

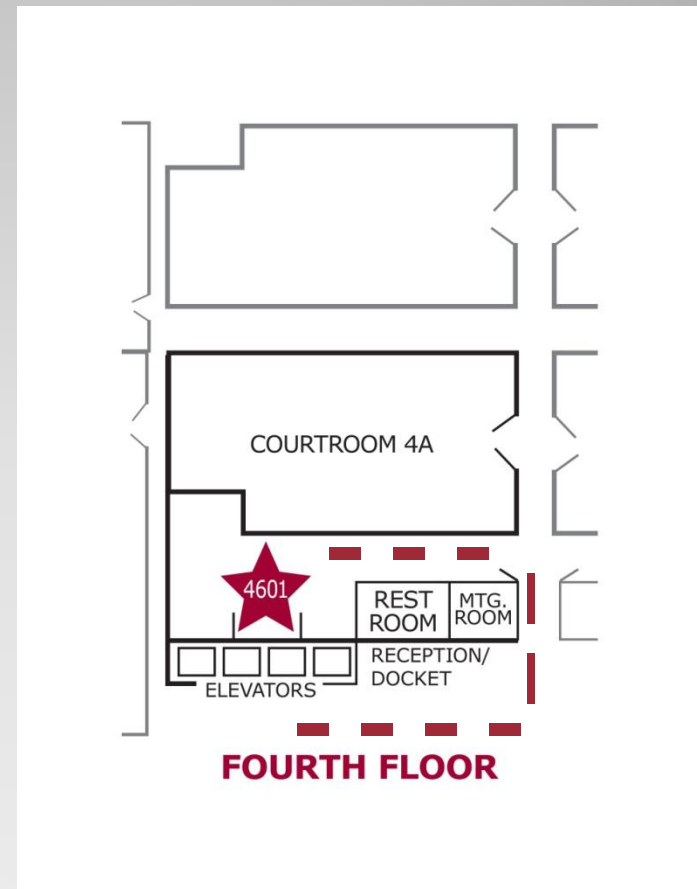
East Baton Rouge Family Court Self Help Resource Center

Meeting the Needs of
Self-Represented Litigants
in East Baton Rouge Family Court

Adapted from Chicago-Kent College of Law
Cook County Circuit Court Help Desk Training Manual,
Southeast Louisiana Legal Services LawHelp Training Materials
and the Louisiana Bar Foundation Student Volunteer Manual

What is the Self Help Resource Center?

- The Self Help Resource Center (SHRC) is a legal information and self-help assistance desk designed to serve as a *starting point* for people who must navigate an unfamiliar and complex court system to resolve legal problems on their own.
- The SHRC is located behind the elevators in the attorney conferences area on the 4th floor. We are open Tuesday & Thursday from 10a.m.- 2p.m.



Who is the Self Help Resource Center?

The SHRC is a collaboration between:

- The East Baton Rouge Family Court
- The Baton Rouge Bar Foundation, Pro Bono Panel
- Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
 - LSU Law Center
- Southern University Law Center
- Louis A. Martinet Legal Society
 - And you, the VOLUNTEERS

General Inquiries About the Court

Getting Around the Courthouse

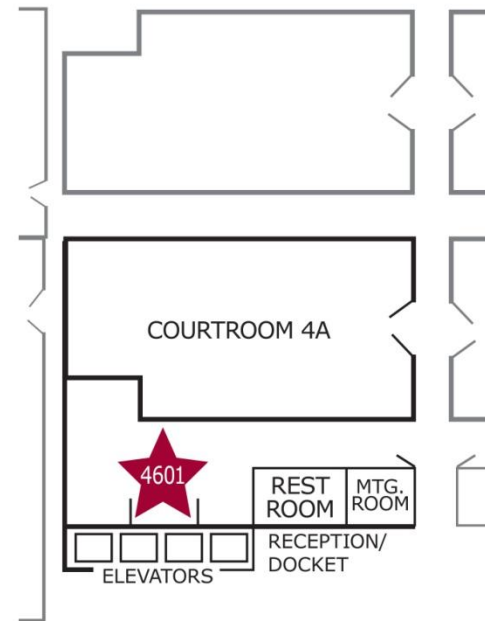
- Some visitors to the Self Help Resource Center need directions to a courtroom or clerk's station. Volunteers and staff should familiarize themselves with the 19th Judicial District Courthouse.
- The next few slides provide an overview of the court's layout. In addition to reviewing the slides, it is best to take some time and walk around the courthouse.

Building Layout

Volunteers assist visitors primarily with matters on the 4th floor.

Chambers and administrative offices are located behind each court room.

The Clerk's and administrative offices are located on the 3rd floor.



FOURTH FLOOR

Fourth Floor

- **East Baton Rouge Family Court**
- **Reception and Docket Information**
- **Self Help Resource Center**
- **Meeting Rooms**
- **Family Law Clinics and State Services**

Third Floor

- **Domestic Docket Clerk**
- **Family Court Processing**
- **Civil Sheriff**

Second Floor

- **Domestic Violence Coordinators**

What do we do?

- **Volunteer law students and staff meet one-on-one with self-represented litigants and potential self-represented litigants under the supervision of an attorney. We assist litigants in EBR Family Court only.**
- **The shifts can be 2 or 4 hours (10a.m.-12p.m. or 12p.m.-2p.m.). Sign up for your shift in advance with Emily Chambers at the BRBF and a BRBF staff member is in attendance at each shift.**
- **In 2012, this collaborative endeavor assisted over 1,200 visitors. Our Self Help Resource Center was recently honored with the LSBA Friend of Pro Bono Award.**

Helping Self Represented Litigants

- Using all available resources, our first goal is to connect visitors with a lawyer:
 - **Students start every session with the 'Introduction Speech'. We remind visitors that it is best to have an attorney represent them in legal matters.**
 - **If they cannot afford an attorney, we can provide them with information about free lawyers through legal services or their local pro bono program. If they cannot qualify for free services, they may choose to represent themselves and we can provide limited services at the help desk.**

Helping Self Represented Litigants

- The Self Help Resource Center provides a number of services to self-represented litigants, including:
 - **Answers to general inquiries about the court**
 - **Referrals to legal aid services**
 - **Assistance understanding and completing court forms and documents**
 - **Notary and printing services**

**East Baton Rouge Family Court
Self-Help Resource Center, 4th Floor
Intake Survey**

Visitor Name: _____ Male ☐ Female ☐ Date: ____/____/____

Parish/State of Residence: _____

1. I have a court case pending on this matter ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, in what court and Parish? _____

2. Were you previously represented by an attorney in this matter? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, why? ☐ can't afford atty, ☐ couldn't find atty, ☐ don't trust attys ☐ not complicated enough for atty ☐ other _____

3. This is my ☐ first, ☐ second, ☐ third, or ☐ more visit to the Self-Help Resource Center.

4. What is the reason for your visit today? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce | <input type="checkbox"/> Visitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attain/Modify Child Custody | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance w/ filing forms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with understanding forms & documents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance completing forms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protect Other | <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Additional Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Release information for a domestic matter | <input type="checkbox"/> General Information about Court |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

5. Are you currently employed? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, Job Title _____

6. What is your yearly household income: ☐ Under \$10,000 ☐ \$10,000 to \$20,000 ☐ \$20,000 to \$30,000
☐ \$30,000 to \$40,000 ☐ \$40,000 to \$50,000 ☐ \$50,000 and above

7. Are you currently receiving: ☐ Social Security/Disability, ☐ Unemployment, ☐ TANF/Food Stamps,
☐ Subsidized Housing Benefits, ☐ Other government benefits, ☐ None

8. How did you learn about the Self-Help Resource Center or who referred you? _____

9. Other information that will help us assist you? _____

DISCLOSURE

I am requesting that the Self-Help Resource Center assist me with information and documents concerning my legal issue. **I understand that neither the Self-Help Resource Center, nor anyone associated with the Self-Help Center, can provide me with legal advice nor represent me or any of my interests in this or any other matter.** I understand that the Self-Help Center may assist both sides in cases. I do not have any expectation of confidentiality concerning any matter discussed and understand that if I wish to have a confidential consultation, I should consult with or retain a private attorney. I have read and understand the disclosure statement written above.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Brief Q&A (0-5min)	<input type="checkbox"/> Provided Form(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Assisted w/ Filing forms
<input type="checkbox"/> Extended Q&A (5-15min)	<input type="checkbox"/> Assisted w/Form(s) Preparation	<input type="checkbox"/> Form Comprehension
<input type="checkbox"/> In-Depth Q&A (15+ min)	<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed Completed Form(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyzed Court or Other Document(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Assisted w/ Computer/Research	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Referred elsewhere: ☐ Yes/ ☐ No. Where: _____

Notes: _____

It All Begins with INTAKE

Recording Visitor Information

- The first step for each visitor is for them to complete the Visitor Information Intake Form including disclaimer.
 - Blank forms are located at the desk
 - Have each visitor complete and sign the form first
- Each visitor to the SHRC will be recorded by the BRBF using information they provided on the Visitor Intake Forms. Be sure that you make visitors complete the intake form at the start of the visit, request that they complete the survey at the end of the visit, and make sure Emily has all intake sheets at the end of your shift.
- Please note: Recording accurate information is essential to making sure we provide the necessary services for self-represented litigants and to secure continued funding for the help center.

Facilitated Use of Online Resources

LawHelp.org/LA

- LawHelp.org is an online resource that provides referrals to local legal aid offices, basic information about legal rights, self-help information, court information, links to social service agencies, and more. Southeast Louisiana Legal Services Corporation administers Louisiana's LawHelp Project.
- All computers at the SHRC have their homepage set to LawHelp.org. If the page does not automatically open, the site's URL is <http://www.lawhelp.org/la>



Using LawHelp.org

- The best way to navigate LawHelp is to browse by legal topics such as "Family & Children", "Housing", and "Consumer Issues".
- Users can also search for specific resources using the search field at right
- LawHelp also makes certain self-help court forms, letters and documents available for self-represented litigants.





LAWHELP.ORG/LA

LOUISIANA'S ONLINE GUIDE TO FREE LEGAL HELP

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**Learn about your rights, finding legal help,
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down the page.**

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"How to get legal help" has
information about who may be
able to get free legal help from
some programs.

[are.](#)

[Where to take
survey.](#)



Family & Children

Domestic Violence, Divorce,
Support, Custody, Visitation,
Child Abuse. Click for More....



Housing

Landlord & Tenant, Public
Housing, Security Deposits,
Evictions, Foreclosures....



Employment



Consumer Issues

Visit ProBono.Net/LA [→](#)

Online resource for lawyers
and legal advocates serving
the public interest.

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above. Ask a LiveHelp
person for help finding
information. It's free!

[2008 Poverty Guidelines](#)



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Online resource for lawyers
and legal advocates serving
the public interest.

**Learn about your rights, finding legal help,
courts, community help. To see more, scroll
down the page.**

Click [here](#) to look for free legal help.

How to use LawHelp: click [here](#) for a slide show. En
Español: apriete [aquí](#).

Download a free PowerPoint viewer if you need one -- click [here](#).

**Help us make LawHelp better! Click [here](#) to take
our quick online survey.**



Family & Children

Domestic Violence, Divorce,
Support, Custody, Visitation,
Child Abuse. Click for More....



Housing

Landlord & Tenant, Public
Housing, Security Deposits,
Evictions, Foreclosures....



Employment



Consumer Issues

Click here for a list
of programs that
offer free legal
help.

Search

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[2008 Poverty Guidelines](#)



LawHelp.Org/LA is Administered by Southeast Louisiana State Bar Association

LawHelp/LA Home

Here is a list of programs that provide free legal help to low-income residents. [Look for help with matters involving criminal law.](#) [Lawyer referral information.](#)

You can look for legal programs by name, in alphabetical order, or you can look for programs that offer free legal help by picking a parish.

By Name

By Service Area

[A-C](#) [D-F](#) [G-I](#) [J-L](#) [M-O](#) [P-R](#) [S-U](#) [V-Z](#) [View All](#)

A [back to top](#)

Acadiana Legal Service Corporation

1020 Surrey Street, Lafayette, LA 70501

337-237-4320

www.la-law.org

Acadiana Legal Service Corporation (Alexandria Office)

620 Murray Street, Alexandria, LA 71309

318-443-7281

www.la-law.org

Acadiana Legal Service Corporation (Lake Charles)

GO

[Tips on Searching](#)

SPECIAL NEWS ITEMS

Louisiana Road Home News

Look Here for program updates from the Louisiana Road Home Media Center.

LiveHelp is Here! (Click [here to see more....](#))

Need help finding the information you need? LiveHelp can help. Hours are M-F, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (CST).

Additional Self-Help Forms Online

- Self-help forms, letters and documents are available on LawHelp in the following areas:
 - Employment
 - Family Law
 - Housing
 - Life Planning



Assistance with Court Forms

- **The SHRC provides certain standardized forms for self-represented litigants in common areas such as divorce, custody and basic civil procedure.**
- **There is a form bank at the SHRC with blank copies of each form.**
- **Volunteers assist visitors in understanding and completing ONLY THE COURT-APPROVED FORMS.**
 - **We do not assist with third-party self-help forms (off the internet, self-prepared, 'copying off a neighbor'). Visitors are generally pleased to hear that we can provide them with ready-made forms, even when they have paid for forms online.**

Available Forms Include

- 103 Divorce
- Establish Custody
- Modify Custody
- Child Support Modification
- *In Forma Pauperis*
- Certain general Motions & Rules

Additional Online Resources

- Use of CourtConnect to access public information including current case information
- Visitors often want to know what their 'next step' is. We must check CourtConnect to determine what step they are on. The visitors often have difficulty explaining what steps they have already completed.



Typical Self Help Process

1. Visitor enters the Self Help area and completes the intake sheet and disclaimer. Law student will introduce themselves and the supervising attorney using the 'introduction speech'. This includes explaining the options to get an attorney and what it means to proceed Pro Se.
2. Litigant will discuss legal issue with volunteer and obtain necessary forms. They will work with an SHRC volunteer law student to understand and complete the appropriate forms. Volunteer attorney will monitor and supervise and may notarize. No legal advice is given at any time.
3. Students review the overall process with the litigant, but focus on the first or next step that they need to accomplish in the process.

Typical Self Help Process

4. Student will direct the litigant to the Clerk of Court's office to file. They should make sure that litigants have *instruction sheets and flow chart* if applicable. The form packet has all the forms the litigant will need for the entire process. It will be filed in parts.
5. Very often litigants will visit the desk again for assistance in determining the 'next step'.

**Divorce Art. 103-
No Minor Children [D4]**

This form is intended for married individuals seeking a divorce who:

- ✓ Have **no** minor children born during the course of the marriage; and
- ✓ Have been separated for a period of at least one hundred and eighty (180) days; and
- ✓ East Baton Rouge Parish is the parish where the parties last resided together as husband and wife, or East Baton Rouge Parish is the parish of Petitioner's domicile, or East Baton Rouge parish is the parish of Defendant's domicile.

Before using this form, litigants should complete an intake form with a SHRC Volunteer to determine if they are eligible.

Instructions:

1. Be sure you have the correct petition.
2. Fill in the blanks with 100% accurate information- *any false statement made under oath contained in the foregoing petition may constitute perjury.*
3. Check all options that pertain to your situation.
4. If you have trouble reading, writing, or understanding what is in this petition, ask a SHRC Volunteer for help.
5. Once you have filled out your petition, ask a SHRC Volunteer to look through it with you to ensure it is correct and complete.

What you will Need:

1. The exact date of your marriage AND separation.
2. The service of a Notary Public
3. You may need the address of your spouse in order to have this petition served.
4. The necessary court costs by cash or money order OR an *in forma pauperis* application (provided by Clerk of Court).

Let's look at one common form:

Petition for 103 Divorce without Children.

There is an instruction packet and flow chart as well.

The form packet has all the forms the litigant will need for the entire process. It will be filed in parts.

Petition for 103(1) Divorce – No Minor Children

PETITIONER

VERSUS

DEFENDANT

Number _____ Division _____
THE FAMILY COURT
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA

SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT
PETITION FOR 103(1) DIVORCE - NO MINOR CHILDREN

The petition of _____ [PETITIONER], a major
domiciled in the Parish (or County) of _____, State of _____, with
respectfully represents:

I. DEFENDANT

Made Defendant herein is _____ [DEFENDANT], a major
currently domiciled in the Parish (or County) of _____, state of _____.

II. RESIDENCE

The parties were married on ____ / ____ / ____ in the Parish (or County) of _____,
State of _____. The parties' last matrimonial domicile was in
the Parish (or County) of _____, State of _____.

III. DATE OF SEPARATION

Petitioner and Defendant began living separate and apart on ____ / ____ / ____ and
have continued to live separate and apart since that time. The parties have not reconciled.

IV. ARMED FORCES

Neither party is an active member of the United States armed forces.

*Forms prepared through collaboration of Self Help Resource Center Volunteers and the 19th Judicial District Court
for the Parish of Orleans. No representation or enrollment as counsel is expressed or implied.*

PRAAYER

WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that [check all that apply]:

____ After all legal delays and due proceedings, Petitioner be granted a divorce in accordance
with the provisions of Civil Code Article 103(1) and 103.1(1)(a);

____ Petitioner/Defendant [circle one] desires to keep the maiden name/married name [circle
one] of _____ [maiden name/married name].

____ Defendant be cast with all costs of these proceedings;

____ Petitioner and Defendant split costs of these proceedings equally;

____ That Petitioner be allowed to file and proceed with this divorce *in forma pauperis*.

____ For all general and equitable relief.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

BY: _____
(Signature)
IN PROPER PERSON (Print Name)
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone Number _____

____ DEFENDANT TO ACCEPT SERVICE

____ SERVE DEFENDANT

Name: _____
Address: _____

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Verification

PETITIONER

Number _____ Division _____
THE FAMILY COURT

VERSUS

PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

DEFENDANT

STATE OF LOUISIANA

VERIFICATION

STATE OF LOUISIANA
PARISH OF _____ [PARISH WHERE SIGNED AND NOTARIZED]
BEFORE ME, notary public, came and appeared: _____, [PETITIONER]
Who, after being first duly sworn, deposed that:

_____ [PETITIONER] is the Petitioner in the above and foregoing
numbered and entitled cause, that all of the allegations of fact made in the Petition are true
and correct, except those allegations made on information and belief, and that as to these,
affiant believes them to be true.

(Signature)
PETITIONER

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED
before me, on this ____ day of _____, 20__.

NOTARY PUBLIC, No.:
Printed Name:
My Commission Expires:

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Acceptance of Service and Waiver of All Delays

PETITIONER
VERSUS

DEFENDANT

Number _____ Division _____
THE FAMILY COURT
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA

ACCEPTANCE OF SERVICE AND WAIVER OF CITATION AND ALL DELAYS
STATE OF _____ [STATE WHERE SIGNED AND NOTARIZED]
PARISH OF _____ [PARISH WHERE SIGNED AND NOTARIZED]

BEFORE ME, the undersigned notary public, personally came and appeared:
_____, who, after being duly sworn, did state that:
Defendant acknowledges receipt of a certified copy of the above-captioned "PRO SE PETITION
FOR 103(1) DIVORCE - NO MINOR CHILDREN," entitled _____
v. _____, filed _____ [FILING DATE] with the docket
number _____ [CASE NUMBER] on the docket of The Family Court for the Parish of East
Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana.

Defendant expressly and formally acknowledges and accepts service of a certified copy
of the petition and waives the issuance of formal citation and service of process.

Defendant further waives all legal delays allowed by law, particularly those delays
allowed for answering and/or excepting to the pleadings provided in Louisiana Code of Civil
Procedure Articles 928, 1001, and 1002.

Defendant further waives notice of trial, and waives Defendant's appearance at trial of
this matter.

Defendant acknowledges that by signing here Petitioner will be allowed to go forward
with this lawsuit in Defendant's absence, and Defendant understands that Petitioner intends to do
so.

Defendant acknowledges that Defendant may be cast with some or all of the court costs

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in this proceeding.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

BY: _____
DEFENDANT [Signature]

IN PROPER PERSON-[Print]

Address

Telephone Number

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED
before me, on this ____ day of _____, 20 ____.

NOTARY PUBLIC, No.:
Printed Name:
My Commission Expires:

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On the first visit, we generally take the litigant through the petition, verification, and waiver or 'service'. The litigant will complete petition and swear to verification.

They will then file with the Clerk of Court using cash, money order, or the IFP.

We may suggest they return after the waiver (or sheriff service) is complete. As you may know the motion for preliminary default must be filled out carefully, so we often suggest that the litigant visit again for help with the PD.

Motion for Preliminary Default (with Certificate and Order)

PETITIONER
Number _____ Division _____
THE FAMILY COURT
VERSUS
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

DEFENDANT STATE OF LOUISIANA

MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY DEFAULT

ON MOTION of Petitioner and on suggesting to this Honorable Court that:

1.

A Petition for Divorce was filed in this matter on the ____ day of _____, 20__.

2.

____ Defendant was served with the Petition for Divorce on the ____ day of _____, 20__; or

____ Defendant accepted service and waived citation and all legal delays, as evidenced by the

Acceptance of Service filed herein, which was executed by the defendant on the ____ day of

_____, 20__.

3.

____ More than 15 days have elapsed since service of the Petition and no answer or opposition has been filed; or

____ No answer or opposition has been filed by Defendant since the execution of the waiver that waived all legal delays.

Wherefore Mover desires that the court enter a Preliminary Default against said Defendant.

Respectfully submitted,

BY: _____
(Signature)

IN PROPER PERSON

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

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ORDER

Considering the above Motion of _____:

IT IS ORDERED that a Preliminary Default be entered in the minutes of this court against

_____, in the above captioned matter, in accordance with the law and the rules of this court.

RENDERED AND SIGNED on this ____ day of _____, 20__, at

_____, Louisiana.

JUDGE, THE FAMILY COURT

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Wait . . .

The litigants are instructed to wait 7-10 days, then they should contact their Judge's office by phone to set a court date. All self-represented litigants are expected to appear in court. *This is listed in the instructions and in the flow chart.* The preferred phone number for each division is also listed in the instructions packet.

Judgment of 103(1) Divorce

PETITIONER

VERSUS

DEFENDANT

Number _____ Division _____
THE FAMILY COURT
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA

JUDGMENT OF 103(1) DIVORCE - NO MINOR CHILDREN

This matter came before the Court pursuant to regular assignment. The Court, considering the entire record of this matter, the testimony of the witnesses, the law and evidence being in favor thereof, ruled as follows:

IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that the default herein entered on the ____ day of _____, 20__ [PRELIMINARY DEFAULT DATE] be now confirmed and made final, and, accordingly, let there be a judgment herein in favor of _____ and against _____, decreeing a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* between the parties and dissolving forever the bonds of matrimony heretofore existing between them, on the basis of their having lived separate and apart continuously and without reconciliation for a period of more than one hundred eighty (180) days prior to filing of the Petition for Divorce.

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IT IS FURTHER ORDERED ADJUDGED AND DECREED that
Petitioner/Defendant [circle one] may resume the use of her maiden name/married name,
_____.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED ADJUDGED AND DECREED that all costs of court in this matter are assessed against

____ Petitioner

____ Defendant

____ Petitioner and Defendant split costs of these proceedings equally;

JUDGMENT RENDERED AND SIGNED on this ____ day of _____, 20__ ,
at _____, Louisiana.

JUDGE

Party Submitting Judgment,

Opposing Party

(Signature)

(Signature)

IN PROPER PERSON (Print Name)

IN PROPER PERSON (Print Name)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number

Telephone Number

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SHRC Does Not Give Legal Advice

- The SHRC is a self-help desk. Volunteers facilitate the use of online legal resources and approved forms, but cannot give legal advice.
- **What constitutes legal advice is not always clear, and it is best to err on the side of caution.** There will be a supervising attorney at each shift. If you are unsure as to whether a question crosses the line into advice ask the supervising attorney for help. We do not give legal advice at Self Help at any time.

Definitions

- **Legal Information**

Facts about the law and the legal process

- **Legal Advice**

Advice about the course of action a client should take to further his or her own best interests

General Guidelines

- **Legal Information**

Volunteers should answer questions that call for factual information—questions that start with “who”, “what”, “when”, “where” or “how”. For example, “How do I file”

- **Legal Advice**

Volunteers should *not* answer a question that calls for an opinion about what a litigant should do—questions that contain the word “should” or “whether”. For example, should I file . .

General Guidelines (Example in Domestic Court)

- **Legal Information**

Volunteers should inform a parent of his or her options and the steps needed to carry out an option

- **Legal Advice**

Volunteers should *not* suggest which option the parent should pursue

Examples of state guidelines

- Volunteers *can* cite (or provide copies of) statutes, court rules and ordinances
- Volunteers *cannot* provide an analysis or interpretation of statutes or ordinances based on the specific facts of a litigant's case

Examples of state guidelines

- Volunteers *can* explain what records are kept by the court and what can be made available to the public. Volunteers *can* provide public case information
- Volunteers *cannot* provide confidential case information (There is no reason a volunteer would have access to confidential information).

Examples of state guidelines

- Volunteers do not take complaints about judge's or attorneys. Volunteers *can* explain how and where to file a complaint.
- Volunteers *cannot* provide opinions about the conduct of a judge, court employee or private attorney ("They shouldn't have done that" NO!)

Examples of state guidelines

- Volunteers *can* provide general referrals to other offices or persons (print outs are at the desk)
- Volunteers *cannot* provide referrals to other offices or persons based upon personal preferences ("**Who would be a good attorney for this case?**" Answer: " I can't recommend a specific attorney but there are lawyer referral services.")

Volunteers get questions about attorneys:

Question: Do I need to hire an attorney?

Answer: You have the right to represent yourself in court. However, the court always urges people to consult an attorney about a legal matter.

Question: Who would be a good attorney for this case?

Answer: I can't recommend a specific attorney; that would be a violation of my ethical duty to remain impartial with respect to all attorneys. You can hire any attorney you like. Or you can call the attorney referral service or talk a friend or neighbor whose judgment you trust.

The court can give the number of a bar or non-profit attorney referral program that operates under state rules. It is appropriate to provide contact information for legal aid and pro bono programs.

Examples of state guidelines

- Volunteers *can* provide forms and instructions, and record on the forms information provided by the litigants.
- Volunteers *cannot* provide or suggest the information that should be entered on the forms. Litigants should fill out the forms themselves by hand. We can provide accommodation to those persons with a disability.

What the Court Can Do for You

"We are happy to help you if we can. However, we are allowed to help you only in certain ways, since we must be fair to everyone."

WE CAN

Explain and answer questions about how the court works

Provide you with contact information for resources where you can get legal help

Give you general information about court rules, procedures and practices

Provide court schedules and information on how to get a case scheduled

Provide you with court forms and instructions that are available

Usually answer questions about court deadlines and how to compute them

WE CANNOT

Tell you whether you should bring your case to court

Tell you what words to use in your court papers (however, we can check your papers for completeness)

Tell you what to say in court

Give you an opinion about what will happen if you go to court

Let you talk to the judge outside of court

Change an order signed by a judge

Additional Services

Referrals to Additional Services

- A full list of free legal services for the Baton Rouge area is available at the SHRC and on LawHelp.org
- The largest provider of free legal services for the poor in the Baton Rouge area is Southeast Louisiana Legal Services
- Other common referrals include the Southern Law Clinics
- For domestic violence (DV) issues, refer litigants directly to the in-court Domestic Violence Coordinator on the 2nd Floor and/or SLLS

Additional Services

Notary Services

- Occasionally, visitors will need a notary for forms such as *In Forma Pauperis* and 'verifications'
- If you are a notary, you can help by bringing your seal and being prepared to notarize documents

Additional Services

Printing Services

- Although the court approved forms are available on the Family Court website, we can print out forms and documents relevant to the litigants legal problem at the desk.
- There is no charge for printing, but the amount of material visitors print out should be reasonable. There is a copy machine available on the 3rd floor for a fee.
- Make sure users do not print out excessively long material such as whole sections of the Code or multiple copies of forms or pleadings.

Important Information

- Location
 - Fourth Floor, 19th Judicial District Court
 - 300 North Boulevard in Baton Rouge
 - Parking is available in the surrounding area
- Hours
 - Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10a.m.- 2p.m.
- Dress Code
 - Business Casual
- Contacts
 - Emily Chambers, Baton Rouge Bar Foundation Pro Bono Project
 - emily@brba.org
 - (225) 214-5558

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!