

# Showcase of Pro Se Assistance Programs Program Profile

HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN  
SELF-HELP CENTER  
Susan Ledray, Room 205

**State:** Minnesota

## **Name of Program & Brief Description:**

Self Help Centers, 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Hennepin County and Statewide

Staff and volunteers assist with any issue that could be addressed in District Court, except domestic violence which is handled at a separate center. Staff provide forms, instructions, videos, tutorials, website resources, foreign-language assistance, help writing forms if needed, and referrals to on and off-site legal advice/representation. Completed forms are screened by court staff for completeness, and screening is required for family court motions before they can be filed. Litigants are helped with emergency requests and with pleadings for which no specific form exists, if doing so is within the scope of the Court Rule for Self Help Centers. Information is provided to help litigants understand the entire court process, excluding appealing to a higher court.

As part of the State Court Strategic Planning process for 2007-2009, the courts have created a plan for statewide access to self-help services via a Self Help website and call-center. Law Libraries are active partners in this planning. The state court will likely seek funding from the legislature to set up the call-center, and the website has been launched although portions are under construction. See [www.mncourts.gov](http://www.mncourts.gov) Self Help Center. Information about Self Help programs in other counties in Minnesota are also available at this website.

**Date Program Was Established:** 1997

**Program Sponsor(s):** 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, State Court Administration

## **Partnerships:**

For Brief Legal Advice Clinics, we partner with the Hennepin County Bar Association, Volunteer Lawyers Network, a non-profit corp., Central Minnesota Legal Services, Legal Aid of Minneapolis. These organizations provide lawyers for court programs to offer brief legal advice to pro se parties at the courthouse.

We partner with Minnesota Justice Foundation to place law students in volunteer or internship positions at the Self Help Centers. We partner with paralegal schools to provide internships for paralegal students, and with law firms to have paralegals volunteer at the Self Help Center.

**Target Group(s)/No. Clients Served per Year:** Any self-represented or unrepresented litigant with a case in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, or residing in the district, needing referrals or help with a legal matter that can be addressed in our court.

**Cost/Funding Source(s):** \$900,000 /District Court budget. Partner organizations also budget to support Self Help Center programs (to pay staff to recruit, train, and mentor volunteers at SHC clinics and to keep statistics).

**Staffing:** 10 full-time employees; 2 part-time employees (job share position); 1 full-time contract position. Includes 1 Sr. Manager (Pro Se Services Manager); 2 Staff attorneys/supervisors; 4 staff attorneys; 1 volunteer coordinator; 4 Sr. Court Clerks.

## **Contact Person and Contact Information:**

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