

Can I get help to represent myself?

Yes. The San Francisco Superior Court has a self-help center, called the ACCESS Center. The center cannot be your lawyer, but has information, law books and self-help books that will help you represent yourself.

Do I need an appointment?

The ACCESS Center helps people on a drop-in basis.



How can the ACCESS Center help me?

The ACCESS Center has:

- Law books
- Self-help books
- Self-help packets with sample forms
- Brochures
- Practice guides
- Lists of referrals and resources

Where is the ACCESS Center?

The ACCESS Center is at:
San Francisco Superior Court
400 McAllister Street, Room 208
San Francisco, CA 94102
(corner of Polk & McAllister)

By BART:

Take the Civic Center exit.

Muni:

Lines 5, 42, 47, 49, F, J, K, L, & M

When is the Center open?

ACCESS hours are:

Monday 1:30 - 4:00

Tuesday 8:30 - 12:00

Wednesday 8:30 - 12:00

1:30 - 4:00

Thursday 8:30 - 12:00

Friday 8:30 - 12:00

For 24-hour recorded information, call:
415-551-5880

How Do I Represent Myself?



ACCESS

San Francisco Superior Court
400 McAllister Street
Room 208
San Francisco, CA
94102-4514

415.551.5880

www.ci.sf.ca.us/courts

Do I need a lawyer?

It is a good idea to have a lawyer to represent you. But, it is not always necessary or possible. This guide will help you decide if you need a lawyer, or not.

You may need a lawyer if...

- You have a complicated case or a case that may become complicated.
- You want legal advice.
- You want to discuss strategies for your case.
- You want a confidential attorney-client relationship.

How do I hire a lawyer?

To hire a lawyer, you can call the San Francisco Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service:

415-989-1616

If you are low income, you may qualify for free or low-cost legal help. Call the San Francisco Bar Association's Volunteer Legal Services Program to see if you qualify:

415-989-1616

You may not need a lawyer if...

- You understand all your options and can make informed choices about your case.
- You are willing to learn and understand the law and the rules and procedures that apply to your case.
- You can spend time to prepare your case.
- You can follow written instructions and work on your own.

How do I represent myself?

1. Read about the law that applies to your case. Do research at the Law Library and ask for help at the ACCESS Center.
2. Look at the options that would solve your problem without having to go to court. For example, you can try Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Mediation, or Arbitration. For more information on how to solve cases out of court, go to the ACCESS Center.
3. Make sure you follow the court procedures. To do this, you must read the laws that affect your case in:
 - California Code of Civil Procedure
 - California Rules of Court
 - San Francisco County Local RulesThe ACCESS Center can show you how to do this.

4. Keep track of all deadlines — especially deadlines for filing papers and serving the other party. If you miss these deadlines, you may lose your case.
5. Go to the courtroom where your hearing will be and watch some cases. You can learn:
 - Where the parties sit
 - How to explain your case to the judge
 - How much time each side has to talk
6. Be prepared for your court hearing. Have copies of:
 - All the papers you filed
 - All the papers the other party served you
 - Anything you have not served the other side but want to use in courtIf you have exhibits (like photos or letters you want to show the court), you must mark each one with a label. (Exhibit 1, etc.)
7. Act professionally in court. Explain your side briefly and clearly. Do not talk about issues that do not support your case.
8. Show respect for the judge, the court clerks, and other people in the courtroom. Do not interrupt the judge or the other side. Do not make personal attacks against the other side.