

Legal Information v. Legal Advice: Court System Manuals



The SRLN Administrative Office of the Courts working group collected resources from court systems throughout the country that are used to provide guidance to court personnel about how they should assist the public. Here is a selection of Court System Manuals:

1. New York: *Facilitating Access Training Manual Volumes [One](#) & [Two](#)* contain numerous hypothetical examples and sample answers. This guide is currently being revised.
2. Massachusetts: *[Serving the Self-Represented Litigant: A Guide by and for Massachusetts Court Staff](#)* (June 2010). This guide contains numerous court specific sample questions and answers, It also includes a concise primer on

communicating with self-represented litigants that is more extensive than other guides.

3. Maryland: [*What Can I do to Help You? A Guide for Court Staff -- How to Distinguish Legal Information from Legal Advice to Better Serve the Public*](#). This guide goes beyond the difference between legal information and advice and discussed other types of services that court personnel can provide, including directing visitors to court resources and providing accommodations for litigants with special needs
4. Illinois: [*What is Legal Information: A Guide to Using the Illinois Supreme Court Policy on Assistance to Court Patrons by Circuit Clerks, Court Staff, Law Librarians, and Court Volunteers*](#). This guide is similar to the Maryland guide, as it offers more than just guidance on the difference between legal information and legal advice. This manual also discusses providing ADA assistance, language access, research materials, etc.
5. Alaska: *Making the Distinction Between Legal Information and Legal Advice: A Guide for Court Employees* (January 2014). (Attached) This manual is written in a simple plain language format.
6. California: [*May I Help You? Legal Advice vs. Legal Information, A Resource Guide for Court Clerks*](#) (2003). This guide focuses on service that court personnel can provide to court patrons.
7. Texas: [*Legal Information vs. Legal Advice: Guidelines and Instructions for Clerks and Court Personnel who Work with Self-Represented Litigants in Texas State Court*](#) (September 2015)
8. Utah: [*Legal Information vs. Legal Advice: Guidelines and Instructions for Court Staff who Work with Self-Represented Litigants in Utah State Courts*](#) (April 2010)

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