



**Supreme Court of Missouri  
Committee on Access to Family Courts**

P. O. BOX 104480  
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI  
65110

EMAIL: [cafc@courts.mo.gov](mailto:cafc@courts.mo.gov)  
PHONE: (573) 751-4377  
FAX: (573) 522-5961

June 27, 2014

Chief Justice Mary Russell  
Supreme Court Building  
Box 150  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Chief Justice,

The Committee on Access to Family Courts is pleased to report to the Court on its efforts to address the need of the people of Missouri to access the judicial system for their legal needs whether they be through pro bono, limited scope or self-representation.

We thank the Court for their support for our efforts. We especially thank Judge Paul Wilson, our liaison to the court, for his guidance, commitment to those in need and readiness to help us succeed. We have endeavored to meet the challenge given us by the Court's Order of April 15, 2008.

We also appreciate the contribution made by the OSCA staff, Kelly Cramer and Terri Norris, who have been assigned to provide support services to our committee and to Lynne Alexander for providing the Adobe Connect training.

Access to the judicial system is as vital to a healthy democracy as access to the ballot box. Together we have made measurable progress but the need also continues to grow with the widening wealth gap.

We look forward to continuing our service to the Court and the people of Missouri.

Lou DeFeo, Co-Chair.

Committee Members

Lou DeFeo, Co-Chair  
William Francis, Jr.  
Kelly Martinez  
Patricia Scaglia

Kathleen Bird  
Denise Gabel  
Joseph Maxwell  
Leslie Schneider

Kelly Broniec  
Lori Greene  
Joel Miller  
Deanna Scott

Karen Brown  
Richard Holtmeyer  
Ben Nelson  
Cynthia Suter

Teresa Burke  
Janel Luck  
Brent Powell

Sandy Dowd  
Larry Luna  
Mike Rinard

# Committee on Access to Family Courts Report to the Supreme Court of Missouri

July 1, 2013 –  
June 30, 2014



## **Committee on Access to Family Courts (CAFC)**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14**

The Committee on Access to Family Courts was established April 15, 2008 by the Supreme Court of Missouri. CAFC was preceded by two joint Court/Bar commissions on pro se litigation. The joint commissions addressed the increased volume of and the inherent challenges with pro se litigation in family law matters in Missouri courts.

The Joint Pro Se Commission made nine recommendations to the Court and the Bar. (See Appendix A)

To implement these recommendations CAFC created a comprehensive framework of online educational materials and resources, court staff/judicial training, forms, rules, publications and programs.

CAFC focuses on pro se, pro bono and limited scope representation (LSR) especially for those living at the margins of our society. CAFC is designated by [Rule 88.09](#) and Court order to develop the “litigant awareness program” and the family law pleading forms to be used by pro se litigants. Members of CAFC include judges, clerks, court staff, attorneys and social service leaders.

A review of the activities and projects undertaken in 2013-2014 appears below and outlines the CAFC’s focus on improvements in the following key areas:

- Communication (public, bar, court staff);
- Self-representation website;
- Forms;
- Education/Training; and
- CAFC member tools and operating procedures.

### **Highlights of Activities 2013-2014**

#### *Communication*

- **“Road Shows”:** Conducted on pro bono and limited scope representation for two local bar associations. [[page 3](#)]
- **e-Newsletter:** Developed for informing circuit clerks and others serving needy litigants about the self-representation website, forms, etc. [[page 3](#)]

#### *Self-Representation website*

- **Self-representation Website:** Continued the development of the self-representation website including the litigant awareness program. [[page 4](#)]

#### *Forms*

- **Standardized Forms:** Developed additional self-representation forms and revised existing forms. [[page 6](#)]
- **Savable Format:** Converted self-represented forms to a format that is savable for all users. [[page 6](#)]

#### *Education/Training*

- **Limited Scope Representation:** Authored and promulgated a brochure for attorneys and judges on limited scope representation. [[page 6](#)]
- **Court Clerk Training:** Developed PowerPoint training modules for clerks on serving pro se litigants. [[page 7](#)]
- **Judicial Benchbook:** Assisted development of chapters on pro se ethics and limited scope representation for the forthcoming judges’ benchbook on domestic relations. [[page 7](#)]
- **CLE Programs:** Provided CLE programs for members, Judicial College, New Judge’s Orientation, Solo and Small Firms Conference and local bar associations. [[page 7](#)]

#### *CAFC Member Operating Tools and Procedures*

- **Adobe Connect:** Trained CAFC members on the use of this new software for on-line meetings and document sharing. [[page 9](#)]
- **Operating Procedures:** Implemented more efficient committee operating procedures. [[page 7](#)]

- **Auxiliary Members:** Expanded CAFC resources by inviting persons with experience, interest and talent to volunteer their services as auxiliary members of CAFC subcommittees. [[page 10](#)]
- **On-line Archives:** Expanded on-line archives for committee members to improve access to essential documents and preserve corporate memory [[page 11](#)]
- **“Welcome Kit”:** Developed a new member “welcome kit” to facilitate their active participation in the work of the Committee. [[page 11](#)]

### ***Communications: Reaching Out***

**Local Bar “Roadshows”:** With the key participation of our judicial liaison, Judge Paul Wilson, we have begun a series of local bar “roadshows.” We hope to develop on-going, two-way communication with local bars and provide to them resources and encouragement to establish local pro bono and LSR programs.

Before each roadshow, demographic research is done on the county/circuit. One of our auxiliary members, Danelle Cord, personally interviews local bar leaders by telephone using a prepared questionnaire. We want to know more about how the local bar is organized and operates, how they communicate with members etc. Based on the interviews and research we select the best place to visit. Presently we are focusing on the smaller and mid-sized communities since the need for pro bono services and pro se resources is greater there. Again personal contact is made with the local bar leadership to set up a “roadshow” event. Collaborating with the local bar and CAFC members in the area, all attorneys and judges are invited to the event.

CLE ethics credit is given as an incentive to attend. Judge Wilson’s presentation focuses on the need for legal help for the marginalized and the pro bono, pro se and limited scope representation resources available to meet the need. Printed materials such as the brochure on LSR and the Judge’s Tool Kit on Pro Bono Legal Assistance are distributed. Listening to local concerns and suggestions is a key component. Local leaders are asked to designate a contact person between CAFC and the local bar for continuing communication. E-mail follow up is made to all attorneys both those attending and those unable to attend.

The roadshows plant seeds with the local bar but the seed must also be nurtured and not left to wither. Development of the “how to” on LSR attorney panels is an example of providing nurturing. Also we will be encouraging local judges to actively implement pro bono, limited scope representation and pro se friendly programs in their circuit using the

many ideas and resources in the Judges' Tool Kit on Pro Bono Legal Assistance. Again, the goal is not merely a one-time event but developing an on-going, two-way relationship.

To date roadshows have been held for the Callaway County and the 12th Judicial Circuit bars (Audrain, Montgomery and Warren counties). Planning for the third is underway.

**CAFC Update e-Newsletter:** We have developed many useful resources, but many needy persons who would benefit and persons who work with needy persons are not aware. The light is being hidden under a bushel. Clerks have requested more timely information on new forms and changes. We have developed an e-mail newsletter, "CAFC Update," targeted to persons who daily work with those who need access to justice such as circuit clerks, law school and public librarians, social service agencies, etc. The newsletter invites on-going, two-way communication with these important persons.

### *Self-Representation Website*

**Background on Website:** The self-represent website was launched in 2009 and has benefited from many additions and upgrades since that time. During May 2014, there were 12,086 visits ("hits") to the home page of the website an increase of 870 over May 2013. During May 2014, 4,737 visited the first page of the litigant awareness program but only 1,669 visited the certificate of completion page. There were 10,551 visits to the forms page. (For more visits' history see Appendix B.) In the next year we need to do a deeper study of the visit statistics to better understand what they tell us about the effectiveness of the website.

A survey developed for website users continues to provide data about the effectiveness of the site and the needs of self-represented litigants. Survey comments are monitored to determine common user issues and oversee user problems with the website. Complaints about viewing the video and downloading forms have decreased substantially since the website went online five years ago.

Many pro se litigants do not complete the forms online. Currently we only have anecdotal data on how these litigants prepare the forms. We need to develop more accurate data on these users.

A third group using the website and forms are agencies such as federal Legal Services and Samaritan Center Legal Care and likely some individual attorneys. These agencies help the needy litigants prepare the forms and review them before they are filed in court.

**Comparison to National Criteria:** The presentation on most helpful technology for self-represented litigants given at the 2013 Court Technology Conference sponsored by the National Center for State Courts shows that we are making progress in addressing needs. We are currently providing four of the eight technology recommendations and partially providing on-site public access stations in some circuits.

- Information specifically designed for self-presented litigants (including use of plain language)
- Multiple media offerings
- Videos with practical steps for court behavior
- On-site public access stations (available in some courthouses)
- Form review services
- Interactivity – live chat
- Multi-lingual content (in two languages and expanding to seven)
  
- Integrate e-filing into self-represented litigant service

**The Litigant Awareness Program:** This program for self-represented litigants was created by the CAFC and approved in June 2011. The content was rewritten in plain language at the sixth grade level a few years ago. The purpose was to inform persons considering representing themselves in family law matters of the risks and responsibilities attendant to self-representation. The program gives the option of watching an online video or reading written materials online about the court system, court procedures and etiquette. During May 2014 the video was visited by 1,147 and the reading version was visited by 1,787.

A self-assessment of the skills and habits useful in self-representation is then provided. We will be evaluating whether the self-assessment is a useful tool.

The third part of the program offers general information on the responsibilities for handling several types of family law matters: dissolution, modification of custody and/or child support, paternity establishment, petition for child custody, family access motions, and change of name (adults). Information on annulments and legal separation is not currently covered.

A printable certificate of completion is available at the end of the program.

The temptation of users to jump immediately to accessing approved forms has proven to be a challenge in directing the public to basic information about the court system, procedures, and requirement for handling a family law matter. The committee early on established two goals: 1) deliver foundational information prior to accessing the forms for first time users but 2) make forms easily accessible for returning users. Website design to this point has failed to adequately achieve both goals. Interviews were conducted by website subcommittee members over the past year with front line staff and librarians to determine the manner in which the website resources are used by the public.

Recommendations were made for increased focus on the content and the usefulness of litigant education program as the starting point for self-represented litigants. These ideas will be incorporated in revamping the self-representation website in the coming year.

**Foreign Language Translations:** The litigant awareness program, including the video, is available in English and Spanish. Translation of the text of the entire website into Bosnian, Chinese, French, Russian, Vietnamese and Spanish is nearing completion. The task of weaving the translations into the website is under way by Office of State Court Administrator (OSCA) staff with a target completion by August 1, 2014. Also the translation of forms in to foreign languages will need addressing in the next year.

### *Forms*

**New Forms:** In the past year the forms subcommittee created the Voluntary Dismissal Form (CAFC Form 713), which has been approved by CAFC and will be reviewed by the State Judicial Records Committee in July, and created the Name Change forms for adults (CAFC Form 401) and for minor child (CAFC Form 402), which are now on the website. In the new year we will be reexamining the forms and our presentation of the forms to ensure easy use for both pro se litigants and the courts; evaluating development of additional family law forms including Respondent packets and packets for litigants without children; and creating a petition for change of name for multiple children and evaluating future maintenance of the forms within the available resources at OSCA.

**Savable Forms:** Family law forms are now savable for all. Previously the self-representation family law forms were printable but not savable using Adobe Reader, the most common software. This was a barrier to their use especially by persons using public computers. The forms now can be saved so that users do not have to complete all forms in one sitting but will be able to come back at a later time to continue working on the

forms or revising their information. We caution users not to save personal information on public computers. Instead they should use a portable memory device such as a USB “thumb drive.”

**Impact of Recent Appellate Decision on Pro Se Litigants Involved in IV-D Paternity Cases:** CAFC reviewed the issue presented by the recent appellate court decision (DSK, MO App Western District 76789, Dec. 31, 2013) that states a court cannot proceed in adjudicating custody in a paternity case unless the issue is specifically pled. It is important to educate pro se litigants on their rights with respect to requesting custody in IV-D cases. CAFC decided against developing a new form; rather, CAFC will develop an informational brochure designed to address custody specifically in IV-D cases.

***Education and Training: Educating Judges, Court Staff, Service Agencies and Attorneys  
On Pro Bono, Limited Scope and Self-Representation***

**LSR Brochure:** A brochure has been developed on limited scope representation to introduce attorneys to this new tool to provide pro bono legal services efficiently and paid services at reduced cost to the client. The LSR brochure (available at <http://www.courts.mo.gov/file.jsp?id=67634>) has been distributed at each local bar roadshow, at the Missouri Bar semi-annual committees’ meeting and through ESQ.

**Court Staff Education:** Since adoption of Court Operating Rule 25, the court staff education subcommittee has made presentations at various court clerk conferences. Feedback from those workshops and conversations with individual clerks was shared with the CAFC committee. It was determined that more court staff would have access to the information on serving the self-represented client by developing materials easily accessible through the JEWELS training system. Over the past two years two modules have been developed. The ongoing input of the Court Clerk Education Committee has been obtained throughout this process.

Module I, entitled “*Serving the Self-represented Litigant*,” is a general overview of access to the courts, Court Operating Rule 25 and resources available through the [www.selfrepresent.mo.gov](http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov) website. Module I has been completed and approved by the CAFC.

Module II will provide more specific explanation of permissible and appropriate customer service for court clerks interacting with the public on family law matters. An interactive PowerPoint program is under development that presents common pro se assistance “scenarios,” possible responses, and discussion of poor, good and better ways to provide customer service within the parameters of Court Operating Rule 25. Additional consultation with the Court Clerk Education Committee is scheduled before this module will be completed.

**Judicial Benchbook on Domestic Law:** Judge Brent Powell has authored with participation of the LSR subcommittee chapters on pro se ethics and on limited scope representation for the soon-to-be released benchbook on domestic law. OSCA is hopeful that the benchbook will be finalized and made available to Missouri judges in the upcoming year.

**CLE Programs:** We have taken advantage of the Court’s order (<http://www.courts.mo.gov/file.jsp?id=61713>) effective July 1, 2013 making Supreme Court committees certified CLE sponsors. We have been able to appreciate CAFC members by giving them CLE credit for authoring publications and participating in Adobe Connect training. Also by providing CLE credit for attending local bar “roadshows” we have another incentive encouraging attendance.

**Judicial Trial College & New Judge Orientation :** With members of the LSR subcommittee participating on the Trial Judges Education Committee meeting, the 2013 Judicial Trial College included a 1 hour session on *Pro Se* and *Ex Parte* contacts, which dealt with the ethical issues involved in communications with the self-represented litigants. Also, as in the past several years, the Trial Judges Education Committee included a session on self-represented litigants and Limited Scope Representation at the 2014 New Judge Orientation program. In addition, the Trial Judges Education Committee has scheduled a session on self-represented litigants and limited scope representation for the 2015 New Judge Orientation program.

**Other Presentations:** Judge Therese Burke spoke at the Court Clerk's College on issues involving self-represented litigants, the Representing Yourself website and LSR. LSR subcommittee members Kathleen Bird and Judge Doug Beach made a presentation to the Missouri Bar Solo and Small Firm Conference to a sizeable audience on incorporating LSR into a solo and small firm law practice. The presentation was very well received.

**Creating Local LSR Attorney Panels:** LSR attorney panels have been organized in Clay and Christian counties. Kathleen Bird has drafted a resource paper on LSR. The LSR subcommittee will be developing a step-by-step “how to” resource to help local attorneys and judges implement an LSR referral service at the local level. The “how to” tool will be distributed to judges and local bar associations especially as a follow up to Judge Wilson’s local bar roadshow presentations.

### ***CAFC Member Operating Tools and Procedures:***

#### ***How Can We Work Better and Easier?***

**Member survey:** At the beginning of this year a survey was conducted of CAFC members. The survey asked: What is a reasonable expectation of what each CAFC member ought to contribute to the work of the committee? Do you feel adequately informed about CAFC work so that you can actively participate? How can we improve timely communication among members? What resources (human or material) are we most in need of to succeed? What points of view does CAFC need that are not presently represented? What goal/objective do you think is most important for us to accomplish within the next six months? The results have been used to guide how the work of the CAFC can best be done.

**Adobe Connect Training:** To save money the Court has requested that we hold half of our meetings by teleconference using Adobe Connect software. However, members were not familiar with this software. Using the software was more of a barrier to communication than an aid. This year we have provided members with three training sessions on using the software as a participant/guest and as a presenter/host. Now members find the Adobe Connect on-line meeting software a beneficial tool rather than a distraction. We now use Adobe Connect not only for teleconference meetings but also during live meeting for members who cannot travel to Jefferson City. The software allows real-time sharing of documents and images where members in Jefferson City or afar can equally participate in the review and revision of forms, publications, etc. Members now can more fully use the on-line meeting software.

**Meeting Documentation and Minutes:** Good meetings start with good preparations. In the past members did not see documents until coming to the meeting or shortly before the meeting. This meant multi-tasking during meetings, trying to read at the same time as trying to participate in discussion. Our member survey indicated members needed documents more in advance in order to prepare for meetings. Subcommittees and staff

are directed to circulate documents relevant to the meeting agenda as they are ready and not wait until the eve of the meeting. The goal is to have all meeting documents at least 20 days before meetings.

In the past, minutes of prior meetings were not distributed until the eve of the next meeting. As a result members did not have the minutes available between meetings. Now draft minutes are circulated a few weeks after the meeting and corrected by e-mail.

**Streamlining Meetings:** Our meeting agenda is based on doing priority things first and staying focused on task. By using a “parking lot agenda” we avoid tangent diversions. Members are invited and expected to participate equally by using tools such as roundtable brainstorming.

The use of a “recorder” (a person) relieves members from the distraction of taking notes, provides real time sharing of what is happening and creates a greater sense of doing this together. The recorder using a computer, projector and screen types key information for all to see in real time. Motions, documents etc. being drafted can be corrected immediately by members. The role is especially helpful during telecommunication meetings.

**Auxiliary Members:** Persons with expertize, experience and commitment to CAFC’s goals have been invited to participate as non-voting, auxiliary members of our subcommittees. These auxiliaries have assisted in developing printed materials, doing the advance work to set up the “roadshows,” beginning communication with law schools, etc. With the support of these auxiliary members we have been able to accomplish more and benefit from different perspectives.

LSR subcommittee auxiliary members include:

*Bruce Galloway* is the President of the Christian County Bar Association. He was recruited by Judge Larry Luna to set up an LSR referral service panel in his county. He is very active promoting LSR and has many good ideas. He and an associate are organizing the LSR panel in his county and doing CLE programs in his county and other places in southwest Missouri.

*Allan Gallas* of Kansas City chaired the Missouri Bar special committee on LSR during the development of the new rules.

*Judge Doug Beach* has resigned as a CAFC member due to his obligations regarding the construction of the new St. Louis County court house but will continue to contribute his knowledge of LSR as an auxiliary member.

*Alan Stewart* was a member of CAFC and the prior pro se commissions. He brings corporate memory to the table.

Pro Bono subcommittee auxiliary members include:

*Danelle Cord*, Jefferson City attorney. She does advance work for the roadshows by personally interviewing local bar leaders by telephone using a prepared questionnaire. She then works with local bar leader to work out the logistics of the event including getting attorneys and judges present.

*Law School representatives are:*

<i>Elizabeth Walsh</i>	Director of Student Services	Washington University School of Law
<i>Brendan Roediger</i>	Director Pro Bono Program	St. Louis U Law School
<i>Judith Ann Sharp</i>	Staff Director	UMKC Law School
	Entrepreneurial Legal Services Clinic	
<i>Robert Kuehn</i>	Professor & Associate Dean	Washington University School of Law
	for Clinical Education	
<i>Douglas Abrams</i>	Associate Professor of Law	UMC Law School
<i>Mary O'Malley</i>	Associate Clinical Professor	UMKC Law School of Law

**CAFC Archives:** We have an on-line archive of CAFC documents and resources for members. This provides members a single go to place for all information relevant to member's active participation. When a new member joins CAFC they immediately have access to all important documentation. The site includes minutes, meeting packets, administrative procedures, events calendar, publications developed by CAFC, reports of CAFC and other sources, links to relevant court orders, rules and numerous resources on pro bono, pro se and limited scope representation.

The archives are valuable to current members but as important, they preserve corporate memory for future members.

**Welcome Kit:** For a new person coming into a group it takes time to get acclimated and comfortable participating. To get new members up to speed quickly, we have developed a new members “Welcome Kit” (<http://www.courts.mo.gov/file.jsp?id=45432>) The kit includes CAFC’ s history; the nine recommendations assigned to CAFC; introduction to CAFC accomplishments (e.g. self-representation website and on-line forms, new Supreme Court rules on LSR, family law forms etc.): Judges’ Tool Kit on Pro Bono Legal Assistance; and administrative information including meeting calendar and location, expenses, and the CAFC on-line archives.

## Looking Ahead

In the year ahead CAFC will:

- Continue the local bar roadshow program and nurturing the seeds planted. [[page 3](#)]
- Reach out to agencies (clerks, librarians, social service, local bars) that serve the marginalized who need legal assistance. [[page 3](#)]
- Complete of the PowerPoint training modules for clerks on pro se litigants. [[page 7](#)]
- With OSCA staff complete of the translations of the forms into six foreign languages. [[page 4](#)]
- Expand the mission of the judicial education subcommittee to include not only educating judges but also developing and implementing a program to encourage judges to actively implement pro bono, limited scope representation and pro se friendly programs in their circuits. [[page 3](#)]
- Finalize the “how to” create a local LSR attorneys panel document, so local bar associations can be easily and quickly educated on setting up a system to connect needy litigants with lawyers who practice LSR. [[page 6](#)]
- Reexamine the forms and our presentation of the forms to ensure easy use for both pro se litigants and the courts. Evaluate development of additional family law forms including respondent packets, packets for litigants without children, and the creation of a petition for change of name for multiple children. Evaluate future maintenance of the forms within the available resources at OSCA. [[page 5](#)]
- Develop a brochure on custody in Title IV-D paternity cases. [[page 6](#)]
- Make improvements in the litigant awareness program to increase effective use by litigants. [[page 4](#)]
- Study the interaction of e-filing and LSR and pro se litigants.

- Listen to the perspectives of web users through the survey; circuit clerks, librarians, social agencies and others who regularly work with needy persons through the CAFC newsletter and local bars through the roadshows.
- Move forward with more communication and collaboration with law schools.  
[\[page10\]](#)

## **Committee on Access to Family Court Members, Liaison and Staff**

Kathleen Bird, Esq., Dispute Resolution Services, 7th Judicial Circuit

The Honorable Kelly Broniec, Judge, 12th Judicial Circuit

Karen Brown, Esq., Jackson County Family Court, Kansas City, Missouri

The Honorable Theresa Burke, Judge, 22nd Judicial Circuit

Lou DeFeo, Esq., Jefferson City, Missouri

Sandy Dowd, Circuit Clerk, 6th Judicial Circuit

The Honorable William W. Francis, Jr., Judge, Southern District Court of Appeals

Denise Gable, Assistant Attorney General, Jefferson City, Missouri

Lori Greene, Esq., Independence, Missouri

Richard Holtmeyer, Esq., Tipton, Missouri

Janel Luck, Jefferson City, Missouri

The Honorable Larry Luna, Judge, 38th Judicial Circuit

Kelly Martinez, Esq., Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Joseph E. Maxwell, Esq., Mexico, Missouri

The Honorable Joel Miller, Judge, 4th Judicial Circuit

Benjamin Bradley Nelson, Esq., Columbia, Missouri

The Honorable Brent Powell, Judge, 16th Judicial Circuit

Mike Rinard, Esq., St. Joseph, Missouri

Patricia Scaglia, Esq., Independence, Missouri

The Honorable Leslie Schneider, Judge, 13th Judicial Circuit

Deanna Scott, Esq., Legal Services of Southern Missouri

The Honorable Cindy Suter, Judge, 14th Judicial Circuit

---

Lou DeFeo serves as co-chair of the committee.

The Honorable Paul Wilson, Supreme Court Judge, serves as the committee's Judicial Liaison.

Bob Stoeckl, The Missouri Bar, serves as staff liaison between the committee and The Missouri Bar.

Kelly Cramer, Debbie Eiken and Terri Norris of the Office of State Courts Administrator serve as staff for the committee.

### **CAFC Subcommittees**

- Court Staff Education
- Communications
- Forms
- Judicial Education and Development
- Limited Scope Representation
- Pro Bono Initiatives
- Website & Litigant Awareness Program

## APPENDIX A

### **Missouri Supreme Court Joint Commission To Review Pro Se Litigation Report to the Supreme Court of Missouri & the Missouri Bar (September 2003)**

#### Recommendation #1- Litigant Education Programs/Brochures

*Pro se* litigants in specific types of cases should be required to participate in an education program that describes the risks and responsibilities of proceeding without representation.

#### Recommendation #2 – Court Staff Education

Guidelines should be developed for court staff that clearly defines what information is and is not considered legal advice. The guidelines should be made available to each circuit court with the option of also distributing the guidelines to *pro se* litigants. A curriculum and training program for court staff and advocates who interact or assist *pro se* litigants should be developed.

#### Recommendation #3 – Judicial Education

The judicial education subcommittee should develop a curriculum and training program for the judiciary on effective court management techniques in cases involving *pro se* litigants. The curriculum should include education concerning ethical dilemmas created by *pro se* litigation and should consider the development of standard protocol for handling hearings involving *pro se* litigants.

#### Recommendation #4 – Internet/Website

An internet-based centralized clearinghouse should be developed and maintained to serve as a repository for information concerning all *pro se* services and programs available statewide.

#### Recommendation #5 – Litigant Education Programs/Brochures

A pamphlet or brochure should be developed and made available for distribution in each circuit court describing the resources available to educate and inform the *pro se* litigant of the risks and responsibilities of proceeding without professional legal representation.

#### Recommendations #6 and #7 – Alliances with State and Local Bar Associations / Pro Bono Initiatives

The circuit and family courts should strengthen alliances with state and local bar associations throughout Missouri to encourage, promote and support lawyer referral

programs that will link those in need of legal representation to lawyers who are available to provide some services in family law cases at reasonable or reduced rates.

**Recommendation #8 - Forms**

The Supreme Court of Missouri should develop and approve plain language, standardized forms and instructions that are accepted in all state courts and made available to *pro se* litigants.

**Recommendation #9**

The Supreme Court of Missouri should establish a *Pro Se* Implementation Committee responsible for the implementation of the approved recommendations of the Joint Commission.

**APPENDIX B**

**Comparison of Website Visits May 2013 to May 2014**

<b>Page</b>	<b>URL</b>	<b>May 2013 Hits</b>	<b>May 2014 Hits</b>
Home	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=5240">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=5240</a>	11,216	12,086
The Litigant Awareness Program	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=37293">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=37293</a>	4,768	4,737
The Litigant Awareness Program Video Page (Do LAP by watching video)	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=39813">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=39813</a>	1,110	1,147
How the Court System Works (Do LAP by reading materials)	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=3478">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=3478</a>	1,838	1,787
Self Assessment Exercise	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=4092">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=4092</a>	617	679
Certificate of Completion	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=3774">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=3774</a>	1,444	1,669
Getting a Lawyer	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=10380">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=10380</a>	940	995
Legal Forms	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=38346">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=38346</a>	10,608	10,551
Stopping Abuse and Stalking	<a href="http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=5054">http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=5054</a>	351	637