

Should I Represent myself?

You have the right to represent yourself in court. This is called appearing "pro se" or acting as a "self-represented litigant."

You also have the right to bring an attorney to court. However, in most civil cases, the court will not appoint an attorney for you. You will have to pay for your own attorney. To find an attorney in your area, contact your local bar association or visit [Locate Your Lawyer](http://LocateYourLawyer) at inbar.reliaguide.com/home.

You are expected to follow the same rules as a lawyer. If you choose to represent yourself you will need to spend time learning court procedure and local rules. Jennings Local Court rules are available in the Clerk's Office and at: www.in.gov/courts/files/jennings-local-rules.pdf. **Judges and court clerks cannot tell you what to do or what to say.**

Not following the rules may negatively effect the outcome of your case. It could also cost you money.

There are free self-help resources available. Information concerning self-service legal resources are available at <https://www.in.gov/courts/selfservice/> and indianalegalhelp.org/. There is also a Rural County Legal Advice Hotline provided by the Indianapolis Legal Aid Society at 317-635-9538. Self-help legal kiosks are located at the Jennings County Public Library and on the second floor of the courthouse. There is also a public access terminal available outside the Clerk's Office for copies of documents and research. Copies are available for \$0.25 a page.

Courthouse Contact Information

- County Clerk 812-352-3070
- Prosecutor's Office 812-352-3041
- 24 N Pike St, Vernon, IN 47282

Jennings County Public Library

- 812-346-2091
- 2375 N State Hwy 3, North Vernon, IN 47265

Hours

Monday-Thursday 9:00 am- 9:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am- 6:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm



Tips for Self-Represented Litigants

What to Know: Before Court

✓ Getting to Court

Allow extra travel time in case of delays. You can lose your case if it is called and you are not at court. A warrant for your arrest could also be issued for failure to appear.

✓ Interpreters and Reasonable Accommodations

If you do not speak English, the court will give you a free interpreter and make reasonable accommodations. Please contact the Clerk at 812-352-3070 if accommodations are necessary.

✓ Court Costs

You will probably have to pay a fee to file a court case. If you do not have money to pay the fee, ask the clerk for a fee waiver application. A decision will be made as to whether the fee should be waived based on your application.



Resources

Legal Aid

A non-profit organization that provides civil legal services including community education, assistance to victims of domestic violence, information and community referral, legal clinics, pro bono attorney referral, and pro se assistance. There is little or no cost to their services.

1531 13th Street, G330, Columbus, IN 47201

877-378-0358

Monday to Thursday 8:30 am to 4 pm

Application/ Intake Hours

Monday & Wednesday- 10am to 12pm

Tuesday & Thursday -1pm to 3pm

Indiana Parenting Time Helpline

A free service you can use to talk about parenting time issues with an attorney. The Parenting Time HelpLine can give you legal information and help you get a better understanding of the Indiana Parenting Time Guidelines. The attorneys provide legal education, explanation, and resources regarding establishing parenting time, or enforcing a parenting time order.

Monday-Friday 8 am -4 pm 844-836-0003

Indiana Legal Services – New Albany

The largest provider of free civil legal assistance to low-income people in Indiana. ILS helps clients who are faced with legal problems that harm their ability to obtain basic needs such as food, shelter, income, medical care or personal safety and family law where there is domestic violence, housing, consumer law, access to health care, and access to government benefits. No criminal law.

3303 Plaza Drive, Suite 5, New Albany, IN 47150

Monday-Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

<https://www.indianalegalservices.org/>

812-945-4123



What to Know: During Court

✓ Courtroom Rules

Do not wear a hat or a coat inside.

✓ Talking to the Judge

Do not interrupt when someone else is talking. The judge will give everyone a chance to talk, but you may have to wait for your turn. When talking, address the judge directly, not the other side.

✓ Preparing Your Case

Always come prepared to court. Bring all of your paperwork and anything else you may need.