

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SISKIYOU  
ACTION PLAN TO ASSIST SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS**

County Siskiyou

Team Leader Commissioner Laura Masunaga

1. **What target group(s) will be served?** Siskiyou County self represented litigants in Family Law cases, as well as increased support in other civil cases.
  
2. **What kinds of services will be offered?** Expanded hours for Facilitator’s clinics; front-end services including informational/educational brochures in English and Spanish, videos, and referral to other organizations offering support to self represented litigants; computer access for filing out and printing forms and for legal research; Community education programs, CLE training for the local legal system, to provide information and training for attorneys interested in implementing “unbundled legal services” as an aspect of private practice or business; child care for those dealing with Family Law issues; AOD directory of services; access to self-help videos broadcast by local cable television; and offering recycled court file folders to self represented litigants.
  
3. **What are the major languages that are spoken in your community? What resources do you have for translation, interpretation?** English, Spanish and various Asian languages. The Court will use a portion of the FY 01-02 grant funding to translate 3 brochures into Spanish that are regularly used in Family Law and Family Court Services. Currently, there are no resources to support interpreter services for Family Law cases.
  
4. **Where will you provide services?**
  - a) **At the courthouse;** Primarily in Family Law, Family Court Services and in the Civil division.
  - b) **In the community – at what locations?** Local public television for videos, several locations throughout the community receive the Facilitator’s clinic schedule, including branch libraries in communities, and other organizations that collaborate with court programs, i.e. Siskiyou Child Care Council.
  
5. **What resources are available at the state level that you can use/adapt?** The Court has identified that video resources exist within other trial courts, and has initiated an attempt to identify and receive copies of videos, both in English and Spanish, that may be shown in Siskiyou County.
  
6. **What programs are in place that can be built on?** Facilitator’s clinics, and collaboration with County Law Library.
  
- 7.
  
8. **What materials do you have that could be adapted for statewide use?** None at this time.
  
9. **A. Which key decision makers do you need to approve your proposed program(s)?** Presiding Judge, all judicial officers, CEO.

**B. How will you convince them?** Judges meetings are monthly and offer a place to receive judicial officer support and approval. Family Law Branch court holds monthly roundtable meetings that might involve judicial officers as well as court services, facilitator, court staff, District Attorneys Office, Family Support, Private Bar, and Legal Secretaries. Support to self represented litigants is a positive endeavor for the Court, particularly if it results in reduced time delays and continuances and a better understanding of court processes for all parties involved. The Judicial Officers encourage the Court to provide information to self represented litigants to facilitate their access to and use of the court system.

**10. Assuming you will expand your county team to further plan and implement your program(s), who else will be included in the implementation team? Please list names and titles of potential implementation team members below.**

- A. Judges – none planned
- B. Court Administrators – none planned
- C. Private Bar representatives – they are invited to specific programs like CLE.
- D. Law Librarians – potentially Gina DeRose
- E. Small Claims Advisors – none in Siskiyou County.
- F. Family Law Facilitators – already done
- G. Coordinators of Legal Services Programs Operating Partnership Programs – unknown
- H. Other Self-Help programs – none known locally.
- I. Law School Clinics – none in Siskiyou County.
- J. Domestic Violence Advocates – already helping.
- K. Legal Services Representatives – none in Siskiyou County.
- L. Community Representatives – none planned.
- M. Family Court Services – already included.
- N. Academics with Interest in this Issue – none known.
- O. Public Librarians – none planned.
- P. Youth Members – none planned.
- Q. Legislative Representatives
  - Board of Supervisors – none planned.
  - State & Federal Representatives – none planned.
- R. Schools – none planned.
- S. Persons involved with the Community based strategic planning team – none planned.

**11. Resource Issues**

- A. Is there a way to re-engineer existing court programs to limit the need for new funds? Utilize resources developed in other trial courts. Note below some ideas for doing this.
- B. What will it cost to establish your program(s)? These programs are on-going and become developed within a process of identification and implementation. How will it be funded? Funds are sought as projects are identified and implemented if existing staff is able to address needs. Funding has been identified from the AOC as well as through the local Child Abuse Prevention Council. It has been identified that other local community partners are needed, though it will still require existing staff to develop, maintain and track relationships and community partnerships. Due to insufficient staff needed to

continuously build bigger and more comprehensive projects, planning and implementation becomes dependant upon available Court staff and fiscal resources. If the AOC were to commit to on going funding of a coordinator for the self represented litigant program, then progress would be both better supported and sustainable. Existing Court staff have severe limitations of working within already tight and busy schedules.

- C. How will you promote the program to funding sources?
- i. At the state level? By incorporating the need to support self represented litigants in the Court's over all strategic and action plan.
  - ii. At the local level? Continue building a local support system by developing community partnerships and asking for volunteers to assist those court customers with needs.
  - iii. Others? (E.g., grant-making groups, private/public foundations community funders such as ) The grant writers in Siskiyou are attempting to become better organized and coordinated. Collaborations with other grant writers to support the public could help the Court to meet funding needs.
- D. What will be the required level of staffing, and what skills and training will staff require? At this time, with State budgets falling not rising, the Court is not expecting to add staff. Therefore, the team will attempt to identify and incorporate community partners to assist self represented litigants. However,, this process is expected to be very slow because of the full time schedules of those whoa re attempting to implement additional service for self represented litigants.
- E. What kinds of technology will you utilize (e.g., personal computers, Internet, interactive voice-telephone response systems, informational videos that explain court procedures, etc.)? Personal computer, video, written brochures, Internet access, links to other Internet resources, public cable television, and a newly developing Court Internet site.
- F. What amount of space will be needed? Will the program be housed in the courthouse or elsewhere? If in the courthouse, how will you ensure it is easily accessible? Space needs are a critical need in Siskiyou. At this time, Family Law and Family Court Services are separated from the main courthouse by almost a mile. There is not space at either facility for a children's waiting room. Also, it is proposed to locate the Facilitator's clinic near the Law Library. Plans are being developed, both at the State and local levels to renovate and partially rebuild the current courthouse and house all but the outlying branches in the same courthouse building. Both plans are likely to take many years before implementation.

12. **With whom can or should you develop partnerships?** Other service providers, local volunteer coordinators, volunteers, regional level coordinators, other trial courts as well as the AOC.
13. **What role will each partner play?** Undetermined.
14. **What regional partnerships might be possible?** Undetermined.
15. **What counties might be appropriate to partner with?** Northern counties, frontier counties, within the regional division, or possibly all.

16. **Who will advocate your program to the following constituencies?**
- A. The courts (judges and court personnel) - The Court team.
  - B. The bar – Judicial officers
  - C. The public – the Court team must organize promotion.
  - D. The legislature and Board of Supervisors – The court team.
  - E. Others (specify)
  - f. Media - the Court team must organize promotion.

### **B. Management Plan and Timeline**

16. **The projected time frame for planning and implementing the program is: \_\_ months, beginning \_\_\_\_\_.** On-going. Program planning needs to be a process of successes and modifications. Planning should be fluid. We don't have all the information needed nor staff time at this moment to complete all plan tasks. Some plan pieces have been completed, some are long-term, and some are now recognized as needing to be added. Planning is a way to keep a topic in focus and moving forward. Ideally, the next step in the process is to incorporate the self represented litigant plan into the larger strategic plan. Having separate planning processes/tracks leads to fragmented communication and an incomplete whole-picture plan.
17. **List below the tasks to be completed to implement the program(s) and the person responsible for completing the task.**  
Please see the attached plan report completed by the Court team.

### **C. Post-Implementation Issues**

18. **What criteria will you use to evaluate the program's effectiveness?**  
Increase of information and services to self represented litigants. Increase of unbundled legal services to self represented litigants. Reduction of frustration and time delays in court. Continued partnership development with local organizations and people to better serve the needs of self represented litigants.
19. **Who will conduct the evaluation?**  
At this time, no formal evaluation process is in place. The Court team will try to determine the success of the project by being in contact with people who know – including judicial officers, court staff and self represented litigants.
20. **Since true institutional change transcends personalities and outlives its initial creators, what steps will you take to ensure that your program will be self-sustaining, and not dependent on a strong sponsor or other individual for its continuance?**  
The Court team continues to try institutionalizing processes, materials and partnerships to develop program sustainability. If the team is successful with integrating project goals and activities into part of how the court does business, then processes, materials and partnerships should not depend upon personalities or creators.  
The Court team is interested in long-term and on-going changes in the way services are provided to self represented litigants.