. Turn to page ___ to learn exactly how to do this.

Self- help materials should use advanced organizers to help users keep organized and see the process as a whole

You can take care of your court case without a lawyer. This packet will show you how. It has four parts:



Part One is called, "**You Should Go To Court.**" It explains why you should go to court.



Part Two is called, "**Know Your Rights.**" It tells you why you might not have to pay any money, or as much money as the company suing you says you owe.



Part Three is called, "**What To Do.**" It tells you what to do in court.



Part Four is called, "**Take This to Court.**" You should take this packet to court with you. It suggests what to say in court.

Self-help materials should avoid legal jargon and simplify complicated processes

home

rather than

domicile

papers or forms

rather than

documents

change

rather than

modify

next to

rather than

abutting

Self-help materials should avoid legal jargon and simplify complicated processes

When you go to court, you or someone else will give information to a judge. This is called “evidence”.

This evidence may include a story that you or someone else tells the judge. This is called “testimony”.

Emails and text messages, documents, photos, and objects that help you tell your story can also be evidence.

Self-help materials must be written at a fifth grade reading level and in a conversational style



You can always tell your side of the story to the judge.

Even if the judge says that it will take a long time to finish the case if you don't settle.

If you want the judge to hear your story, the judge has to listen.

Self-help materials should draw on and reflect communication theory at the level of the page, the sentence, and the word

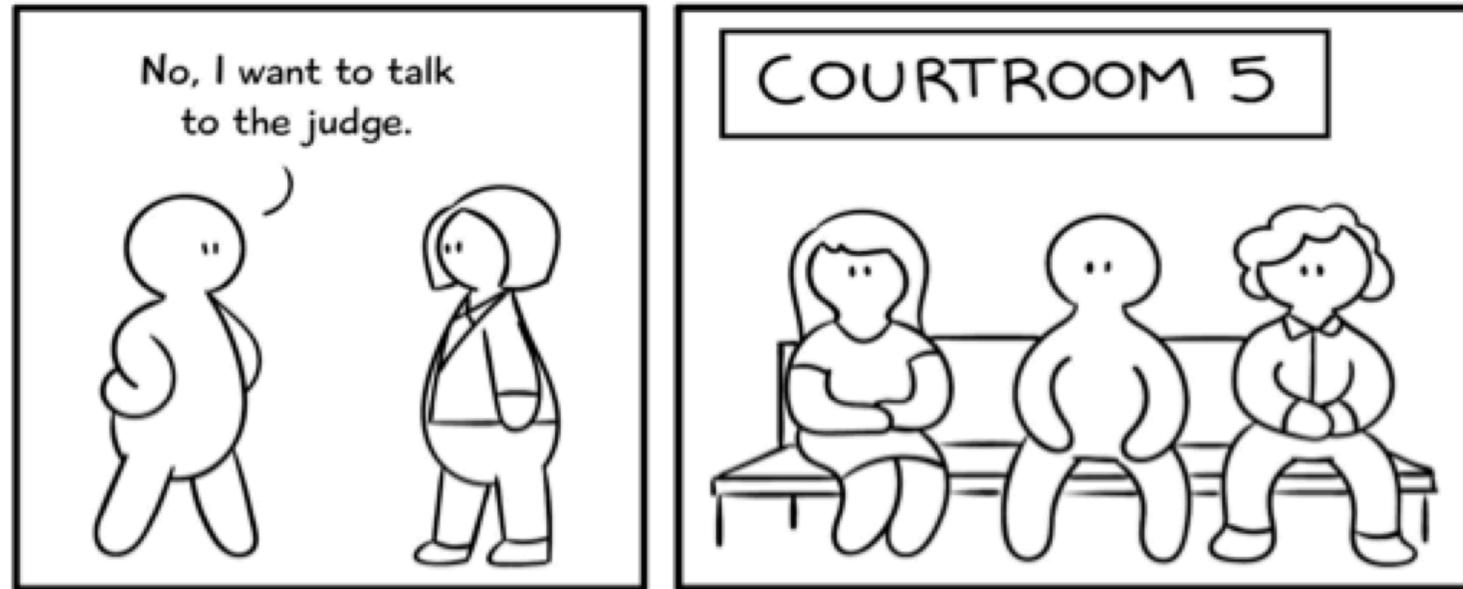
- Use the active voice and present tense
- Place the main idea before the exceptions
- Give examples of how one would follow a complicated direction
- Use headers on each page
- Leave plenty of white space on each page so as not to overwhelm the reader
- Don't mix fonts within the body of text

If you don't want to agree to a deal, you don't have to.

Tell the lawyer that you want the judge to decide. Then go back into the courtroom.

You might have to wait for a while before it is your turn. That's OK.

You have the right to see the judge.



Pre-Tested the Deployment Problem

Methodology

- Court observations
- Semi-structured cognitive interviews with consumers in debt collection cases in Maine, Connecticut, and Massachusetts
- Focus groups

Cognitive Interview Example

Which graphic image best communicates the concept of the need for “best evidence” to be introduced in court?

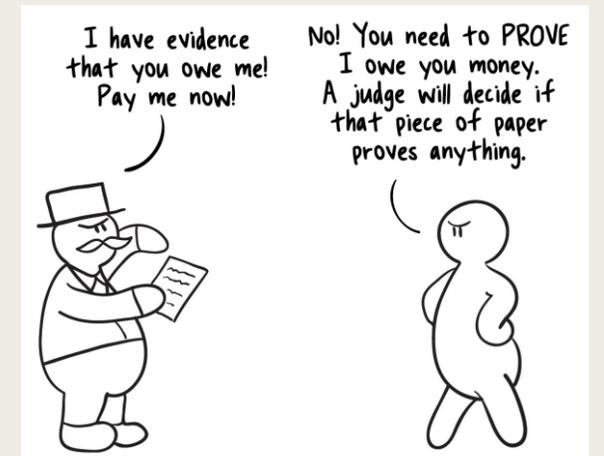
Version #1



Version #2



Version #3



Case Study



Family violence intervention order applications

For respondents

This fact sheet will help you understand:

- family violence and family violence intervention orders
- how a lawyer can help you
- what might happen at court.



If there is anything you do not understand about your paperwork or your situation, speak with a lawyer.

Victoria Legal Aid can help you find a lawyer to help with your case. **See** 'More help and information' at the end of this fact sheet.

What is family violence?

Family violence is behaviour from a person to their family members that includes being violent, abusive, controlling or causing fear. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, social or financial. It can also include damage to property. For children, it includes seeing, hearing or being exposed to this behaviour. The law says family violence is wrong and everyone has a right to feel safe.

Who is a family member?

A family member can be a husband, wife, girlfriend, boyfriend, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, an ex-partner or anyone you treat like a family member. For example, a carer, guardian or someone related to you in your culture. Family violence can happen in all relationships, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and questioning relationships.

What is an intervention order?

A family violence intervention order is a court order that protects a family member, children and property from violence. Intervention orders have rules called 'conditions' that you must follow. For example, the order may say that you cannot hurt or threaten your family members or damage property. If you do not follow the rules, the police can charge you with a crime.

If you break a condition, you can be charged.

Intervention order conditions cannot be broken by agreement. If you do not understand the conditions, talk to a lawyer.

Intervention orders made in Victoria are recognised everywhere else in Australia. If you or your family members move interstate, the order will still apply.

Who is who in an intervention order?

The person who asked for the order is 'the applicant'. They could be a police officer or a family member. The family member and any children are 'affected family members'.

You will be called the 'respondent'.

The person who you will listen to your case at court is 'the magistrate'.

Why are the police involved?

If police get a report of family violence, they must check that everyone is safe. The police have a duty to protect people from family violence, especially children. If there is a risk, the police must act, even if your family member does not want them to. It is a police decision.

Do I need to go to court?

Going to court to talk to the magistrate is called a 'case' or 'hearing'. The magistrate will decide whether to make an intervention order. The court can get you an interpreter if you need one.

Speak to a lawyer as soon as you can about if you need to go to court. There are different ways that you can be a respondent. The police may have given you:

- a family violence safety notice
- a summons or bail undertaking
- an application. This is a statement of what the applicant said happened and the order they want
- an interim intervention order. This is a temporary intervention order.

Do I need to see a lawyer?

If you have an intervention order or family violence safety notice against you, a lawyer can help explain what the rules (conditions) are. A lawyer can also explain what your choices are at court. A lawyer can get you an interpreter, if you need one. You can usually get help from a free lawyer the first time you go to court. After that, you may need to get your own lawyer. If you don't know whether you need to get your own lawyer, call Victoria Legal Aid. **See** 'More help and information' at the end of this fact sheet.

What are my choices at court?

You can:

- agree to an intervention order. You do not have to agree to what is said about you in the application
- argue against (contest) the whole intervention order
- ask to change the rules (conditions) of the order
- offer an undertaking instead of an order. This is a promise to not use violence. Talk to a lawyer about when you can do this.

- Text heavy
- Conceptual (rather than procedural) information
- No graphics to explain and keep user's interest
- Narrative definitions that need definitions
- Untimely information ("Do I need to go to court?" – you only get this if you are AT court)

Personal safety intervention orders: mention hearing

Self-help guide for respondents

July 2020

This guide is for you if:

- someone applied for a **personal safety intervention order** against you
- you are 18 or over
- you do not have lawyer today.

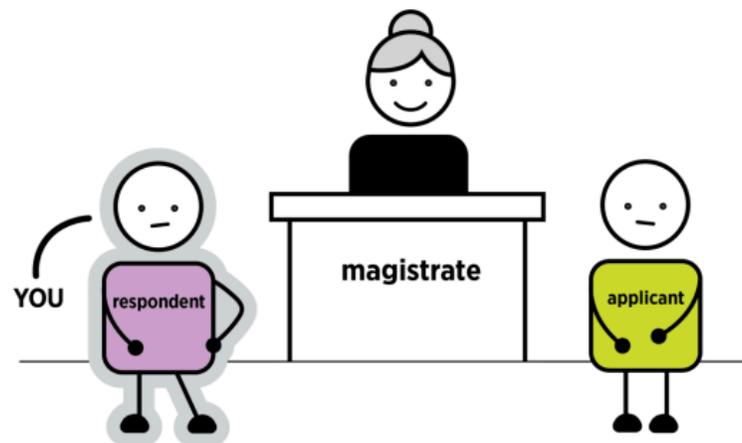
How will this guide help me?

This self-help guide has information on:

- if a duty lawyer can help you today (page 2)
- words you might hear in court today (pages 3–4)
- what today is about, where to go and what you will need to do (pages 5–8)
- information about your options in court today, including what you can say in court (pages 9–16)
- space to write (pages 17 and 20)
- what do to if you do not come to an agreement today and where to get more help (pages 18–19).

Disclaimer: The material in this publication is a general guide only. It is not legal advice. If you need to, please get legal advice about your situation.

This guide has pictures

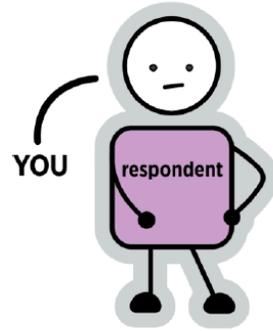


This booklet has pictures of actions you might have to do today.

- Advanced organizers
- Lots of white space
- Asks the questions the users has AT THAT MOMENT and then answers them
- Use of bullet points
- Graphics used to engage and inform.

What are some words I might hear today?

Words about people



Respondent. This is you.



Applicant. The person who applied for a personal safety intervention order. If the police applied on their behalf, the police are the applicant and the other person are called the **protected person**.



Magistrate. The person in charge of the court room today.

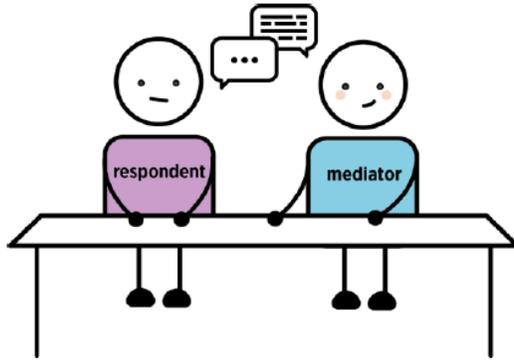
- Definitions reinforced by graphics
- Lots of white space
- Simple conversational language

What will I need to do today?

Today is a mention hearing. You may be able to talk to a mediator or talk to the magistrate in court.

You also must follow the rules of any interim order (if there is one) until a final decision is made.

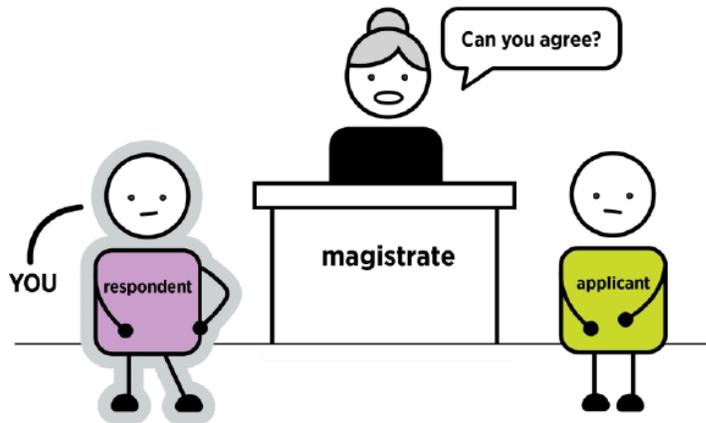
Talk to a mediator



There may be a mediator at court today. The most a mediator can usually do today is a mediation assessment. This means they will talk to you and the applicant to see if mediation is possible. If mediation is possible, you will have to go into court and tell the magistrate you have agreed to mediation. The magistrate will adjourn (put off) your case until you have had a mediation session.

A mediation session is when you talk to the mediator to see if you and applicant can come to a safe agreement.

Talk to the magistrate in court



Today is not a day to tell your side of the story in detail.

- Preview of what to expect
- Graphics used to explain information
- Simple conversational language
- Lots of white space
- Characters reinforcing definitions

Where do I go?



Go to the front desk, or **registry** at the court. If there is an information counter at court, you can ask where you need to go.



Tell the registrar you are here for 'a personal safety intervention order mention hearing'.

The registrar can tell you what court room you are in and where you should wait.



Tell the registrar if you need an interpreter.

The registrar can also give you copies of your paperwork if you do not have it. This can include:

- the **application** for a personal safety intervention order. This has a summary of what the applicant said you did. It also has **conditions** (rules) the applicant is asking you to follow
- an interim intervention order, if the applicant asked for one.

- Procedural information
- Scripts: “Tell the registrar you are here for...”
- Advice regarding fundamentals (i.e., interpreter, copies of paperwork)
- Graphics used to reinforce the information about what to expect – address uncertainty and apprehension.

BACK TO THE U.S. ...

Divorce Fact Sheet

Introduction

A divorce starts when one spouse (husband or wife), the plaintiff, files a complaint for divorce in circuit court. The defendant is the person the plaintiff wants to divorce.

To be divorced in Arkansas, one of the parties must live in Arkansas at least 60 days before the plaintiff files for divorce. Any children of the parties must live in Arkansas for six months before the court can decide custody and visitation.

Grounds

Arkansas is a fault divorce state, so the plaintiff must prove there are reasons (grounds) for divorce. The most common grounds for divorce are general indignities and separation for 18 months.

Service

The plaintiff must tell the defendant about the divorce by serving them with the Complaint for Divorce and a summons.

The plaintiff may serve the defendant using a process server or deputy sheriff or by sending the paperwork by certified mail.

It is possible to serve the defendant by publication, but only if the plaintiff has done everything they can to find the defendant. This type of service is called "service by warning order."

If the defendant is in jail or prison or active military duty, then special rules apply to service and how long the defendant must answer the lawsuit.

Once the defendant is served they generally have 30 days to file a written answer with the court. If the defendant does not file a written answer, then the court may grant the divorce without further notice to the defendant.

Settling Issues

In most cases, the plaintiff must wait at least 30 days from the date the complaint was filed to finalize the divorce. If the plaintiff and defendant agree on all the issues of the marriage, then the case may be finalized without a contested hearing.

In all divorce cases, the plaintiff must prove grounds for divorce.

Some of the Issues the Judge May Decide

Custody and Visitation

The law assumes that the parents should have joint custody of minor children but can be decided differently, for example if there is abuse or one parent is a registered sex offender. If the parents cannot agree on a custody arrangement, then the judge decides what is in the children's best interest. If the judge decides that joint custody will not work, then the judge decides who will have custody and who will have visitation. The judge will also decide if there are any restrictions on visitation.

Child Support and Alimony

Parents will be ordered to pay child based on the Arkansas Family Support Chart. The judge may award alimony based on the facts of the case if one spouse has a need and the other spouse can pay.

Property and Debt Division

Any property or debt that either party acquired during the marriage can be divided in a divorce. If the parties do not agree to a division, then the judge will order a fair division.

Afterwards

Once the judge orders a final divorce decree, the terms cannot be changed just because a party does not like it or changes their mind. Custody, visitation, and support are the only things in the decree that can be modified at a later date.

The divorce decree lists the rights and responsibilities of each party. If one party does not follow the decree, then the other may file a motion for contempt of court asking the court to enforce the decree.

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All these words are freaking me out. Where do I start?
What do I do?



Divorce Fact Sheet

Introduction

A divorce starts when one spouse (husband or wife), the plaintiff, files a complaint for divorce in circuit court. The defendant is the person the plaintiff wants to divorce.

To be divorced in Arkansas, one of the parties must live in Arkansas at least 60 days before the plaintiff files for divorce. Any children of the parties must live in Arkansas for six months before the court can decide custody and visitation.

Grounds

Arkansas is a fault divorce state, so the plaintiff must prove there are reasons (grounds) for divorce. The most common grounds for divorce are general indignities and separation for 18 months.

Service

The plaintiff must tell the defendant about the divorce by serving them with the Complaint for Divorce and a summons.

The plaintiff may serve the defendant using a process server or deputy sheriff or by sending the paperwork by certified mail.

It is possible to serve the defendant by publication, but only if the plaintiff has done everything they can to find the defendant. This type of service is called "service by warning order."

If the defendant is in jail or prison or active military duty, then special rules apply to service and how long the defendant must answer the lawsuit.

Once the defendant is served they generally have 30 days to file a written answer with the court. If the defendant does not file a written answer, then the court may grant the divorce without further notice to the defendant.

Settling Issues

In most cases, the plaintiff must wait at least 30 days from the date the complaint was filed to finalize the divorce. If the plaintiff and defendant agree on all the issues of the marriage, then the case may be finalized without a contested hearing.

Some of the Issues the Judge May Decide

Custody and Visitation

The law assumes that the parents should have joint custody of minor children but can be decided differently, for example if there is abuse or one parent is a registered sex offender. If the parents cannot agree on a custody arrangement, then the judge decides what is in the children's best interest. If the judge decides that joint custody will not work, then the judge decides who will have custody and who will have visitation. The judge will also decide if there are any restrictions on visitation.

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What on earth are general indignities?



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I don't get what I have to do. Who's the sheriff? What's a process server and how do I find one?



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Divorce Without a Minor Child Instructions

Filling in the Forms

COMPLAINT FOR DIVORCE

1. the county where you live
2. your legal name
3. the case number that will be assigned by the circuit clerk's office
4. your spouse's legal name
5. your legal name
6. your spouse's legal name
7. the county where you live
8. your former legal name
9. the county where your spouse lives
10. the city where you and your spouse were married
11. choose those that apply to your spouse:
 - a. has treated you with such indignities as to render your condition intolerable
 - b. has committed adultery in the last five years
 - c. has been convicted of a felony during the last five years
 - d. you have lived separate and apart from each other for 18 continuous months
 - e. has endangered your life with cruel and barbarous treatment

Sign and print your legal name, then address.

VERIFICATION

12. the county of the notary public signing this verification
13. your legal name

Sign and print your legal name. The notary public will fill out the rest of this sheet.

ENTRY OF APPEARANCE, WAIVER OF SERVICE OF SUMMONS, AND WAIVER OF NOTICE

14. the county where you live
15. your legal name
16. the case number that will be assigned by the circuit clerk's office
17. your spouse's legal name
18. the county where you live

Sign and print your legal name.

VERIFICATION

19. the county of the notary public signing this verification
20. your legal name

Sign and print your legal name. The notary public will fill out the rest of this sheet.

AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE BY MAIL

21. the county where you live
22. your legal name
23. the case number that will be assigned by the circuit clerk's office
24. your spouse's legal name
25. your spouse's legal name

Sign and print your legal name.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Sign and print your legal name. The notary public will fill out the rest of this sheet.

DECREE OF DIVORCE

26. the county where you live
27. your legal name
28. the case number that will be assigned by the circuit clerk's office
29. your spouse's legal name
30. your legal name
31. your spouse's legal name
32. your witness's legal name
33. your legal name
34. those that apply to your spouse:
 - a. has treated you with such indignities as to render your condition intolerable
 - b. has committed adultery in the last five years
 - c. has been convicted of a felony during the last five years
 - d. and you have lived separate and apart from each other for 18 continuous months
 - e. has endangered your life with cruel and barbarous treatment
35. your spouse's legal name
36. your former legal name
37. your legal name
38. your spouse's legal name

The judge will fill out the rest of this sheet.

Where are these forms?
 What's a complaint?
 What's a verification?
 What are they talking
 about?



CENTER FOR ARKANSAS
 LEGAL SERVICES



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The judge will fill out the rest of this sheet.

The Process

Proofreading

Read over these forms and make sure the information you have given is correct and complete. You must write in dates and the Case number in many of these forms. The Court Clerk will provide the Case Number for you. You must file your Complaint for Divorce at the county courthouse in the county where you live. Write in the appropriate date on the day that you file your forms.

Notarizing

Take the Divorce Complaint form to a notary public before you sign it. The notary will charge you for notarizing the complaint. The amount varies, but is usually under \$10. Look in the phone book to locate a notary.

Sign both the Complaint and the Verification Page in front of the notary who will then notarize the Verification Page and give it back to you. A notary cannot notarize a complaint that she did not see you sign. Do not forget to fill in your address and phone number underneath your signature on the Complaint.

Filing

Make three copies of your Complaint and take the copies and the original to the correct County Circuit Clerk. The filing fee for the Complaint is \$165 (in most counties as of August 2014) and must be paid at the time that you file.

If you cannot afford to pay the filing fee, then you can file an In Forma Pauperis (IFP) Petition. The petition, supporting affidavit, and order are at the same website you found this document (arlegalservices.org). You must get the IFP Order signed by a judge before you can file the divorce without paying the filing fees. If the IFP Petition is granted, the judge will enter an Order waiving your filing fee.

Ask the clerk to issue a standard Restraining Order when the divorce complaint is filed. A restraining order prevents each party from harassing the other or the children of the parties. Also, it prevents either party from selling or disposing of marital property while the case is pending.

Service

A summons is an order issued by the court to the defendant to answer the complaint within a certain amount of time. After you file a complaint with the court clerk, she will assign a case number to your case and issue a summons. A summons should be issued automatically, but in some counties you must request the summons form. Have an address available where your spouse can be served. You will then have to serve the complaint and summons on the defendant. This can be done in several ways.

Waiver of Service by the Defendant

After you have filed the complaint and it has been file stamped by the court clerk you must provide a copy of it to your spouse. Your spouse may then agree to waive the service of the

Summons and Complaint. If your spouse does agree to waive service then he or she must sign the Entry of Appearance and Waiver of Service of Summons Form that is provided in this packet. This form must also be notarized meaning that your spouse must sign the form in front of notary public.

Once this is done, you may file the Entry of Appearance and Waiver of Service of Summons, but you should file the Complaint first. If the defendant will not voluntarily sign an Entry of Appearance and Waiver of Service of Summons, you will have to use another method to serve the Summons and Complaint on your spouse. If you use the Entry of Appearance and Waiver of Service of Summons Form then you will not use the Affidavit of Service by Mail Form.

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Setting the Hearing

Ask the clerk to issue a Notice of Hearing after:

- filing the Complaint for Divorce—waiting 30 days from the date the Complaint for Divorce was filed if your spouse signed an Entry of Appearance
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Next, ask the clerk which judge the case is assigned to. Then, take the Notice of Hearing to your assigned judge's office. Once in the judge's office, you will need to speak to your judge's case coordinator. Ask the case coordinator to set a date and time for your divorce case to be heard by the judge. Ask the clerk if there is a regular scheduled day for pro se divorces (pro se means that you will not have an attorney represent you). The case coordinator will fill in the date and time of the hearing on the Notice of Hearing.

Take the "Notice of Hearing" back to the Circuit Court Clerk's Office and have it filed-marked. You will then need to send, by regular mail, a copy to the defendant.

Preparing for and Attending the Hearing

Preparing for the Hearing

You will need to find someone who can testify as your witness in court. This person should be 18 years old or older. This person may be a family member, but should not be a boyfriend or girlfriend. Your witness should have first-hand knowledge of your grounds for divorce and how long you have lived in Arkansas. The witness cannot testify as to what you told her, the witness must personally know about your grounds for divorce. See the "Presenting Testimony" section.

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I don't know what to expect at the hearing. It sounds awful. At least there is a check list. But I still don't know what they are talking about.



Attending the Hearing

When you go to your hearing, you will generally wait in the courtroom until the bailiff calls your case. When your case is called, proceed to the front of the courtroom. Ask the bailiff where you and your witness should sit. The judge or bailiff will direct you to proceed with your case. You and your witness will be sworn in along with the defendant and any witness your spouse brings.

Presenting Testimony

You will get to go first. You and your witness will have to testify according to the court testimony outline in this packet. If you have presented enough evidence to support your grounds and proof of residence, the judge will rule in your favor and grant your divorce. You will need to give the judge a copy of the Divorce Decree from this packet.

Entering the Decree

Once the judge signs the Divorce Decree, you will need to take it and the other two copies to the circuit clerk's office and file them. You will then be divorced. You must send your former spouse a copy of the signed Decree of Divorce

Checklist

- Did you prepare an Entry of Appearance and Waiver of Service of Summons (if your spouse agreed)?
- Did you have your spouse sign the Entry of Appearance and Waiver of Summons in front of a notary public? If not, did you have the Complaint, Summons, and Restraining Order served on the defendant using the Service by Mail method?
- Did you prepare the Complaint for Divorce according to the instructions? Did you sign the Complaint in front of a Notary Public?
- If you are not submitting a Petition for Leave to Proceed In Forma Pauperis, do you have the \$165 filing fee?
- Did you make three extra copies of the Complaint for Divorce to take to the court clerk?
- Did the court clerk file stamp all the copies of your Complaint for Divorce?
- If your spouse signed the Entry of Appearance and Waiver of Summons, did you file it after the Complaint for Divorce?
- If the waiver was not used, did you file the proof of service with the court clerk used after the defendant was served? Did you attach the return receipt?

- Did you call or visit the judge's case coordinator and request a hearing date after you filed proof of service with the court clerk?
- Do you have a witness who has agreed to go to court with you and corroborate (confirm) your grounds for divorce and residency?
- Did you make copies of the Decree of Divorce for the judge to sign?
- Did you review Your Court Testimony for the hearing contained in the Instruction Section for Filing a Pro Se Divorce?
- Did you review with your witness their testimony contained in the Instruction Section for Filing a Pro Se Divorce?

This fact sheet is a collaboration of the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc. These nonprofit organizations provide free legal assistance to eligible Arkansans who meet income, asset, and other guidelines. Legal assistance may also include advice and counsel, brief services, or full representation depending on the situation. For more information about civil legal aid in Arkansas, please visit arlegalservices.org. For information specific to Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc., visit arlegalaid.org. Apply for services online or by calling 1-800-9-LAW-AID (1-800-952-9243).

The information and statements of law in this fact sheet should not be considered legal advice. This fact sheet is provided as a broad guide to help you understand how certain legal matters are handled in general. Courts may interpret the law differently. Before you take action, talk to an attorney and follow his or her advice. Always do what the court tells you to do.

**Content provided by:
Center for Arkansas Legal Services**

Updated June 2017

Divorce is hard. The legal process shouldn't be. This tool will help you complete two forms you need to file for an uncontested divorce with no minor children in your local Colorado county court. All you need to do after your forms are done is file them in the right place. We will also provide you with a step-by-step preview of what to expect as your divorce goes forward.

Forms to be Filed ^

We will be asking you a series of questions and your answers will automatically fill out two forms:  JDF 1000 and  JDF 1101. These forms will get your uncontested divorce started.

All you need to do after your forms are done is file them in the right place. We will tell you how to do this and give you a step-by-step preview of what to expect as your divorce goes forward.

Information Needed for the Forms ^

Here is a list of the information that you may want to gather to fill out your forms:

i The more information you provide, the better off you are. But any information that you don't know can be filled out later.

First, are you and your spouse filing together or separate? You may need to discuss this with your spouse.

Second, you will need to provide some basic information about you and your spouse:

- Full name (first and last)
- Date of Birth
- Social security number
- Address
- Best way to contact you (cell, email, or landline)
- Any military service by you or your spouse.
- How many years/months you each have lived in Colorado

Third, you will need to provide some information about your marriage and separation:

- Date and location of where you got married
- Date of separation
- Whether you/your spouse has an attorney

Finally, you will be asked:

- Whether you want to keep your married name, or change your name.
- Whether there have been any court orders related to domestic violence or domestic abuse.
- Whether you filed any protection or restraining orders against your spouse.

Let's Get Started!

We should first make sure you can get an [uncontested divorce](#) in Colorado.

Have you OR your spouse lived in Colorado for at least 3 months? [Why is this important?](#)

Yes No

Do you and your spouse share any children who are below the age of 18? [Why is this important?](#)

Yes No

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Filing Status



You and your spouse need to decide whether to file separately or together.

We are here to guide you through this process. Whatever decision you make will not impact your filing.

[Together](#) [Separate](#)

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Part 6 of 7:

We just need to ask you a few more questions.

Would you like to change your name? [Is this important?](#)

Yes No

Has the court issued any [protection / restraining orders](#) within the last two years?

Yes No

You're almost done. One more set of questions to complete your forms.

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Please provide information about yourself:

How long have you lived in Colorado?

When did you move to Colorado?

Are you in the military?

 Yes No

Do you have an attorney?

 Yes No

Please provide information about your spouse:

How long has your spouse lived in Colorado?

When did your spouse move to Colorado?

Is your spouse in the military?

 Yes No

Does your spouse have an attorney?

 Yes No

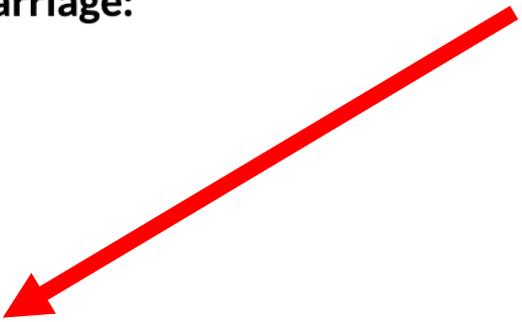
Please provide information about your marriage:

Location of marriage:

Date of marriage:

Date of separation:

Great job! You have entered all the information needed to complete your forms.

On the next screen, you can download your forms, along with detailed instructions on how to file them with the court.

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Divorce Pro

Colorado Legal Services

Getting Ready to File:

- Review forms above carefully and make any changes directly to the forms.
 - We suggest you print three copies of the forms if you are filing in person.
 - One for the court
 - One for yourself
 - One for your spouse
- Sign and date these forms.
- If filing together, have your spouse sign JDF 1101.
- File your forms at the courthouse.
- If filing separate, serve (deliver) the filing documents to your spouse.

Steps to File:

- Call your courthouse. Ask if you need to file in person or online. Keep this contact information because you might need it again.
- You will need to pay a filing fee, or fill out the [fee waiver](#) if you cannot afford the filing fee.
 - If you are having trouble, call your courthouse (using the contact information above) and ask for help.
- Finally, review your forms and make sure you sign and date them at the bottom of the page.



We have some final tips for you when you go to court:

When to get there:

- Courts and neighborhoods can be busy.
- We suggest getting there 30 minutes early. There are several things that can happen
 - Parking can be hard to find.
 - You may need help finding the room (ask someone there if you need help).
 - The court might be ahead of schedule or it could be behind schedule.
 - Be prepared to wait longer than expected since the court might be running behind.

How to dress:

- Try to dress in business casual. This means:
 - Men:
 - A button up shirt.
 - Sleeves rolled down on the button up.
 - The shirt tucked into your pants.
 - Nice pants or slacks.
 - Nice shoes.
 - A belt.
 - A tie (optional)

- Women:
 - A dress or a nice blouse (a button up works as well).
 - Nice pants, slacks, or a skirt.
 - Nice shoes (heels or flats).
 - A belt (if wearing pants or slacks).

What to take:

- Take any forms you have with you.
 - This is why we suggest you have three copies of your forms.

Final tips:

- Divorce can be stressful, but judges want to help make this process as painless as possible.
- Courts will sometimes issue other orders related to your divorce during this process. We highly recommend that you keep in contact with your litigant coordinator and check in with them at least once a month.

We want to thank you for using Divorce Pro!

We hope you have found this helpful and useful.



After you file:

Once you have filed with the Unset County court, the court will give you a Case Management Order (CMO).

- i A Case Management Order (CMO) is an order given to you by the court that tells you what steps you and your spouse must follow for your case to continue.
- The CMO might set a date for the Initial Status Conference (ISC). This will happen within 42 days after filing.
 - i An Initial Status Conference (ISC) is the next step needed to get an uncontested divorce. This is an informal meeting with the judge and you don't need a lawyer. At your ISC, the family court facilitator or the judge will tell you about the next steps of your case.
- Your CMO will explain if you need to fill out some of the following additional forms **before** the ISC. Click [here](#) to access these forms.
 - Financial Statements
 - JDF 1111 - Sworn Financial Statement
 - JDF 1111SS - Supporting Schedules for Assets

Thank you!

Questions/Comments/Affirmations?