

Appeals to the Third District Court of Appeal of Florida

Information for Persons Who Do Not Have a Lawyer

The Clerk's offices at the Circuit Courts for Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties and at the Third District Court of Appeal **are not permitted to provide legal advice** to any of the parties in a pending appeal. Frequently, individuals who are not represented by an attorney (sometimes called "pro se" parties) ask where and how they may obtain legal advice regarding their appeal. The list which follows has some suggestions as provided by The Florida Bar, but should not be considered to be complete. Your local public librarian may be able to assist you with computer access to the Internet or online sites described in this summary.

Pro se parties should try to obtain legal advice regarding their appeals. Important legal rights may be lost if the rules of procedure are not followed. The rules set deadlines and requirements for filing that must be met if a party's points on appeal are to be considered.

The Florida Bar Appellate Practice Section has prepared a very thorough "Pro Se (Self Represented) Appellate Handbook©." The 2016 edition of the Handbook is available online in English, Spanish, and Creole. The English version is available online at:

http://www.flabarappellate.org/prose/pdf/EDIT_ProSe_English_2016.pdf

The Spanish-language version is at:

http://www.flabarappellate.org/prose/pdf/Edit_ProSe_Spanish_2016.pdf

The Creole version of the Handbook is at:

http://www.flabarappellate.org/prose/pdf/Edit_ProSe_Creole_2016.pdf

A paper copy of the Pro Se Appellate Handbook© in English is also available at the front desk of the Clerk's Offices at the Third DCA Courthouse, 2001 S.W. 117 Avenue, Miami, Florida 33175 (open to the public Mon. – Fri. 9 a.m. to noon, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.).

In Miami, the Dade County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service website is at <https://www.dadecountybar.org/page/pubreferralservice>, and the Service may also be reached at (305) 371-2646. As of June 2019, clients are referred to a licensed attorney for a consultation of up to one-half hour for a \$50.00 fee.

The Florida Bar Lawyer Referral Service provides similar services throughout Florida, including Monroe County. The website is at: http://www.unitycoalition.org/files/Flyer1_Florida_Bar_Lawyer_Referral_Service.pdf, and the Service may also be reached at 1-800-342-8011. As of June 2019, the fee for a one-half hour meeting with an attorney is \$25.00.

Copies of the “Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure” are available online through a link on the Third District Court of Appeal website:

<https://www.3dca.flcourts.org/content/download/526818/5853043/Florida%20Rules%20of%20Appellate%20Procedure%20.pdf>

Other Florida court rules, statutes, and opinions may be found online at a publicly-available Internet web site without charge:

<http://www.floridalawonline.net/courts.html>.

Printed copies of the Florida Rules of Court can be reviewed at any of the local law school libraries (Florida International University, the University of Miami and St. Thomas University are all within Miami-Dade County), or at the Law Library on the third floor of the Miami-Dade County Courthouse, 73 West Flagler Street, Miami, Florida 33130.

The Third District Court of Appeal has a website online at <http://www.3dca.flcourts.org/>. Through that website it is possible to access opinions issued by the Court and the docket listing for a particular case—a list of what has been filed and when. The site also contains directions, answers to frequently-asked questions, and other information about the Court.

Criminal and Juvenile Cases: Offices of the Public Defender. In appeals from misdemeanor, felony, and juvenile cases, the Public Defender's offices may provide legal assistance to defendants meeting certain financial eligibility rules.

- (a) Office of the Public Defender, Miami-Dade County
1320 N.W. 14th St.
Miami, Florida 33125
(305) 545-1961
www.pdmiami.com

- (b) Monroe County Public Defender
Offices in Key West (1111 12th Street, Suite 311,
(305) 295-3100); in Marathon (4695 Overseas Hwy., Suite 2,
(305) 289-6015); and in Plantation Key (50 High Point Rd.,
Suite 103, Tavernier, (305) 853-7410).
Website: <http://robertlockwood.org/>

Non-Profit and Volunteer Services. There are several non-profit and volunteer or “pro bono” groups that provide free or reduced-charge legal assistance to those who lack the means to pay for a private attorney. Although each group has its own requirements, generally an individual must prove that his or her income and property are below certain levels in order to be eligible for these services. The list which follows is not an exclusive list, but contains information on groups that have many years of presence and experience in South Florida.

- (a) Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. [Main Office]
4343 West Flagler Street, Suite 100
Miami, Florida 33134
(305) 576-0080
www.legalservicesmiami.org

Monroe County: (866) 686-2760 (and access via the same website shown for the Main Office)

Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., is a non-profit with nearly 30 staff lawyers. Legal Services provides assistance to low-income clients in Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys (Monroe County). Legal Services' attorneys provide assistance with evictions and foreclosures, consumer debts, public benefits (including food stamps, cash assistance, reemployment assistance, and Social

Security disability benefits), educational issues regarding children with disabilities, and other types of civil cases. Details on how to apply for services are here:

<https://www.legalservicesmiami.org/contact-hours>

- (b) Dade Legal Aid
123 N.W. First Avenue
Miami, Florida 33128
(305) 579-5733
Email: psb@dadelegalaid.org
<http://dadelegalaid.org>

Dade Legal Aid is a public interest law firm dedicated to providing free civil legal services to low-income residents of Miami-Dade.

“Put Something Back,” the official pro bono project of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Dade County Bar Association and Dade Legal Aid, provides free attorneys to income-eligible clients unable to be served by another agency in Miami-Dade County.

To Apply: On Tuesdays and Thursdays, “Put Something Back” screens clients for income eligibility and case type. Once accepted, eligible clients are then referred to private attorneys who have agreed to take their case without charging for their services. While the attorneys’ services are free, clients may still be responsible for payment of costs and certain expenses. The project does not handle emergency, criminal, fee generating, personal injury, traffic or medical malpractice cases. If your case needs immediate attention please contact the Lawyer Referral at <https://www.dadecountybar.org/page/pubreferralservice>

For more information, contact psb@dadelegalaid.org

- (c) Self-Help Forms—Circuit Court Website

Guides to self-help for non-lawyers with legal issues in Miami-Dade County, including forms, are also found at: <https://www.jud11.flcourts.org/Self-Help-Center>.

- (d) Cuban American Bar Association (CABA) Pro Bono
2400 South Dixie Highway
Miami, Florida 33133
(305) 646-6006
Email: info@cabaprobono.com
<https://cabaprobono.com/>

This non-profit legal services project is based in Miami. It assists the underprivileged, low-income victims of abuse living within 125% of the federal poverty guideline, and in foreclosure cases, living within 275% of the federal poverty guideline.

- (e) Bankruptcy Bar Association of the
Southern District of Florida
Pro Bono Committee
(Referral form and contact info by County at:
<http://www.bbasdfl.org/article.html?aid=107>)

This is another “pro bono” project established by attorneys in South Florida. Bankruptcy specialists volunteer to assist individuals unable to hire a private attorney. These lawyers may be able to renegotiate indebtedness or to assist a client in obtaining a “fresh start” or a repayment plan through the bankruptcy courts.

- (f) Reemployment Assistance Benefits

In addition to assistance provided by the Public Benefits Unit at Legal Services of Greater Miami (contact information above), special self-help guides for these benefits can be found at <http://www.floridajobs.org/help-center---contact-us>

Self-Help Information and Forms Provided by the Florida State Courts

The Florida Courts have developed an App for smart phones to provide access to information and forms that may assist non-lawyers with legal matters. The App is called “Florida Courts Help,” and details are at:

<https://help.flcourts.org/download-the-app/>

The centralized online site for self-help information and forms, including information about self-help sites throughout Florida, is at:

<https://www.flcourts.org/Resources-Services/Court-Improvement/Self-Help-Information>

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This summary is for informational purposes only, and is not in any way intended to provide professional or legal advice concerning any legal matter, to serve as a substitute for the services of an attorney, or to constitute statements of official policy or procedure on which anyone may rely in the course of any proceeding before any court.