



**COMPARITIVE RESULTS SUMMARY  
 SURVEY OF ARKANSAS CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES  
 &  
 SURVEY OF ARKANSAS COURT CLERKS  
 REGARDING SELF-REPRESENTED [PRO SE] LITIGANTS**

**29 December 2005**

Pro Se Case Percent in Your Court	<b>Judges</b>	<b>Clerks</b>
5 % or less	44	24
5 – 10 %	41	31
10 – 20 %	9	15
20 – 30 %	4	19
30 – 40 %	-	-
40 – 50 %	-	8
> 50 %	2	-
No Response	-	3
<b>Five highest types of pro se cases [in order from top]</b>		
	Divorce	Divorce
	Order of protection, domestic violence	Order of protection, domestic violence
	Child/spousal support	Name change
	Child custody, visitation	Child/spousal support
	Name change	Child custody, visitation
<b>Percent seeing increase in pro se over past 3 years</b>		
	79	88
<b>Three top referral agencies provided to pro se litigants</b>		
	Legal services	Legal services
	Old case files	Old case files
	Bar association	Public library
<b>Percent with no special procedures or forms [other than Protective Orders] for pro se litigants</b>		
	85	98
<b>Percent that hold pro se litigants to same standards as attorneys</b>		
	67	83
<b>Percent favoring standard protocols for treatment of pro se litigants</b>		
	76	68

Six most helpful actions for improving pro se litigation [in order from top]	Brochures with procedures by case type	Approved forms
	Approved forms	Toll free helpline
	On-site facilitator	Brochures with procedures by case type
	Training court personnel	Website
	Videos of procedures & etiquette	Videos of procedures & etiquette
	Website	Training court personnel
If only one item of support for pro se litigants could be provided, which would be highest priority for you	Approved forms	Approved forms

Comments from each group around certain issues run in parallel in many ways. For example, the responses to the question regarding the respondents concerns about pro se litigants in court cluster in the same ways. The primary concerns center around law and procedures. These comments are the most frequent in number and reference the same concerns. Both judges and clerks talk about “lack of knowledge of the law, pro se litigants being unprepared or failing to appear, and unaware of what they are doing or the impact of what they are doing.”

Another clustering occurs around concerns for pro se litigant needs. These comments should help the committee and commission in fashioning positive change with regard to pro se litigation. Equally important for the same reasons are the descriptions by judges and clerks about the concerns they have regarding pro se litigant impacts on their own work. These two inputs coming in essence from opposite directions should be the building blocks of a more rational and effective/efficient system for everyone involved.

Finally, some of both judge and clerk responses fall into a category called concerns for justice. These comments should serve as measuring devices for whatever the committee and commission create to improve the system.

Another excellent set of examples emerges from the parallel comments of judges and clerks in response to the open-ended question at the end of the survey asking for any additional observations. These statements offer a more explanatory nature on priorities each individual set out in responses to earlier questions. They set out caveats, necessary features and roadblocks to successful reform of pro se litigation. These suggestions as well should guide the development of future committee and commission work.