

Individuals who represent themselves in court are referred to as Pro Se Litigants.

You may decide to represent yourself in court and not to hire an attorney. You have the right to represent yourself in Texas courts without the assistance of an attorney. The decision to handle legal matters by yourself can be influenced by many issues such as your ability to find free or low cost legal assistance, the type of legal matter, the Court that has jurisdiction of the legal matter and whether you are initiating the legal action or responding to it.

As a Pro Se Litigant you are expected to:

- Invest time and resources to prepare your case
- Determine the correct court for your case
- Use the correct court forms
- Use the correct spelling of the names of the parties
- Educate yourself and follow the laws and rules that apply to your case
- Comply with court deadlines and procedures
- Understand your rights and responsibilities under the law
- Present information in an organized and concise manner
- Follow the case to conclusion

If these expectations present a challenge for you, we recommend you research the resources available to you at the Nueces County Law Library, on line at texasatj.org/pro-se-litigants and/or TexasLawHelp.org. Court staff members and employees of the District Clerk's Office or the Nueces County Law Library cannot give you legal advice how to proceed if you choose to represent yourself.

As a Pro Se Litigant, you must make sure you understand that laws that control your case and the court rules concerning how to present your case.

Laws

Texas laws which control certain cases can be found as follows:

- Texas Code of Criminal Procedure
- Texas Family Code
- Texas Code of Civil Procedure
- Texas Probate Code

These Codes are available on line and can be reviewed at the Nueces County Law Library.

Rules

Depending on the type of case and the type of court that must hear your case, different rules apply. You are expected to know the rules which apply if you chose to proceed without an attorney.

The courtroom experience can be new and intimidating for some pro se litigants. Many hearings are open to the public and attending a similar hearing with the judge assigned to your case can provide you with a greater understanding of the process.