



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
OF THE COURTS  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA  
94102-3688  
Tel 415-865-4200  
TDD 415-865-4272  
Fax 415-865-4205  
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov)

## FACT SHEET

---

September 2007

# 2006–2007 Ralph N. Kleps Award Recipient: Regional Court and Library Partnership, Superior Courts of Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey Counties

In this partnership, the superior courts and public libraries in the four counties collaborate to help librarians better serve the public by training the librarians in the use of courts' Web sites and other online legal resources and by educating them about the availability of courts' self-help programs and family law facilitators.

### Why This Program Is Innovative

In some courts, the Self-Service Centers share space or coordinate with local law libraries, but none have partnered with the public libraries on a regional basis. This project's novel collaboration brings each court's self-service efforts to the community.

### Problems the Program Was Designed to Address

The courts in the four counties have had an ongoing working group that has explored ways to improve access to self-help services for the last two years. The courts recognized that the need is greater than existing self-help centers and staff can serve. In Santa Clara County alone, approximately 10,000 individuals were turned away in one year because the Self-Service Center and the Family Law Facilitator's Office did not have enough time or staff to help them. Access is further limited since court-sponsored centers are located at courthouses that are not necessarily convenient or accessible and have limited hours of operation.

### Program Goals and Desired Outcomes

- Increase public trust and confidence in, and understanding of, the court.
- Develop an ongoing partnership with the public libraries.
- Disseminate information about court self-help services to a wider population.
- Increase community outreach.
- Inform librarians about legal self-help services available on the Internet and in the community.
- Increase each librarian's understanding of the court system.

#### Actual Program Outcomes and Benefits

- Court-developed self-help resources and services have been distributed in the community, expanding the public's access to services and its understanding of the courts.
- Librarians report that they use the Web sites and handouts on a regular basis and are doing a better job in helping the public find information about legal issues.
- Participating courts have made connections with librarians in their counties.
- Librarians have planned workshops with their local courts for librarians and the public.
- In spring 2006, the court's self-help center managers conducted six training sessions, in which 88 librarians from all four counties were trained.
- The Peninsula Library System (PLS) and the self-help managers worked together to develop a bookmark listing each court/library system Internet address and essential legal sites in California. Fifteen thousand were distributed to each court and 84 library facilities. All the courts and libraries requested additional copies of the bookmark, and a second 15,000 were ordered.

#### How This Program Was Originally Funded

The project was funded by Trial Court Improvement Funds at \$25,000. Of this, \$11,400 went to the PLS for project coordination and travel. The remainder of the funds was spent on the design and printing of 15,000 bookmarks, and the design and printing of a folder (My Legal Organizer) for litigants to store court papers and provide contact information for all 4 courts. The courts absorbed their staff and travel costs.

#### Ongoing Budget and Staffing Impacts

The librarians would like to continue partnering with the courts, which may be done without additional financial support, just time commitment.

#### How the Program Is Sustained

- Librarians are very organized, have excellent communication networks, and want to learn more about the courts and legal resources to better assist patrons.
- Once the connection was made, both the courts and librarians maintained the relationship and new programs were generated at no additional cost to either.

#### Recommendations for Courts Wanting to Replicate This Program

- Have collaborating courts form a team to define project scope.
- Have courts meet with the administrators of library systems to establish areas of interest and work together to establish the curriculum.
- Ensure adequate participation by all members of the project team.
- Include estimates of time and money to develop and sustain additional projects resulting from the initial project.
- Ensure adequate facilities are available for training.

#### Contact:

Jean Pennypacker, Director, Family Resources Division, Superior Court of Santa Clara County, 408-882-2718, [jpennypacker@scscourt.org](mailto:jpennypacker@scscourt.org)

#### Additional resources:

Ralph N. Kleps Award information, [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/innovations](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/innovations)

System Reference Web Site: [www.systemref.org/law.htm](http://www.systemref.org/law.htm)

Interactive forms site: [www.ezlegalfile.org](http://www.ezlegalfile.org)

California Courts Online Self-Help Center: [www.legalselfhelp.ca.gov](http://www.legalselfhelp.ca.gov)

State legal referral Web site: [www.lawhelpcalifornia.org](http://www.lawhelpcalifornia.org)