

# Resource Guide for Self-Represented Litigants in the United States District Court, Eastern District of Missouri

## **Introduction: Resources Available to Self-Represented Litigants**

### **About:**

This Resource Guide was prepared by the United States District Court, Eastern District of Missouri (EDMO), to provide information that may be useful to self-represented litigants (SRL).

- EDMO maintains a web-page of information about representing yourself in federal district court. To access that information, visit:  
<https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/representing-yourself-pro-se>
- For more frequently-asked questions and answers regarding representing yourself in federal district court, visit:  
<https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/faqs/Pro%20Se>

This resource guide supplements the information available on the EDMO website by providing additional sources of information and resources. Below are the different types of resources that you can expect to find in this document:

1. *Free Legal Services for Self-Represented Litigants*
2. *Pay-for-Service Lawyer Referral Options*
3. *Free Federal & State Legal Information for SRLs*
4. *Additional Non-Legal Resources*
  - a. *Health Resources & Services*
  - b. *Housing Resources & Emergency Assistance*
5. *Other Community Resources*

## **Section I: Free Legal Services for Self-Represented Litigants**

*The following organizations provide free legal services to self-represented litigants. Eligibility for services at these organizations may depend upon income-level, geographic location, legal need or other factors.*

- **ACLU of Missouri, <https://www.aclu-mo.org/en/legal-help>**
  - The ACLU of Missouri is a public-interest law firm that principally addresses issues arising only in Missouri that involve challenges to a government law, policy or practice affecting the constitutional rights — that is, the civil liberties and civil rights — of a significant number of people. Almost all cases litigated by ACLU involve constitutional issues, and because the United States Constitution and Missouri Constitution protect only against unlawful government action, ACLU of Missouri rarely takes on disputes involving private companies.
  
- **ArchCity Defenders, <http://www.archcitydefenders.org/>**
  - ArchCity Defenders (ACD) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit civil rights law firm providing holistic legal advocacy and combating the criminalization of poverty and state violence against poor people and people of color. ACD uses direct services, impact litigation, and policy and media advocacy as its primary tools to promote justice, protect civil and human rights, and bring about systemic change on behalf of the poor and communities of color directly impacted by the abuses of the legal system. Interested clients are asked to apply online.
  
- **Catholic Legal Assistance Ministry, <https://sfcstl.org/locations/clam/>**
  - Founded in 1987, the Catholic Legal Assistance Ministry (CLAM) provides exceptional pro bono legal services and equal access justice to the poor and marginalized in civil matters throughout the 11 counties of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. CLAM provides legal representation in civil matters to impoverished people who cannot afford to hire an attorney, including family law matters, immigration, veterans advocacy, and equal housing.
  
- **Immigrant Power of Attorney Workshops, <http://www.mica-project.org/presentations-screenings-and-workshops.html>**
  - The Catholic Legal Assistance Ministry, M.I.C.A. Project, and Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates coordinate Immigrant Power of Attorney Workshops. These workshops are targeted to members of the immigrant community, and are spaces where people are able to work with a volunteer attorney to complete a Power of Attorney form to designate someone to take care of their property or care for their children if, for some reason, they are unable to do so.

- **Free Legal Answers-Missouri, <https://missouri.freelegalanswers.org/>**
  - Free Legal Answers is a virtual legal advice clinic. Qualifying users post their civil legal question on the website and attorneys qualified to provide pro bono legal assistance respond to the question. Users then receive an email when their question receives a response. Volunteer attorneys will not answer criminal law questions.
  
- **KC LEGAL, <http://www.kclegal.net/memberdirectory/>**
  - Kansas City Lesbian, Gay, and Allied Lawyers (“KC LEGAL”) is a nonprofit 501(c)(6) membership association of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (“LGBT”) and allied legal community in the Kansas City metropolitan area. KC Legal provides a directory of legal professionals committed to providing resources supportive of justice and equality to those in and around the Kansas City community
  
- **Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation, <http://lollaf.org/>**
  - Land of Lincoln provides free civil legal services to eligible low-income residents and seniors in 65 counties in Central and Southern Illinois. Land of Lincoln handles only certain kinds of civil cases: housing, family safety and stability, consumer protection, education, protection of seniors and persons with disabilities, health care, utilities, and income security. The kind of help provided ranges from telephone advice or brief service, to representation in court or at administrative hearings.
  
- **Legal Advocates for Abused Women (LAAW), <https://www.supportvictims.org/legal-advocates-for-abused-women>**
  - The Legal Advocates for Abused Women (LAAW) program partners with law enforcement and criminal court systems to break the cycle of violence at the earliest possible stage. LAAW serves St. Louis City and the counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Franklin. LAAW is a non-profit agency that offers free legal representation to victims of domestic violence at Order of Protection hearings in the St. Louis metropolitan area and several surrounding counties.
  
- **Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM), <https://lsem.org/>**
  - LSEM provides free civil legal assistance, advice and information for low-income people and the elderly in 21 eastern Missouri counties. Clients must

meet financial eligibility based on household incomes or meet other qualifications for consultation or representation.

Information and training services are free and open to the public.

Interpreters are available for the hearing impaired and accessibility accommodations are available, as needed.

Legal Services of Eastern Missouri cannot handle criminal issues or cases.

- **Missouri Attorney General's Military Legal Assistance Team,**  
**<http://ago.mo.gov/home/military-legal-assistance-team/mlat>**
  - The Missouri Attorney General's Military Legal Assistance Team (MLAT) is a statewide program bringing together private attorneys to provide pro bono legal representation and education to our military communities. The MLAT provides pro bono legal assistance to service members and veterans in Missouri for qualifying legal matters. The program also offers educational opportunities for Missouri service members, veterans, and businesses.
  
- **The Samaritan Center Legal Care, <http://www.midmosamaritan.org/legalcare/>**
  - This program is affiliated with the Samaritan Center, a multi-service charitable agency providing food, clothing, utility assistance, free medicine assistance, dental clinic, medical clinic and other services. All attorneys and secretaries are volunteers. During prescreening, an evaluation will be done on the applicant's ability and willingness to pay a reduced fee if referred to an outside attorney. Agreement on a reduced fee will be between the attorney and client.
  
- **St. Louis Bankruptcy Pro Se Assistance Program,**  
**<https://www.bamsl.org/index.cfm?pg=BankruptcyAssistanceProject>**
  - The Pro Se Assistance Program (PSAP) is a free legal clinic designed to help individuals without an attorney to answer legal questions about bankruptcy, including how bankruptcy may be used to help prevent foreclosure. The PSAP provides debtors with an opportunity to meet with a volunteer private attorney for a free 30-minute consultation.
  
- **Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts (VLAA),**  
**<https://vlaa.org/get-help/legal-accounting-services/>**
  - VLAA offers legal and accounting assistance to artists and arts organizations with arts-related legal and accounting problems.

To receive free assistance, you must be a Missouri or Southwestern Illinois artist with an arts-related problem and meet income guidelines. Individual artists (all disciplines) with incomes less than \$36,420 per year (+\$4,320 for each additional member of the household) qualify for free assistance

## **Section II: Pay-for-Service Lawyer Referral Options**

*The following organizations refer individuals with legal needs to fee-associated legal services. Eligibility for services at these organizations may depend upon geographic location or other factors.*

- **The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis (BAMSL), <https://www.bamsl.org/>**
  - BAMSL's St. Louis Lawyer Search is a free online lawyer referral service. Available attorneys are located in the St. Louis metropolitan area and charge fees for their services. The online search tool is available at: <http://www.stllawyersearch.org/>
  
- **The Kaufman Fund Veterans Legal Referral Program, [www.thekaufmanfund.org/veterans-legal-referral-program/](http://www.thekaufmanfund.org/veterans-legal-referral-program/)**
  - The Kaufman Fund Legal Referral Program and their associated partners provide help to veterans in St. Louis City, St. Louis County or St. Charles County in need of housing, counseling, healthcare, rehabilitation, and legal needs. The Kaufman Fund partners with support agencies and attorneys willing to assist veterans needing legal assistance.
  
- **The Missouri Bar, <http://www.mobar.org/>**
  - The Missouri Bar provides a free lawyer referral search for attorneys outside of the St. Louis metropolitan area. Available attorneys are located across the state of Missouri and charge fees for their services. Use the Missouri Bar's LawyerSearch to find a lawyer currently accepting new clients. Not all Missouri lawyers are listed in LawyerSearch—only those who have indicated that they would like to be included. Users can search by areas of practice or location (city or county). The online search tool is available at: <http://www.mobar.org/LawyerSearch.aspx>

## **Section III: Free Federal & State Legal Information for SRLs**

*The following section provides free federal and state-specific legal information for self-represented litigants. These resources are provided as public legal information and are not intended to replace legal advice.*

- **United States Constitution,**  
**<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/the-constitution/>**
  - The Constitution of the United States of America is the supreme law of the United States. Empowered with the sovereign authority of the people by the framers and the consent of the legislatures of the states, it is the source of all government powers, and also provides important limitations on the government that protect the fundamental rights of United States citizens.
  
- **Federal Rules of Civil Procedure,**  
**[https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/cv\\_rules\\_eff\\_dec\\_1\\_2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/cv_rules_eff_dec_1_2018_0.pdf)**
  - The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (eff. Dec. 1, 2018) govern civil proceedings in the United States district courts. The purpose of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is "to secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of every action and proceeding." Rule 1, Fed. R. Civ. P.
  
- **Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure,**  
**<https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/rules-of-criminal-procedure.pdf>**
  - The Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure (eff. Dec 1, 2018) govern criminal proceedings and prosecutions in the U.S. district courts, the courts of appeals, and the Supreme Court. The purpose of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure is to "provide for the just determination of every criminal proceeding, to secure simplicity in procedure and fairness in administration, and to eliminate unjustifiable expense and delay." Rule 2, Fed. R. Crim. P.
  
- **Missouri Courts: Initiating an Appeal,**  
**<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=842>**
  - This website is designed to provide information about the process of initiating an appeal in the Missouri Courts.

- **Missouri Courts: Petition for Child Support & Support Forms,**  
**<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=704>**
  - This website is designed to provide information for individuals who have agreed on the terms of their child custody case in the Missouri Courts.
- **Missouri Courts: Self Representation in a Family Law Case,**  
**<https://www.selfrepresent.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=5240>**
  - This website is designed to provide information and resources for those involved in family law matters in the state of Missouri.
- **Missouri Courts: Self Representation in Small Claims Court,**  
**<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=704>**
  - This website is designed to provide information about the forms associated with small claims not to exceed five thousand dollars in the Missouri Courts.

## **Section IV: Additional Non-Legal Resources**

*The following sites provide directories or resource guides to agencies, organizations, and groups that can help you quickly find help in your area:*

- **United Way 2-1-1 of Missouri & Illinois, <http://www.211helps.org/>**
  - United Way 2-1-1 of Missouri and Illinois offers 24/7 connection to resources and agencies, including assistance with housing, utilities, clothing, household items, food, transportation, health, disaster recovery, employment, and more.  
Dial 2-1-1, call 1-800-427-4626, or visit the 2-1-1 website.
- **Mercy Neighborhood Ministry Resources,**  
**<https://www.mercy.net/practice/mercy-neighborhood-ministry/mercy-neighborhood-ministry-resources/>**
  - Mercy Neighborhood Ministry provides a comprehensive list of resources to help individuals seek additional help.
- **Start Here St. Louis Area Resource Directory, <https://www.startherestl.org/>**
  - This website provides general information, street addresses, phone numbers and websites for dozens of agencies, shelters, employment resources, food pantries and other organizations throughout the St. Louis area.

## **A: Health Resources & Services**

*The following organizations provide a variety of health resources and services in the State of Missouri. Eligibility for services at these organizations may depend upon income-level, geographic location, demonstrated need or other factors.*

- **Community Counseling Center (CCC), <http://www.ccntr.com/>**
  - Community Counseling Center (CCC) is a private, charitable, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit behavioral health organization serving the public since 1974.  
CCC is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International and is certified by the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH).
  
- **Independence Center, <https://www.independencecenter.org/about/>**
  - Independence Center is a community-based rehabilitation program for adults with severe and persistent mental illnesses in the St. Louis area.
  
- **Family Care Health Centers, <https://familycarehealthcenters.org/>**
  - As one of the leading community health care providers in St. Louis, Family Care Health Centers is dedicated to providing comprehensive primary health care services to the residents of St. Louis. With two state-of-the-art facilities in the metropolitan area, Family Care also works to improve the overall health of the communities it serves by reducing barriers to health care.  
Comprehensive health care is provided regardless of health insurance status. Family Care accepts private, Medicaid and Medicare insurance plans.
  
- **Missouri Department of Mental Health, <https://dmh.mo.gov/mentalillness/helpinfo/links.html>**
  - A list of compiled mental health resources from the Missouri Department of Mental Health.
  
- **Missouri Mental Health Foundation, <http://www.missourimhf.org/>**
  - Founded in 2008, the Missouri Mental Health Foundation (MMHF) is a non-profit organization established to provide a singular focus on raising



awareness and public understanding of the many issues impacting individuals and families living with mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance use disorders.

- **Tri-County Mental Health Services, Inc., <https://www.tri-countymhs.org/>**
  - Providing Nationally Recognized Behavioral Health Services. Services include mental health, substance use treatment, prevention and wellness activities for Clay, Platte and Ray counties in metropolitan Kansas City, Missouri.

## **B: Housing Resources & Emergency Assistance**

*The following organizations provide housing, shelter, household resources, and/or emergency financial assistance in the State of Missouri. Eligibility for services at these organizations may depend upon income-level, geographic location, demonstrated need or other factors.*

- **Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, <https://cccnmo.org/programs/emergency-assistance/>**
  - Serving the 38 counties of the Diocese of Jefferson City, Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri provides assistance with rent, utilities, and other basic needs that ensure the dignity of those in need. Call for intake between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, Phone: 573.635.7719
- **Missouri Department of Mental Health, *Shelter Plus Care*, <https://dmh.mo.gov/housing/housingunit/shelterpluscare.html#CE>**
  - Shelter Plus Care (SPC) provides permanent housing through rental assistance for people who are both homeless and disabled. The goal of SPC is to create long-term housing stability, a return to self-sufficiency, and reintegration with community. People in need of assistance are referred to DMH through a Continuum of Care's coordinated entry process.

- **Missouri Governor's Committee to End Homelessness,** <https://www.endhomelessnessmo.org/housing-resources>
  - A list of Missouri housing services, including resources for affordable housing, fair housing, disaster survivors, and emergency shelter.
- **Missouri Homeless Shelter Directory,** <https://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/missouri.html>
  - A list of Missouri homeless shelters by city. Many are emergency shelters along with general homeless shelters and some transitional housing opportunities. Many of these shelters now have waiting lists. Please call before going to them. Many waiting lists are very long.
- **RedDough Money Center,** <https://reddough.com/about-us/>
  - RedDough Money Center provides an affordable payday loan alternative; check cashing; and other banking services. RedDough Money Center is owned and operated by Prosperity Connection, a 501(c)(3) focused on providing resources that make it possible for individuals to earn economic independence.

## **Section V: Other Community Resources**

*The following community organizations provide social services and general resources in the State of Missouri and St. Louis Metropolitan area. These groups do not typically have eligibility requirements and provide different forms of non-legal support.*

- **Bilingual International,** <https://www.bilingualstl.org/>
  - Bilingual International's mission is to ensure equal access to healthcare, mental health, and social services for all, regardless of national origin or language ability, through the advocacy, education, and direct multilingual services.
- **Centro Latino de Salud,** <https://centrolatino.missouri.org/en/about/>
  - The mission of Centro Latino is to empower Latinos, Latino families and the general public through provision of services and guidance in navigating the health, education and cultural resources of mid-Missouri. Centro Latino provides assistance to immigrants as they become acclimated to their new environment with its different laws, customs, and language. Families and

individuals that contact the Centro receive orientation to the community as well as physical, mental, and social support.

- **IDD Help, <http://www.iddhelp.org/>**
  - IDD Help is a central spot for information about a variety of services available for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. IDD Help is a partnership project of the SB 40 Boards for the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. The project works in conjunction with United Way 211.
  
- **Mediation Achieving Results for Children (M.A.R.C.H.), <http://www.marchmediation.org/>**
  - M.A.R.C.H. is a private, not-for-profit corporation governed by a board made up of representatives from participating judicial circuits, mainly mediators. M.A.R.C.H. will provide mediation services to better serve the needs of the children of parents who are divorced, separated or never married. Eligible participants can receive up to 4 hours of free mediation services.
  
- **PROMO: LGBTQ Community Resources, <https://promoonline.org/services>**
  - PROMO envisions a Missouri where everyone has full equality in the hearts and minds of citizens, in all areas of the law, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. PROMO provides a directory of LGBTQ Community Services in the state of Missouri.
  
- **Prosperity Connection, <https://prosperityconnection.org/>**
  - Prosperity Connection was established in 2009 with the help of St. Louis Community Credit Union. It is a 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help individuals and families earn economic independence through financial education, community services and low-cost banking options in an effort to improve their standard of living and better their lifestyle. Prosperity Connection offers free financial coaching and money management education, as well as low-cost banking options for people who cannot open an account or access affordable credit.
  
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, <https://mydss.mo.gov/temporary-assistance>**
  - The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, also known as Temporary Assistance (TA), is a program designed to provide cash benefits to

low-income families for the household's children such as clothing, utilities and other services.

Upon approval of TA, recipients must participate in employment and training services through the Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) program,

**<https://mydss.mo.gov/missouri-work-assistance>**. The MWA program helps TA recipients transition from TA to a job by helping set goals and get the skills needed to find a job and support the recipient's family.