

Justiceworks, Ltd.'s Family Law Information Center offers unrepresented family law litigants assistance with legal forms, court procedures and referral information for community resources.

Location

The Family Law Information Center is located on the second floor of the Portage County Courthouse.

Hours of Operation

Walk-in hours are
12pm - 1pm
Monday - Friday
or by appointment

Service is also provided on Family Court trial/pre-trial dates. For information on pre-trial dates, please call the Justiceworks, Ltd. office at 715-344-3677

Justiceworks, Ltd is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.



Additional Resources:

Wisconsin Court System:
wicourts.gov

The Wisconsin State Law Library:
wilawlibrary.gov

Legal Information and Education Resource:
legalexplorer.com

Wisconsin Department of Children & Families:
dcf.wisconsin.gov

Portage County Clerk of Court &
Office of Family Court Commissioner:
1516 Church St
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-1364

Portage County Child Support:
817 Whiting Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-1588

CAP Services: 1608 West River Dr.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-343-7100

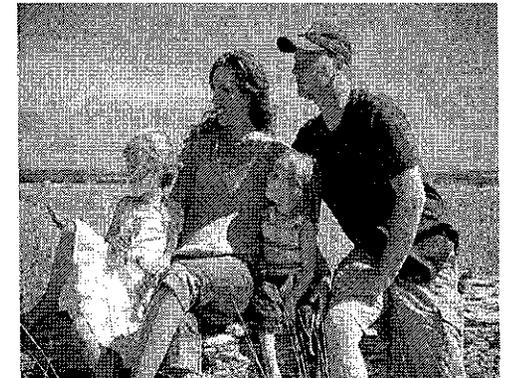
Family Crisis Center: 1616 West River Dr.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-343-7125

Portage County Legal Aid Society:
1608 W. River Dr.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-343-7100

Justiceworks, Ltd
1578 Strongs Ave
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-344-3677
www.justiceworksltd.org



FAMILY LAW INFORMATION CENTER



About the Justiceworks Family Law Information Center

The majority of divorces filed with the Clerk of Courts Office list no attorney for either involved party. In these cases, called pro se divorces, individual litigants represent themselves in family law proceedings without legal assistance. Portage County is not unusual in this circumstance; statewide court statistics demonstrate a dramatic increase in pro se proceedings.

Family law proceedings involve complicated procedures and rules which can challenge even well trained lawyers. During the divorce process and final divorce judgment, a court may enter orders on:

- ◆ Custody, placement, and support of minor children
- ◆ Maintenance
- ◆ Property division
- ◆ Payment of debts

When individuals come to court unfamiliar with the process and unprepared, they are unable to provide complete and accurate information to the judge. This creates costly time burdens for the courts, and lessens the likelihood that the parties will receive an optimal result.

To offer assistance, two non-profit agencies, Justiceworks Ltd. and the Portage County Legal Aid Society, pooled resources, volunteer efforts, and funding to open the Family Law Information Center in November of 2007.

The Center is staffed by community volunteers that have gone through a training process. The Center will assist individuals with legal matters pertaining to family law issues but does not give legal advice to any individual.

Should I Represent Myself?

Representing yourself in court is a big decision. Most people come to court because they need legal guidance to resolve disputes. In many matters, such as a disputed divorce or a complicated child custody case, it is best to obtain legal representation. If you are unsure whether to represent yourself in court it is always a good decision to consult with an attorney first to help you determine the best course of action for your particular situation.

Even when individuals consider all of the reasons why they should obtain a lawyer, many people still decide to represent themselves in court. If you choose to proceed unrepresented, the Family Law Information Center is here to assist you.

The Justiceworks Family Law Information Center will:

- ◆ Help you understand the family court process and the court forms
- ◆ Provide you with all necessary family court forms
- ◆ Provide information regarding Wisconsin statutory law
- ◆ Refer you to community and legal resource information
- ◆ Serve as a resource at any point during the process, from initial filing to final hearing

The Justiceworks Family Law Information Center will not:

- ◆ Give you legal advice
- ◆ Fill out your court forms
- ◆ Give you an opinion about your case
- ◆ Recommend a specific attorney

Family Law Information Center staff will also assist you in understanding the court process and legal forms *at any time during the divorce process*. You may need to come back to the Center for additional help after you have completed the initial filing process.

How do I get started?

Beginning in 2012, all pro se litigants to a family action are required to obtain a *Certificate of Readiness* from the Family Court Commissioner through the Family Law Information Center (FLIC).

A one-time fee of \$100 for non-represented joint petitioners, or \$75 for a non-represented petitioner and \$25 for a non-represented respondent, is required. Fees are to be paid by cash or check at the Portage County Treasurer's Office, located on the first floor of the Portage County Courthouse.

After paying the fee, call the Justiceworks' office to set up your initial appointment or stop in at the FLIC over the noon walk-in hours. At your initial meeting, you will be provided with the Justiceworks FLIC Pro Se Guide and court forms. The FLIC Pro Se Guide contains step-by-step process information, definitions of basic family law legal terms and testimony guidelines.

The FLIC staff and volunteers will help you review and understand the divorce guide, filing process and court forms. It is recommended that you come in for assistance early in the process and proceed with your family law action one step at a time so you are prepared for court hearings and do not become confused or overwhelmed. When your paperwork is in order, the Certificate of Readiness will be issued to you by the FLIC service coordinator in conjunction with your court appearance date.