



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF FRESNO



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXPANDED SELF-HELP SERVICES

For More Information Contact:

Suzanne Abi-Rached, Media Coordinator

(559) 457-1605

sabi-rached@fresno.courts.ca.gov

The Fresno Superior Court is pleased to announce that it will be expanding the services provided by its Self-Help Service Center. The expanded services will include additional business hours at the Self-Help Center, assistance with conservatorship/guardianship cases and greater outreach to remote parts of the County.

The Self-Help Center was established more than two decades ago, in an effort to increase access to justice and assistance to the public by providing comprehensive services, at little or no cost, to self-represented litigants in Fresno County. Though the assistance provided is primarily in the area of family law, services are also available for civil and small claims matters. Assistance is provided for adoption, termination of parental rights, marital dissolution/legal separation/nullity, child custody, support and protective orders (domestic violence and elder abuse). Assistance with civil harassment restraining orders, small claims, unlawful detainers, emancipation and name change is also available through a contract with the Better Business Bureau.

In 2012 the office hours were reduced to 4 days a week, due to a statewide budget crisis and the resulting staff shortages. Through the continued commitment and efforts of the court and its staff, services were provided to over 2000 self-represented litigants per month, despite the reduced hours and resources. In September, the court welcomed news that it would receive \$400,000 in increased self-help funding from the Governor's 2018-2019 Fiscal Year Budget. The additional funds will be used to increase accessibility to self-help services by extending service hours to five days per week and hire additional staff to both establish greater contact with outlying communities as well as to increase assistance across a broader spectrum of subject matter - including certain Probate matters.

Beginning January 1, 2019, the Self-Help Service Center will be open from Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Staff will be available to answer general questions during those times. Resources permitting, additional staff will be available to review documents on a first come first serve basis. The Center is located at 1130 O Street, First Floor, Fresno, CA 93721-2220. The phone number to the Self-Help Service Center is 559-457-2100 or toll-free within Fresno County: 1-866-665-2345.

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