Rural Court-based Self-help Programs Resources/Information

Websites

California (20 of 58 counties are quite rural):

Superior Court of Placer County (part of regional program with legal

services) - <http://www.placercourts.org/d_fcc.htm>

Superior Court of Glenn County (part of SHARP regional program) - <http://www.glenncourt.ca.gov/court_info/self_help.html>

Superior Court of Kern County (nice use of John Greacen's legal info/advice basic form which has been adopted by the California Judicial Council in an interactive format:

<http://www.kern.courts.ca.gov/whatcando.asp>

Superior Court of Kings (very user friendly):

<http://www.kings.courts.ca.gov/>

Videos

Videos from rural programs that might be of interest can be found at: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/equalaccess/kleps.htm>

SHARP-Self-Help and Regional Assistance Program: Superior Courts of Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties Windows Media Player: [32K ] [341K ] Apple QuickTime: [32K ] [341K ] Transcript (DOC, 24 KB) A collaborative self-help center focusing on the needs of three rural counties, featuring extensive videoconferencing between counties to extend services to remote areas.

Legal Assistance Center: Superior Court of Calaveras County Windows Media Player: [32K ] [341K ] Apple QuickTime: [32K ] [341K ] Transcript (DOC, 25 KB) An extensive, community-wide legal assistance center staffed by a small claims advisor, superior court clerk, and family law facilitator, which provides litigants with public computers equipped with access to self-help Web sites and forms.

Night Court for Child Support Calendar: Superior Court, Inyo Windows Media Player: [32K ] [341K ] Apple QuickTime: [32K ] [341K ] Transcript (DOC, 34 KB) This unique court combines a dedicated child support calendar in a night-court setting that allows working parents to attend court without losing pay. The efficiency and effectiveness of the court are enhanced by parents' increased participation and by the availability of additional resources, such as the Family Law Facilitator.

Visual Guides to the Courts: Superior Court of Siskyou County Windows Media Player: [32K ] [341K ] Apple QuickTime: [32K ] [341K ] Transcript (DOC, 28 KB) The court produced visual storytelling brochures that walk litigants through eight subject areas of the legal system. To design the brochures so that they incorporate the public's perspective, the court organized seven public forums around the county, collaborated with other agencies and stakeholders in the justice system, and met with representatives of different cultures in the community. The court distributed the guides at courthouses, family resource centers, public health and mental health organizations, hospitals and clinics, schools, nonprofit social service agencies, public libraries, law libraries, law enforcement agencies, and the local bar association as well as in Native American tribal communities. Six of the guides have been translated into Spanish.

Tip of the Day Radio Program: Superior Court of Ventura County Windows Media Player: [32K ] [341K ] Apple QuickTime: [32K ] [341K ] Transcript (DOC, 24 KB) The Tip of the Day program consists of five-minute live public-service radio announcements in Spanish Monday through Friday at 10:30 a.m. on KOXR, a Spanish-language radio station. The court started the program in mid 2002 as a way to promote the court's no-cost self-help legal access centers. Topics are chosen from questions that have previously been raised by people seeking help at the centers. Each tip is intended to provide general information to the community while also informing citizens of the wide range of services and programs offered by the court. Since the program was implemented, the number of people seeking assistance at the self-help legal access center in La Colonia, the predominately Spanish-speaking neighborhood of Oxnard, has more than doubled.

Public Law Center: Superior Court of Nevada County Windows Media Player: [32K ] [341K ] Apple QuickTime: [32K ] [341K ] Transcript (DOC, 25 KB) The Public Law Center assists the growing number of self-represented persons involved in the court system and improves access to justice for all members of the community. This legal self-help center provides information to persons who are not represented by an attorney and who may have to navigate through court procedures on a number of legal issues such as adoption, conservatorship, guardianship, name changes, unlawful detainer, traffic, appeals, civil harassment, neighbor disputes, and jury service.

**Services offered with Central Support from Administrative Office of the Courts**

**Alaska:**

* + Telephone helpline
  + Internet-posted resources
  + Workshops, lectures & classes
  + Training on resources, law & procedure

**Idaho:**

* + Workshops by circuit rider in one district
  + Central full-service office and trained Deputy Clerks providing limited services in other districts
  + Internet-posted resources - document assembly forms created in conjunction with Idaho Legal Aid Services
  + AT&T language line available with speaker phones

**Montana:**

* + Montana State Law Library telephone helpline
  + Internet posted resources

**New Mexico:**

* + State Judiciary web-site with standard forms for divorce and domestic violence cases

**North Dakota:**

* + Judiciary Internet-posted resources

**Wyoming:**

* + Divorce and child support forms developed under direction of Supreme Court by Citizen’s Access to the Court’s Committee
  + Internet-posted resources

**Utah (Proposed):**

* + Telephone helpline
  + Video connection via Internet
  + Internet-posted resources and OCAP document assembly
  + Information workshops (pilot in 2 districts in 2007, if legislature funds it)

**Tapping Existing Urban Resources**

**Nevada:** 2 large volume counties with Internet-posted resources, accessible through Supreme Court’s website (Clark & Washoe); Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans providing self-help divorce clinics, plus free and reduced fee services

**Arizona:** Maricopa County originally developed numerous resources, now state-wide services through centers and Internet-posted resources

**New Mexico:** State Judiciary web-site with standard forms for divorce and domestic violence cases

**Regional Planning for Services**

**California:** SHARP project in 3-county area, w/ 40 percent rural population in 1 county and majority rural population in other 2 counties. Combined poverty rate of 19%, putting them in poorest quartile of state counties. Project: Staffed self-help centers at several courts provide walk-in and phone assistance; videoconferencing links self-help centers to provide workshops, one-on-one help, and staff supervision by one supervising attorney.

(Although we often don’t think of California as rural, 20 of their 58 counties are quite rural. They also have a non-unified court system. They have had standard Judicial Council forms available for many years; but there are many local forms.)

Imperial County California partners with the Mexican Consulate and the University of Mexicali across the border. Three fourth year law students from Mexicali UABC doing their mandatory internship in the court, work with the family law facilitator and self-help program. In addition two interns from the Mexican Consulate (Mexican Attorneys) also assist with self-help workshops, mobile self-help outreach initiative and family law presentations. Website: <<http://www.sre.gob.mx/calexico/>>.

**Developing Resources Locally**

**Lancaster County, PA:** County Court develops resources and services, both in-person and Internet posted, extending County Law Library services

**Idaho (pre-1998):** 2 counties create standard forms for default divorce; both Idaho Legal Aid Services and the Idaho Volunteer Lawyer’s Program create forms and offer workshops for default divorce; IVLP also creates forms and workshops for modifications

**Arizona:** Maricopa County originally developed numerous resources, now state-wide services through centers and Internet-posted resources

**Oregon:** local courts develop forms for use in their courts; now AOC optional forms (may not be accepted by some courts/facilitators)

**Demographics and Geography**

**Alaska**

Area: 572,000 square miles - 2004 population: 650,000

Population density: 1.1/square mile (U.S. average = 80/square mile)

Population distribution: 40% live in Anchorage; the remaining 60% spread in hundreds of small towns/villages, many inaccessible by road

Per capita money income: $22,660 (national average = $21,587)

Poverty: Less than 10% live below federal poverty level (national average = 12.5%)

Education: above national average

Languages: 14.3% speak language other than English at home (national average = 14.1%)

Internet available throughout most of the state

**Utah**

Area: 82,144 square miles - 2005 population: 2,469,585

Population density: 27.2/square mile (U.S. average = 80/square mile)

Population distribution: 77% live in the 4 Wasatch Front counties stretching from Ogden through Salt Lake City to Provo

Per capita money income (1999): $18,185 (national average = $21,587)

Poverty: 10% live below 2003 federal poverty level (national average = 12.5%)

Education: above national average

Languages: 12.5% speak language other than English at home (national average = 14.1%)