

IN FORMA PAUPERIS FORM PACKET

INSTRUCTIONS

SELF-HELP RESOURCE CENTER

The Self-Help Resource Center's hours of operation are from 10:00AM - 2:00PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

If you have questions or need assistance, complete an intake form with the Baton Rouge Bar Association online at www.familycourt.org.

These instructions are to help you through the process of obtaining pauper status. To qualify as a pauper, you must show to the court that you cannot afford to prepay the court costs. The law allows paupers to file pleadings with the Clerk of Court's office without paying costs in advance.

These forms are not legal advice and cannot take the place of the advice that a lawyer can give you. It is always best to speak with a lawyer before taking any legal action.

If you represent yourself in court, you must follow all of the proper procedures and the law. It is your responsibility to see your case through the whole process.

UNDERSTANDING PAUPER STATUS

This form is used to ask the court to let you file pleadings in your case without paying the Clerk of Court in advance. **This does not mean the filing is free!** Everything you file with the Clerk of Court's office has a cost. Even if you file as a pauper, the Clerk of Court will still charge filing fees to your account. **You may have to pay the filing fees when your case is over.** You can ask that the other side pay the costs, but the judge in your case will decide how costs will be paid in the end.

Pauper status is not automatically granted to everyone who asks for it. You have to qualify to file as a pauper. To fill out this form, you will need:

- Your picture ID, for example, a driver's license.
- A friend or family member who knows about your personal and financial information. This person will also need a picture ID.
- Proof of your income, like check stubs or last year tax return, W2 of 1099 forms. If you do not have income, you will need other information. If you have government benefits or assistance, you will need proof of that, like a letter explaining your benefits.
- You will also need a notary. The Self Help Resource Center provides notary services at no cost.

It is very important that you provide an answer to every single question on the form. You should not leave any spaces empty. If the question does not apply to you, write "N/A" or "not applicable". If you do not fill out every space, the court may deny your pauper status.

To file, you must go to Clerk of Court's Suit Accounting office, located on the Third Floor of the Nineteenth Judicial District Courthouse, 300 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. If you want to make other arrangements for filing, you should contact that office at (225) 389-3982.