

Court fees too much? Here is what to do:

If you have questions or need assistance filling out these forms, please visit the **SELF-HELP RESOURCE CENTER** at two of the following locations:

24th Judicial District Court, Second Floor
200 Derbigny Street
Gretna, Louisiana
Tues. & Thurs. 10 am – 12 pm

Orleans Civil District Court, Second Floor
421 Loyola Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana
Mon., Weds., & Fri. 9 am – 12 pm

If you cannot afford to **PREPAY** the court costs, you will need to fill out an **In Forma Pauperis (IFP)** form.

You can obtain an *In Forma Pauperis* form from the Self-Help Resource Center or on the courthouse website.

This handout is to help you through the process of obtaining pauper status by completing an *IFP* form.

To qualify as a pauper, you must show to the court that you cannot afford to **prepay** the filing fees.

The law allows paupers to file pleadings with the Clerk of Court's office without paying costs in advance.

What to do when you can't prepay court costs:

An IFP form is used to ask the court to let you file pleadings in your case without paying the Clerk of Court in advance. **This does not mean the filing is free!**

Everything you file with the Clerk of Court's office has a cost. Even if you file as a pauper, the Clerk of Court will still charge filing fees to your account. *This means filing fees will be due when your case is over.* You can ask that the Defendant pay the costs, but the Judge decides how costs will be paid in the end.

Pauper status is not automatically granted to everyone who asks for it. You have to qualify to file as a pauper. To fill out this form, you will need:

- Your picture ID (I.E. a driver's license)
- A friend or family member who knows about your personal and financial information. This person will also need a picture ID!
- Proof of your income, like check stubs or last year tax return, W2 of 1099 forms. If you do not have income, you will need to provide other information. If you have government benefits or assistance (SSI, welfare, food stamps, etc.), you will need to provide proof, like a letter explaining your benefits.
- You will also need a notary. The Self Help Resource Center cannot ensure that a notary will always be present.

It is very important that you provide an answer to every single question on the form. You should not leave any spaces empty. If the question does not apply to you, write N/A or "not applicable".
If you do not fill out every space, the court may deny your pauper status.

If you represent yourself in court, you must follow all of the proper procedures and law.
It is your responsibility to see your case through the whole process.

This handout was developed by The Pro Bono Project | www.probono-no.org | 504-581-4043
This information is only a guide for self-represented litigants. It is not legal advice and should not be considered as legal advice.