

# Filing *Pro Se* in Juvenile Court



**Butler County Juvenile Court**  
**280 N. Fair Avenue**  
**Hamilton, Ohio 45011**

**Ronald R. Craft**  
*Administrative Judge*

**Kathleen D. Romans**  
*Judge*

## **Website:**

[www.butlercountyohio.org/JuvenileJusticeCenter](http://www.butlercountyohio.org/JuvenileJusticeCenter)

## **What is *Pro Se*?**

When a person files legal documents on a *pro se* basis, he or she is filing for himself or herself without the assistance of an attorney. A *pro se* filer must prepare all documents, subpoenas, memoranda, and evidence for presentation to the court. A non-attorney is not permitted to prepare or present any documents for anyone other than himself or herself.

## **CAUTION**

As with any court, citizens are not required to be represented by an attorney and may represent themselves if they so choose. The court must, however, hold any person who represents himself or herself to the same standards in terms of evidence, paperwork, and compliance with the law and rules that must be met by attorneys. **Neither the court nor any court employees can provide you with any legal advice.** The rules of law and the rules of procedure which apply in Juvenile Court can be confusing, even to trained legal professionals. **If you choose to represent yourself, you are doing so at your own risk.**

## **Do you want to talk to a lawyer?**

The Butler County Bar Association operates a Lawyer Referral Service which can provide the name of a subscribing Butler County attorney who is available for consultation concerning specific legal issues. The Lawyer Referral Service can be reached at (513) 896-6671.

The Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati provides information and limited legal services at no cost to financially qualified persons. The Legal Aid Society can be reached at (513) 241-9400.

## **Are there other resources?**

*Pro Se* litigants may do individual research at the Butler County Law Library located at 10 Journal Square, Suite 200, Hamilton, Ohio 45011. The library can be reached at (513) 887-3455.

## **What can I file *Pro Se*?**

You may create documents for filing on your own or you may use packets (with instructions) prepared for public use. Pre-printed packets are available at the Juvenile Court for a fee, or can be downloaded free of charge from the Juvenile Court's website. A complete list of available packets is provided on the back page of this pamphlet.

The Juvenile Court does not and cannot assure that the packets or instructions offered for public use are suitable for your specific legal problem or need.

## **Where do I file?**

**NOTE: If you are currently married but separated and pursuing a matter of custody, visitation, or support, please advise the Deputy Clerk who will then determine if jurisdiction lies with Juvenile Court or Domestic Relations Court.**

When jurisdiction lies with Juvenile Court, documents must be filed with the Clerk of the Juvenile Court. Offices are located at 280 North Fair Avenue, Hamilton, Ohio 45011, on the ground floor of the Judge David J. Niehaus Juvenile Justice Center.

## How do I File?

1. Print (from the website) or pick up the appropriate packet from the Juvenile Court Clerk's office, which is open Monday through Friday from 8: 30 AM until 4:30 PM, except on legal holidays.
2. Fill out the forms in the packet **completely**. The forms should be neatly printed or typed in dark blue or black ink. Forms filled out in some colors of ink or pencil may be rejected because they cannot be adequately scanned.
3. Return the completed forms or authored documents to the Clerk's office, with appropriate filing fee or fees, for review. Fee(s) payment may be made by cash, money order, cashier's check, debit card, American Express, Discover or Mastercard. No checks are accepted.
4. After the forms or documents are reviewed, you will be notified regarding any changes that you need to make before your case can be filed, or you will be notified that your paperwork is ready to be filed. **Paperwork approved or ready to be filed simply means that all basic information appears to be present. It does not guarantee or indicate that paperwork is legally correct or appropriate.**
5. When you pay the appropriate filing fee or fees, completed forms or documents determined to be ready will be filed and a court date will be assigned. **Filing fees are not refundable.**

**NOTE: Completed forms or documents, with appropriate filing fee or fees, received by mail will be reviewed within a few days following receipt. The status of paperwork**

**received will be assessed (as outlined in steps 3-5) and a response will be sent by mail.**

6. Your case will initially be scheduled for what is called a pre-trial. The purpose of a pre-trial is for the court to review the appropriateness of the pleadings (the paperwork), to review service (notice to the parties to the case), to address questions of jurisdiction and applicable law, and to determine what issues, if any, can be resolved without a formal trial.
7. At the pre-trial, the court will determine if the case should be scheduled for mediation, trial, or another pretrial.
8. If the case is scheduled for trial, the parties will be required to present evidence regarding their complaints or motions in accordance with applicable rules and statutes.

## What does it cost to file?

A complete list of filing fees is provided in (Appendix A) the Juvenile Court Local Rules of Procedure. A copy of the rules are available at the Juvenile Court for a \$3.00 fee, or can be downloaded free of charge from the Juvenile Court's website.

*Pro Se* litigants who claim financial inability to pay for filing fees will be required to provide financial disclosure, including but not limited to documentation (i.e. tax forms, pay stubs, etc.) regarding proof of income, and a sworn affidavit which certifies that all information provided is truthful. Anyone who knowingly provides false information within a sworn affidavit may be prosecuted for perjury.

## Other Information

An appropriate motion code should accompany all motion filings. A list of motion codes is available at the Juvenile Court or can be downloaded from the website.

Listed below are packets available:

Complaint for Custody  
Complaint for Grandparent Power of Attorney  
Complaint for Visitation  
Motion for Contempt  
Motion for Continuance (General)  
Motion for Continuance (Juvenile Traffic)  
Motion for Court Order (You must indicate what type of action you are requesting by noting the appropriate motion code)  
Motion for Custody  
Motion for Grandparent Power of Attorney  
Motion for Reconsideration (Juvenile Traffic)  
Motion for Visitation  
Motion of Notice to Relocate  
Motion of Objection to Magistrate's Order  
Motion of Request for Transcript  
Motion to Deny Continuance  
Motion to Modify a Court Order (You must indicate what type of modification you are requesting by noting the appropriate motion code)  
Motion to Set Aside Magistrate's Order