



Court Leadership and Self-Represented Litigation

Solutions for Access, Effectiveness, and Efficiency

INTRODUCTION TO THE LEADERSHIP PACKAGE

Developed by the Self-Represented Litigation Network

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I. Introduction

This document describes the components of the Self-Represented Litigation Leadership Package, prepared by the Self-Represented Litigation Network and launched at the September 2008 Court Solutions Conference, organized by the National Center for State Courts.

The core of the Package is fifteen modules, each of which focuses on a different area of self-represented litigation innovation. These Modules can be used in a wide variety of ways to encourage leadership in innovation. These ways include as a traditional educational curriculum, as a tool for discussion, as materials for a leadership seminar, or even just as a stimulant for a lunchtime conversation. They have been built for maximum flexibility with a wide variety of constituencies.

The Self-Represented Litigation Network is an open and growing group of organizations and working groups dedicated to fulfilling the promise of a justice system that works for all, including those who cannot afford lawyers and who go to court on their own. The Network brings together courts, and access to justice organizations in support of innovations in services for the self-represented. It operates in a number of Working Groups and is hosted by the National Center for State Courts under a Memorandum of Understanding. Participant organizations are listed in an appendix to this document.

The Leadership Package and its Modules have been developed by the Working Groups of the Network, with the advice and counsel of the Advisory Group, whose members are listed in Appendix II.

II. The Modules

These modules are as follows:

1. **Challenge, Models, Court Self-Diagnosis, and Strategies for Getting a Court Moving.** Telling the story of leadership and impact of self-represented litigant friendly courts and state court systems. Diagnosis, Planning and Start-up
2. **Establishing and Operating a Court-Based Self Help Center.** Court-based informational services that assist the self-represented navigate the court and file needed forms
3. **Designing and Modifying Physical Space for Access.** Building self-help spaces, the courthouse and the courtroom so that litigants are served most effectively and efficiently.
4. **Establishing Justice Corps and Volunteer Programs.** Building highly cost effective services with students and other volunteers.
5. **Ethical Guidelines for Clerks and Court Staff.** Establishing programs so that clerks and other staff know what they can and cannot do to provide information to litigants without violating court neutrality.
6. **Developing and Deploying Plain Language Forms and Instructions.** Removing barriers by designing and setting up standardized forms and instructions written so that they can be completed by the self-represented, and so that the court and judge save time and get accurate information and save time
7. **Deploying Automated Forms for Access.** Implementing a project that allows litigants to use computer software to help them prepare forms. Increases accuracy and court preparation.
8. **Caseflow Management for Access.** Modifying current caseflow management to ensure that self-represented litigant cases move, and that litigants get the services they need to proceed with their cases.
9. **Working with Judges for Access.** Exploring the best ways of getting judges and court leaders communicating about removing barriers to access in the courtroom, the courthouse and the community

10. **Courtroom Staffing and Services for Access.** Establishing programs in which additional courtroom staff – including attorneys – help keep cases moving and make sure there are appropriate resolutions.
11. **The Court Role in Establishing and Supporting Discrete Task Representation.** How courts and judges can help encourage unbundling of legal services so that litigants that need counsel get them, and cases can keep moving.
12. **Supporting and Integrating Law Library Services for the Self-Represented.** How courts and law libraries can work together to provide additional services to the self-represented, leveraging existing resources in the interests of moving cases and providing access.
13. **Distance Services for the Self-Represented.** Establishing the programs that use technology to provide information and tools for the self-represented, providing access to all in the state, while improving the courts’ operations.
14. **Promoting Access for Those With Limited English Proficiency.** How courts can establish programs that solve the especially large challenges faced by those with no lawyer and limited English – and by the courts that must serve this population.
15. **Access Innovations to Enhance Compliance.** How courts can increase compliance with their orders, removing obstacles, and assisting the self-represented who do not know how to obtain enforcement.

III. Components of the Modules

Each module includes:

- A. A PowerPoint presentation, which includes slides and notes, designed to assist presenters or discussion leaders. These modules vary, but they usually include an introduction of the general concept, examples of the innovation in practice, the impact of the innovation upon court access, effectiveness, efficiency, and upon staff and leadership, keys to success, steps to deployment, suggested leadership activities, and ideas for resources to support deployment.
- B. A chapter of the *Activity Handbook*, which describes in greater detail the activities suggested in one or more slides of the PowerPoint.
- C. A chapter of the *Resource Handbook*, which lists additional resources that will be of use in deploying the innovation. An additional resource included on the CD, but not organized by Module, is the Self-Represented Litigation *Best Practices* document. Also on the CD is *Self-Represented Litigation Network Principal Products*, a short summary of the main materials produced by the Network.

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- D. For most Modules, a block of Program Profiles, each usually 3-5 pages in length, which describe key successful examples of the innovation. Profiles are referenced by document name in the notes to the PowerPoint. A full list of these Profiles, which includes contact names and e-mails for each Profile, appears at the end of this document, before the Appendices.
- E. A series of video segments on the DVD. These segments, and their relationship to the Modules, are described in a document entitled *Introduction to Video*. Video segments are also listed and described in the notes to the second slide of each Module, and in the notes to the appropriate slide within the Module.

IV. The DVD

The DVD contains approximately 30 segments. They are described in the *Introduction to the Videos* document listed above. It is available from the National Center for State Courts

V. Distribution, Permitted Usage, and Thanks.

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Points of view and opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Center for State Courts or of any co-sponsor or of any participant in, or funder of, the Self Represented Litigation Network

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7	NPADO Overview	07-NPADO-1	Kate Bladow	kbladow@probono.net
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Appendix I

Self Represented Litigation Network

Participant Organizations

- American Association of Law Librarians
- American Judges Association
- American Judicature Society
- California Administrative Office of the Courts
- Conference of State Court Administrators
- Conference of Chief Justices
- Harvard Law School Bellow Sacks Project on the Future of Access to Justice
- Law School Consortium Project
- Legal Services Corporation
- Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts
- National Center for State Courts
- National Association for Court Management
- National Association of IOLTA Programs
- National Association of Women Judges
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
- State Justice Institute

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Program Profiles

Appendix II

Court Leadership and Self-Represented Litigation Leadership Package

Advisory Group

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The National Judicial College, William Dressel, President, Robin Wosje, Esq.,
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American Judicature Society.

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National Association for Court Management, Skip Cheshire, Court Administrator,
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Conference of State Court Administrators, Patricia Griffin, Director, Delaware
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Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives (ABA), Bob Echols.

Arizona, Robert James, Criminal Court Administrator for the Superior Court, Maricopa
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