

Can Court Staff Help With Your Case?

The people who work in the clerk’s office and for the judges want to answer your questions and help you, but they must stay neutral and impartial. Being “neutral” means they must not make any recommendations about what you should do. Being “impartial” means they must treat everyone the same. They cannot give you legal advice, but they can give the same types of information to people on both sides of a case. “Legal advice” is what you would get from a lawyer – the lawyer applies the law to the facts of your case and recommends that you take a particular course of action.

Here is a list of some things that clerks and court staff can and cannot do for you:

CAN	CANNOT
Explain and answer questions about how the court works.	Tell you whether or not you should bring your case to court.
Provide the number of the local lawyer referral service, legal services program, Texas State Bar lawyer referral service, and other services where legal information is available.	Tell you what words to use in your court papers. However, we will check your papers for completeness. For example, we check for signatures, notarization, correct county name, correct case number and presence of attachments.
Give general information about court rules, procedures and practices.	Recommend what to say in court.
Provide court schedules and information on how to get a case scheduled.	Give an opinion about what will happen if you bring your case to court.
Give you information from your case file.	Talk to the judge for you or let you talk to the judge in private.
Give you samples of court forms that are available.	Change an order signed by a judge
Usually answer questions about court deadlines.	Tell you what deadlines apply in your case.