Santa Cruz Superior Court
Self Help Center/Family Law Facilitator

1 Second Street, Room 301, Watsonville, CA 95076

- Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- It is best to sign in at 8:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. There is no sign-in after the Self Help Center reaches maximum capacity for each session.
- **Closed every Friday**

The Self Help Center Assists with the Following:

- **Family Law**
- **Restraining Orders**
- **Guardianship (of the person)**
- **Limited Conservatorship**
- **Landlord/Tenant –** residential tenancies, simple matters
- **Name Change/Gender Change**
- **Civil**- Breach of Contract Collection cases only
- **Collections**
- **Emancipations**
- **CARE Act**
- **Small Claims** - Services are offered in person and by phone. Small Claims Advisor Phone Line: **831-786-7370**. Messages can be left at any time. Calls are returned within 72 hours.

We help with many other issues too. Please call or email to see if we can help you.
We provide community and legal referrals, and public computers.
Please read the ***Come Prepared*** section on the back to know what to expect when you visit.

Special Programs:

Probate Conservatorship:

- Information about options for conservatorship & alternatives. Call 831-786-7200, option 4 and leave a message with your name & phone number. Phone calls are returned within 72 hours.

Record Clearance:

- Visit, call or email the Law Library in Santa Cruz, 701 Ocean Street, Room 70, basement. (831) 420-2205 or santacruzlawlibrary@gmail.com . Visit www.lawlibrary.org for current hours of in-person services.

Phone Line/E-mail/Websites:

- You may call the SHC at **831-786-7200, option 4**. Calls are returned within 72 hours.
- You may e-mail the SHC at selfhelp.information@santacruzcourt.org
  E-mails are returned within 48 hours during business days and are often returned sooner.
- Forms and other self-help information can be found at the state self help website: www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp or www.courts.ca.gov/forms.htm
- Santa Cruz Superior Court website: http://www.santacruzcourt.org

What is the Self Help Center?

The Self Help Center, which includes the services of the Family Law Facilitator, helps people who need legal information but do not have lawyers. The Center can give you information, court forms, and help you understand your legal options. We cannot represent you and, in most cases, you will be required to fill out your own court forms with our guidance. We only help with very simple legal situations, often we may need to refer you to a private attorney or to the law library for you to do your own legal research. We help many people each day therefore we usually spend less than 15 minutes with each person and there can be a long wait. We are not responsible for the outcome of your case. Conversations with the Self Help Center are not confidential, we do assist parties on both sides of the case, and we cannot assist you if you are currently represented by an attorney.

Come Prepared

We can only help you: Please do not send someone in your place. It is important that we speak directly with the person who needs our assistance. We cannot help someone on your behalf.

When you arrive: When you arrive, please sign in and you will be called in the order your intake form is turned in. Depending on how many people need assistance, the sign in sheet may fill up before the end of the stated hours of operation. We apologize for this, but we do not know how many people will need help on any given day. Many people arrive and line up outside the SHC at either 8 am for the morning session or 12:30 pm for the afternoon session.

Be prepared to wait: The wait may be several hours after you check in. You may also need to return for multiple visits depending on your legal issue.

Cost for Services: There is no cost for the services of the Self Help Center, but you may have to pay for copies and court filing fees at the clerk's office.

How do I hire an attorney? The Self Help Center cannot represent you or give the name of any specific attorneys. We can give you community resources to assist you in finding your own attorney. You may call the Lawyer Referral Service for a low cost attorney consultation at 831-425-4755.

What should I bring to Self Help Center? Try to bring a copy of your entire court file (including all of your court case numbers) and any documents that support your legal issue (such as pay stubs if you are modifying child support). Also bring a pen, stamps (you may need as many as 8), blank envelopes, and something to keep you busy while you wait. Please keep all cell phones turned off or on silent.

What if I don't speak English well? We cannot guarantee an interpreter. You may need to bring your own interpreter and someone to help you fill out your court forms in English.

Come in person: Your case is most important to you and you have the most knowledge about your case. We cannot assist you if you send a family member or friend in your place.

Children: Children are not allowed at the Self Help Center. Your children are very valuable. The waiting time can be hard on them, and you can be distracted by their needs. It is not in your children's best interest to be present when you are talking about your legal problems.

What if I just want a legal form? You can download any state court form at www.courts.ca.gov/forms.htm and local Santa Cruz Superior Court forms at www.santacruzcourt.org.

Program Changes/Office Closure: Due to our small staff there can be unexpected office closures. There are many days when the office is only staffed by one attorney. We apologize for any inconvenience.