



news

Colorado Judicial Branch
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 5, 2013

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Southwestern Colorado judicial districts offer aid to self-represented litigants

DURANGO, Colo. – The Sixth and 22nd Judicial Districts announced today they have opened new centers in Durango and Cortez to offer help to people representing themselves in non-criminal court proceedings.

The centers are part of a broader program the Colorado Judicial Branch created to help the courts address the ever-growing number of cases in which people forego representation by attorneys. For example, in 63 percent of Colorado divorce cases today, neither party has a lawyer.

The Judicial Branch recently hired 12 case managers to coordinate and provide services to self-represented parties in 11 judicial districts to provide procedural information, locate forms and help complete them, and understand their options to try to resolve disputes outside the courtroom through mediation or other forms of alternative dispute resolution.

“The need for legal resources could not be greater in this large, isolated geographic area of La Plata and Montezuma counties,” said Michelle Sylvain, self-represented litigant coordinator for the Sixth Judicial District (Archuleta, La Plata and San Juan counties). “Many people involved in civil matters don’t qualify for help from Colorado Legal Services, but don’t have sufficient income to hire private counsel.”

Caitlin Stewart, the self-represented litigant coordinator for the 22nd Judicial District (Dolores and Montezuma counties), said: “Self-represented parties often need help navigating the legal process, which means court staff must spend more time processing these cases. My role, and that of the other case managers, will be to help people manage their cases efficiently, helping to ease the courts’ workload.”

Office hours in Durango are 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday; office hours in Cortez are 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information, contact Sylvain at 6thselfhelp@judicial.state.co.us; or Stewart at 970-564-5029 or caitlin.stewart@judicial.state.co.us.