



Court Help Program Update

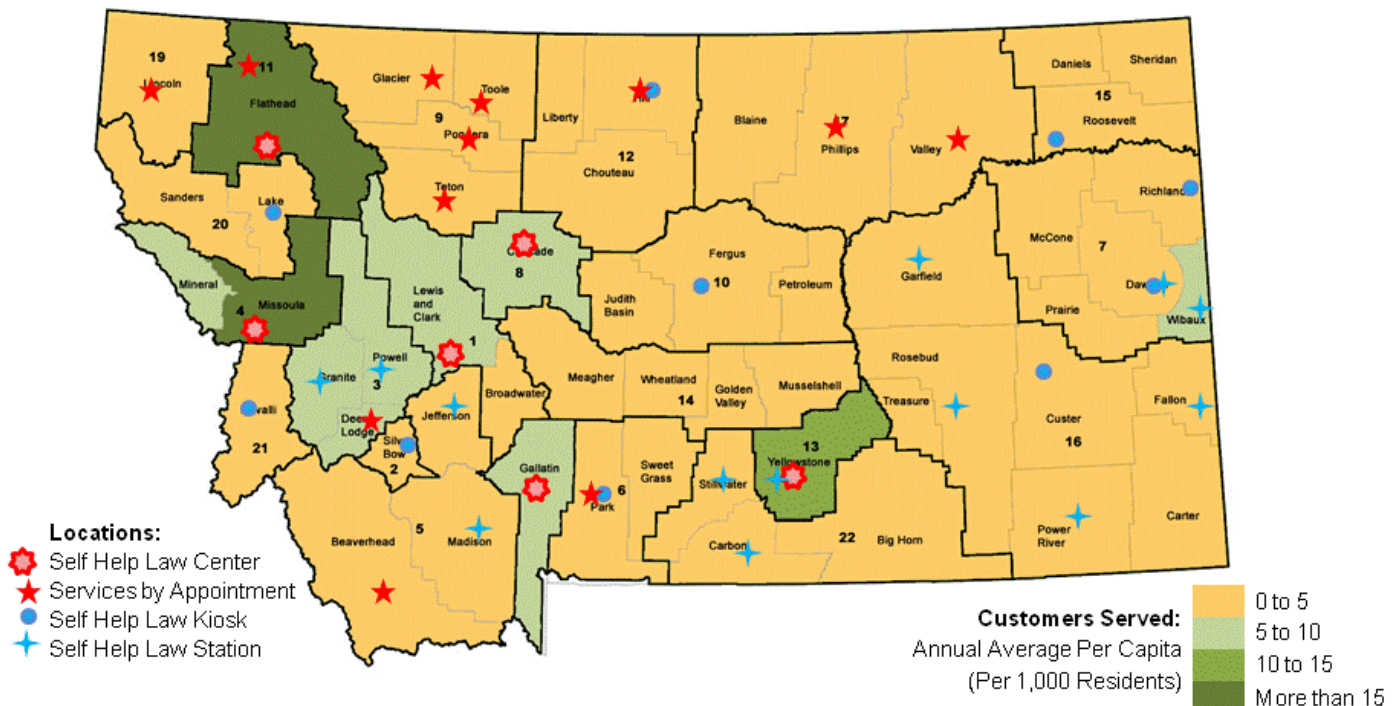
Spring 2014

The following summarizes the operations of the Court Help Program of the Montana Supreme Court. The Court Help Program is designed to better meet the legal needs of Montana citizens through assisting self represented litigants and enhancing pro bono opportunities.

Court Help Program Self Help Law Centers assist Montanans in acquiring legal information and resources to meet their legal needs. In addition to directing customers to attorney and agency referral resources, the Court Help Program is equipped to provide legal forms and assist self-represented litigants in successfully filing court documents. The Court Help Program Self Help Law Centers have served Montanans on over 6,200 occasions since January 2014. Approximately eighty percent of self help customers are seeking assistance in a family law or child support matter. Ninety three percent of customers indicate they are seeking legal forms or instructional information while approximately 682 visits were for attorney referral resources.

Updated Court Help Services

Over the last year we were able to expand our services by adding three new Self Help Kiosks in Park, Hill, and Dawson counties as well as numerous self help stations throughout eastern Montana. Here is a map of our service locations and break down of customers served per capita.



For more information about self help services near you visit our interactive website www.courts.mt.gov.

Pro Bono Spotlight

“Spring is nature’s way of saying, ‘Let’s party!’” – Robin Williams. And, I offer the perfect reason to celebrate! Each spring, the First Judicial District bestows their annual pro bono awards upon some incredibly deserving individuals. These 2014 recipients are emblematic of everything that is good in the legal profession. The humble nature and commitment to those less fortunate are often the very innate characteristics that move them to help. May it inspire more to join their in their ranks. Thank you for your service. Salute.

First Judicial District Pro Bono Award Recipients



Alissa Chambers, Esq.
*Crowley Fleck Law Firm
Helena Office*



Michael Fanning, Esq.
*Special Assistant Attorney General
(and Boston Marathon finisher!)*



Erin Farris-Olsen, Esq.
Law Office of Erin Farris-Olsen

Access to Justice Standing Committee examines New York Court System...

Thanks to Lisa Mecklenberg-Jackson, the State Law Library acquired grant funds through the National Center for State Courts, for Self Represented Litigant Committee Chair, Judge Michele Snowberger, and Committee Member, Erin Farris-Olsen, to participate in a seminar featuring New York State’s Access to Justice Program. Judge Snowberger and Ms. Farris-Olsen visited the Help Center located in Bronx, New York and studied the development of interactive forms using A2J software as well as best practices for access to justice programs. The Standing Committee is excited to assist Court Help in program planning and integrating some of the ideas explored in New York.

Welcome Catherine Baker!



Catherine Baker has decided to join our program as the new Self Help Law Facilitator in Gallatin County. A native of Bozeman, Catherine has two bachelor’s degrees from Montana State University including a: B.A. in Political Science and B.S. in Sociology. Catherine earned her J.D. from Gonzaga School of Law in 2013. While in law school she was president of the Criminal Law Society and secretary of the Multi-Cultural Law Caucus. Catherine also worked in the Indian Law Clinic. Her passion for the public interest and extensive background has already demonstrated a substantial contribution to our Court Help team.

New!!! Dissolution with Children Forms Open for Public Comment...

Please take a moment to review the new proposed revised Dissolution with Children Forms on the Court’s website: http://courts.mt.gov/supreme/boards/self_represented_litigants. Email comments and suggestions to the Standing Committee: SCSLRS@mt.gov