Santa Cruz Superior Court
Self Help Center/Family Law Facilitator

The Self Help Center Assists with the Following:

➢ Family Law, Restraining Orders, Guardianship (of the person), Limited Conservatorship, Landlord/Tenant, Name Change/Gender Change, and Emancipations.
➢ See *Special Programs* below for assistance with Small Claims, Civil, and Probate Conservatorships.
➢ Community and legal referrals, public computers and self help legal resource library.
➢ Please read the ***Come Prepared*** section of this handout to know what to expect when you visit.

Watsonville Location: 1 Second Street, Room 301, Watsonville, CA 95076

- Monday – Thursday 8:30-11:30 and 1:00 - 3:00. It is best to sign in at 8:30am and 1pm. There is no sign-in after the Self Help Center reaches maximum capacity for the day.
- **Closed on Friday and the third Tuesday afternoon of the month.**

Santa Cruz Location Workshops: Hosted in the Law Library at 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz

We offer informational workshops for Small Claims, Civil Answer, Divorce and Probate Conservatorships. Please see our website at www.santacruzcourt.org/self-help for the monthly schedule.

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Special Programs:

Small Claims Program:

- Small Claims Advisor Phone Line: **831-786-7370**. Phone Consultations Tuesday, 1:30-4:00pm. Messages can be left at anytime. Calls are returned once a week.
- In Person: Tuesday and Thursday 8:30-11:30, Watsonville Courthouse, Self Help Center, after phone consultation.
- Evening Workshops once every other month at the Santa Cruz Courthouse, Law Library. See court website for schedule, http://www.santacruzcourt.org/self-help.

Civil Program:

- Walk in assistance Tuesday and Thursday 8:30-11:30, Watsonville Courthouse, Self Help Center. Breach of contract (collection) cases only.
- Afternoon workshops once a month at the Santa Cruz Courthouse, Law Library. See court website for schedule, http://www.santacruzcourt.org/self-help.

Probate Conservatorship (workshop only, no walk-in service):

- Afternoon workshop once a month at the Santa Cruz Courthouse, Law Library. See our website for dates at http://www.santacruzcourt.org/self-help.

Phone Line/E-mail/Websites:

➢ You may call the SHC at **831-786-7200, option 4**. Calls are returned within 72 hours.
➢ You may e-mail the SHC at selfhelp.information@santacruzcourt.org. E-mails are returned once a week.
➢ Forms and other self help information can be found at the state self help website: www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp or www.courts.ca.gov/forms.htm
➢ Santa Cruz Superior Court website: http://www.santacruzcourt.org

What is the Self Help Center?

The Self Help Center, which includes the services of the Family Law Facilitator, helps people who need legal information but do not have lawyers. The Center can give you information, court forms, and help you understand your legal options. We cannot represent you and in most cases you will be required to fill out your own court forms with our guidance. We only help with very simple legal situations, often we may need to refer you to a private attorney or to the law library for you to do your own legal research. We help many people each day therefore we usually spend less than 15 minutes with each person and there can be a long wait. We are not responsible for the outcome of your case. Conversations with the Self Help Center are not confidential, we do assist parties on both sides of the case, and we can not assist you if you are currently represented by an attorney.

Come Prepared

When you arrive: When you arrive please sign in and you will be called in the order your intake form is turned in. Depending on how many people need assistance, the sign in sheet may fill up before the end of the stated hours of operation. We apologize for this, but we do not know how many people will need help on any given day. Many people arrive and line up outside the SHC at either 8 am for the morning session or 12:30 pm for the afternoon session.

Be prepared to wait: The wait may be several hours after you check in. You may also need to return for multiple visits depending on your legal issue.

Cost for Services: There is no cost for the services of the Self Help Center but you may have to pay for copies and court filing fees at the clerk's office.

How do I hire an attorney? The Self Help Center cannot represent you or give the name of any specific attorneys. We can give you community resources to assist you in finding your own attorney. You may call the Lawyer Referral Service for a low cost attorney consultation at 831-425-4755.

What should I bring to Self Help Center? Try to bring a copy of your entire court file (including all of your court case numbers) and any documents that support your legal issue (such as pay stubs if you are modifying child support). Also bring a pen, stamps (you may need as many as 8), blank envelopes, and something to keep you busy while you wait. Please keep all cell phones turned off or on silent.

What if I don't speak English well? We cannot guarantee an interpreter. You may need to bring your own interpreter and someone to help you fill out your court forms in English.

Come in person: Your case is most important to you and you have the most knowledge about your case. We can not assist you if you send a family member or friend in your place.

Children: Children are not allowed at the Self Help Center. Your children are very valuable. The waiting time can be hard on them and you can be distracted by their needs. It is not in your children's best interest to be present when you are talking about your legal problems.

What if I just want a legal form? You can download any state court form at www.courts.ca.gov/forms.htm and local Santa Cruz Superior Court forms at www.santacruzcourt.org.

Program Changes/Office Closure: Due to our small staff there can be unexpected office closures. There are many days when the office is only staffed by one attorney. We are also closed in the afternoon the third Tuesday of each month. Please check our web site at www.santacruzcourt.org/self-help for our monthly calendar. We apologize for any inconvenience.