

PERSIDING LAPORTE COUNTY JUDGES

Circuit Court

Thomas Alevizos, Judge
Jonathan Forker, Magistrate
Nancy Gettinger, Juvenile Magistrate

Superior Court 1

Kathleen Lang, Judge

Superior Court 2

Richard R. Stalbrink Jr., Judge

Superior Court 3

Jennifer Koethe, Judge

Superior Court 4

William Boklund, Judge
Greta Friedman, Magistrate

Indiana Supreme Court

Division of State Court

Administration

30 South Meridian St., Suite
500

Indianapolis, IN 46204

<http://www.in.gov/judiciary/selfservice/>

LAPORTE COUNTY CIRCUIT AND SUPERIOR COURTS

813 Lincolnway, LaPorte, IN 46350

300 Washington Street, Michigan City,
IN 46360

Phone: 219-326-6808 or 219-874-5611

Extension 2651

Fax: 219-324-0147

E-mail: Imalik@laportecounty.org

LAPORTE COUNTY CIRCUIT AND SUPERIOR COURTS



Self-Help Center

How volunteers can and cannot assist with your case

Indiana Supreme Court Self Service Legal Center
web site

<http://www.in.gov/judiciary/selfservice/>

The Indiana Supreme Court does not recommend that you choose self-representation over hiring a licensed attorney to handle your court case. The Court also recognizes the fact that in some instances people choose not to hire an attorney or cannot afford to hire one. Representing yourself in court should not be taken lightly, and there are many instances in which hiring an attorney is a good idea. In fact, we suggest that even if you use the forms provided on this site that you still talk with an attorney prior to submitting them to a court in order to achieve the best result possible.

Before deciding whether or not to represent yourself, you should know what will be expected of you. The Court has created the video below to provide information about the court process and what your responsibilities will be if you represent yourself. Remember that this video and the assistance offered by this website apply to civil cases. If you are charged with a criminal offense, the court can appoint an attorney for you if you cannot afford to hire one.

Family Matters: Choosing to Represent Yourself in Court

"Family Matters: Choosing to Represent Yourself in Court" is a guide for self-represented (pro se) litigants developed by the Indiana Supreme Court. This video provides information about your responsibilities and the procedures you must follow if you choose to represent yourself. It also provides resources for legal advice and assistance if you decide you need it. You can view all the videos at:

<http://www.in.gov/judiciary/2616.htm>

The Court, including the judge, the clerk, and all court staff, **must remain impartial**. This means that they cannot take sides in any matter coming before the court. They will give the same types of information to persons on both sides of a case, but they cannot provide legal advice. Information you provide to court staff is not confidential. Read below to find out what the court can and cannot provide to you.

We can provide you with telephone numbers of lawyer referral services where you may be able to find an attorney to assist you.

We can explain and answer questions about how the court works.

We can provide you general information about court rules, procedures and practices.

We can provide you information from your case file, including information as to when your next court hearing is.

We can provide a copy of the small claims manual and court forms that are available and instructions on how to complete them.

We can review your papers for completeness by checking for signatures, notarization, correct county name, and correct case number.

We cannot provide legal advice or legal interpretations. Only a lawyer can give you legal advice. Staff can answer questions that call for factual information—these are generally questions that start with “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” or “how.” They cannot answer questions that call for an opinion about what you should do—these are generally questions that start with “should,” or “whether.” For example, court staff can explain court rules and procedure, but they cannot suggest which of several available procedures you should follow.

We cannot advise you whether or not you should bring your case to court or give you an opinion about what will happen if you bring your case to court.

We cannot advise you what to say in court.

We cannot let you talk to the judge outside court. We also cannot talk to the judge for you about your case.

We cannot fill out a form for you or tell you what words to use in your court papers.

We cannot sign an order or change an order signed by the judge. We cannot explain the meaning of a court order to you.

We cannot provide any guidance or interpretation of the Parenting Time Guidelines for you.

The goal of LaPorte County Self Help Center(s) is to provide affordable services to those LaPorte County residents with limited resources, and provide better access and more efficient processing for pro se parties who are unable to engage their own attorneys. The self-help center volunteers will assist pro se parties with required document preparation for divorce cases, permanency or paternity case. The volunteer will assist the pro se parties in reviewing the paper work is ready, in proper order for the case to precede to a hearing or if other paper work needs to be completed. Volunteers **CANNOT provide any legal advice.**

- Dissolution of Marriage
- Pauper Petition (Waiver of Fees)
- Protective Orders

Lindsay Malik, BSW

Family Court Project Coordinator

Self Help Center Hours and Locations

LaPorte County Courthouse 3rd Floor

Monday 8:00 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Wednesday 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Michigan City Courthouse 2nd Floor

Monday 2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.

To schedule an appointment please call

326-6808 or 874-5611 Ext. 2651