

San Benito Superior Court Self Help Center

Hollister Self Help Center Location:

When: Every MONDAY and WEDNESDAY, except court holidays

Hours: 8:00 am- 12:00 pm

Where: 450 4th St., Hollister, CA 95023

Interpreter: You must bring your own interpreter if needed

The Hollister Self Help Center location can provide the following assistance:

- Assist with Small Claims, Guardianship (of the person), Limited and Probate Conservatorship, Name Change/Gender Change, Restraining Orders, Landlord/Tenant issues, Emancipation, and Civil/Collections (contract cases only).
- Provide community and legal referrals.
- Review and distribution of court forms.
- Explain how to use the internet to locate legal information and court forms.
- You may call with questions (831) 786-7200, option 4. Calls are returned within 72 hours.
- Email at selfhelp.information@santacruzcourt.org; emails are returned within 72 hours. Please make sure to indicate what county you live in when you call or email.
- Small Claims Advisor Phone Line: (831) 786-7370. Messages can be left at anytime. Calls are returned within 72 hours.
- For **FAMILY LAW** assistance in San Benito County, including child support, custody/visitation, divorce and paternity, please see the Family Law Facilitator's Office. You may call (831) 636-4057 or come to the courthouse for information regarding their hours and program.

Watsonville Self Help Center Location:

TO RECEIVE HELP IN WATSONVILLE YOU MUST BRING A COPY OF YOUR COURT FILE AND ALL LEGAL DOCUMENTS. WITHOUT THESE DOCUMENTS THE SHC CANNOT ASSIST.

It is always best to receive services in San Benito where we have access to your court file.

- Santa Cruz Superior Court: 1 Second Street, Room 301, Watsonville, CA.
- Monday-Thursday 8:30-11:30am and 1:00-3:00 pm, no appointments. Closed Friday and the third Tuesday afternoon of the month.
- Assistance with Name change/Gender Change, Restraining Orders, Guardianship (of the person) Limited and Probate Conservatorship, Emancipation and Landlord/Tenant issues, Small Claims, Civil (contract cases), and Collections.
- We provide limited assistance on Family Law based on time and resources. At most we can only help start new cases, provide information and assist with modification. You must have a copy of the last order if you are seeking modifications on current orders. (Without a copy we may not be able to assist. It is best to receive Family Law assistance from the Family Law Facilitator in San Benito)
- If you have questions before you visit please call (831) 786-7200, option 4. Calls are returned in 72 hours. It is best to call first before coming to Watsonville to make sure you are prepared.
- Note services are first come, first served and we may be full before the end of the stated session. It is best to come at the beginning of the session.

What is the Self Help Center?

The Self Help Center helps people who need legal information but do not have lawyers. The Center can give you information, court forms, and help with understanding your legal options. We cannot represent you, and in most cases you will be required to fill out your own court forms with our guidance. We only help with very simple legal situations. Often, we may need to refer you to a private attorney or to the law library for you to do your own legal research. We help many people each day, therefore we usually spend less than 15 minutes with each person and there can be a long wait. We are not responsible for the outcome of your case. Conversations with the Self Help Center are not confidential. We do assist parties on both sides of the case, and we cannot assist you if you are currently represented by an attorney.

Come Prepared

When you arrive: When you arrive please sign in and you will be called in the order your intake form is turned in. Depending on how many people need assistance, the sign in sheet may fill up before the end of the stated hours of operation. We apologize for this, but we do not know how many people will need help on any given day.

Be prepared to wait: The wait may be several hours after you check in. You may also need to return for multiple visits depending on your legal issue.

Cost for Services: There is no cost for the services of the Self Help Center, but you may have to pay for copies and court filing fees at the clerk's office.

How do I hire an attorney? The Self Help Center cannot represent you or give the name of any specific attorneys. We can give you community resources to assist you in finding your own attorney.

What should I bring to Self Help Center? Try to bring a copy of your entire court file (including all of your court case numbers) and any documents that support your legal issue. Also bring a pen, stamps, blank envelopes, and something to keep you busy while you wait. Please keep all cell phones turned off.

What if I don't speak English well? You need to bring your own interpreter to help you fill out your court forms in English. We do not have interpreters.

Come in person: Your case is most important to you and you have the most knowledge about your case. We cannot assist you if you send a family member or friend in your place.

Children: Children are not allowed at the Self Help Center. Your children are very valuable. The waiting time can be hard on them, and you can be distracted by their needs. It is not in your children's best interest to be present when you are talking about your legal problems.

What if I just want a legal form? You can download any state court form at www.courts.ca.gov/forms

Program Changes/Office Closure: Due to our small staff, there can be unexpected office closures. In San Benito County, occasionally there will be Monday closures for court holidays and staff vacation. If you are concerned we may not be open, please call first (831) 636-4057. In Watsonville the center is closed in the afternoon on the third Tuesday afternoon of the month and every Friday. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Web Sites: Santa Cruz Superior Court: <http://santacruzcourt.org/>
San Benito Superior Court: <http://www.sanbenito.courts.ca.gov/>