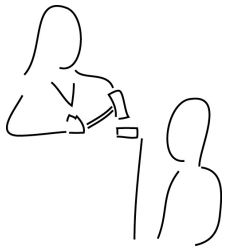


# How Do I Represent Myself?



## Do I need a lawyer?

It is a good idea to have a lawyer to represent you. But it is not always necessary or possible. This guide will help you decide if you need a lawyer, or not.

## You may need a lawyer if...

- You have a complicated case or a case that may become complicated.
- You want legal advice.
- You want to discuss strategies for your case.
- You want a confidential attorney-client relationship.

## How do I hire a lawyer?

To hire a lawyer, you can call your local Bar Association, and ask for a referral.

If you are low income, you may qualify for free or low-cost legal help.

## You may not need a lawyer if...

- You understand all your options and can make informed choices about your case.
- You are willing to learn and understand the law and the rules and procedures that apply to your case.
- You have time to prepare your case.
- You can follow written instructions and work on your own.

## How do I represent myself?

1. Read about the law that applies to your case. Do research at the Law Library.
2. Make sure you follow the court procedures. To do this, you must read the laws that affect your case. We can show you how to do this.
3. Look at other options that could solve your problem without having to go to court, such as mediation. For more information on mediation, contact our office.



4. Keep track of all deadlines — especially deadlines for filing papers and serving the other party. If you miss these deadlines, you may lose your case.
5. Go to the courtroom where your hearing will be and watch some cases. You can learn:
  - Where everyone sits
  - How to explain your case to the judge
  - How much time each side has to talk
6. Be prepared for your court hearing. Have copies of:
  - All the papers you filed
  - All the papers the other party served you
  - Anything you have not served the other side but want to use in court. If you have photos or letters, you must mark each one with a label. (Exhibit 1, etc.)
7. Explain your side. Be brief and clear. Do not talk about things that do not support your case.
8. Show respect for the judge, the court clerks, and other people in the courtroom. Do not interrupt the judge or the other side. Do not make personal attacks against the other side.

## Can I get help to represent myself?

Yes. We cannot be your lawyer, but we have information and books that will help you represent yourself.

**SAMPLE**  
Not Legal Advice