

## **The Joint Pro Se Implementation Commission October 2007 Update**

- The Joint Pro Se Implementation Commission launched [www.selfrepresent.mo.gov](http://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov) September 10, 2007. The site is still considered to be under development.
- The site also is accessible from the Judicial Home page by clicking on “Representing Yourself” located in the Quick Links box.
- The site provides users with educational resources about the Missouri court system, information about what circuit clerks and other court staff can or cannot assist with, the *pro se* process, legal terminology, and the process for filing for a dissolution of marriage.
- A self assessment tool created to help the user identify his or her strengths and weaknesses, which might factor into the decision to proceed with representing yourself, is provided within the site.
- After a user has reviewed all of the above mentioned educational resources, he or she may proceed to the forms needed to file for a dissolution of marriage. The following forms are available from the site in one forms package:
  - Petition for Dissolution of Marriage
  - Statement of Income and Expense
  - Statement of Property and Debt and Proposed Separation Agreement
  - Missouri Department of Health Certificate of Dissolution of Marriage
  - Family Court Filing Certificate
  - Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage
  - Parenting Plan
  - Answer to Petitioner’s Petition for Dissolution of Marriage
- Resources are available from the site for people who need assistance with adult abuse or domestic violence issues.
- An evaluation is included in the Web site to provide feedback to the Commission about the effectiveness of the site.
- The Pro Se Commission has proposed that an awareness program and forms assisting pro se litigants be approved by the Supreme Court of Missouri.
- The Commission has asked the Supreme Court to adopt rules requiring every pro se litigant in certain types of cases such as dissolution of marriage to complete the litigant awareness program on the Web site (or an alternate program approved by the Commission) and order that all Missouri courts accept the forms provided on the Web site.
- The Commission would like the Supreme Court to make the use of the forms mandatory.
- The Pro Se Commission requested comments about the site from:
  - a.) attorneys through publication in *ESQ* in regards to proposed rules changes; and
  - b.) the leadership of local and specialty bar associations throughout Missouri through an emailed letter in regards to the Commission’s efforts to improve access to the courts for people who cannot afford lawyers and lessen the challenges that pro se litigant pose for judges, court clerks and lawyers. The comments received have been considered by the Commission. Further comments are welcome by the Commission.
- Commission members have made presentations about the work of the Commission and the new Web site at the Presiding Judges Meeting and the Missouri Bar Annual Meeting.