



## Pro Se Statistics

### Nationwide

- 2009 survey by Self-Represented Litigation Network
  - 60% judges reported increase in pro se litigants in their courtrooms
  - Only 29% reported no impact, and many were criminal court judges
  
- Data on Unrepresented Litigants from *Documenting the Justice Gap in America*, an Updated Report of the Legal Service Corporation, September 2009
  - **Judicial Impact:**
    - References the 2009 Self-Represented Litigation Network study mentioned above.
  - **Unrepresented by Necessity**
    - 2005 study of pro se litigants in New York City Family and Housing Courts found that 57% had incomes under \$20,000 and 80% had incomes under \$30,000 per year.
    - 2003 California Report to the Legislature found that more than 90% of the 450,000 people who use court self-help programs in the state earn less than \$24,000 per year.
  
- Maryland
  - Has very detailed data capturing information on SRLs who appear at any point in the case. They are able to capture very accurate data because reporting is tied to court funding.
  - 70% of cases involve at least one SRL at some point in the case.
  - Number of SRLs has remained steady over time.
  
- Oregon
  - Estimate 65% pro se in total family law. Based on a sample study data and extrapolated.

### Texas

Data obtained from the Office of Court Administration, except poverty statistics and unless otherwise noted. Poverty statistics were obtained from Data from U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). Data does not include pro se respondent filings, Title IV-D cases in which the parties are not represented, or post-judgment filings.

#### Total Cases Filed September 1, 2010 – August 31, 2011

- 57,597 family law cases in which petitioner filed pro se, representing 21.6% of total family law case filings
- 16,862 for other civil and probate cases in which petitioner filed pro se

Sample Counties:

- **Bell County (Central Texas)**
  - 27.4% total family law filings are pro se
  - 52.0% divorce filings are pro se, up from 40% in 2010 (*per the Bell County Clerk. Represents January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011 time frame.*)
  - 20.9% increase in divorce filings over 5 year period from 2006-2010
  - 26.0% increase in poverty population over 5 year period from 2006-2010
  
- **Collin County (Northeast Texas)**
  - 34.8% total family law filings are pro se
  - 17.7% increase in divorce filings over 5 year period from 2006-2010
  - 44.4% increase in poverty population over 5 year period from 2006-2010
  
- **Galveston County (Southeast Texas)**
  - 54.0% total family law filings are pro se
  - 1.7% decrease in divorce filings over 5 year period from 2006-2010
  - 3.6% decrease in poverty population over 5 year period from 2006-2010
  
- **Midland County (West Texas)**
  - 36.9 total family law filings are pro se
  - 10.9% increase in divorce filings over 5 year period from 2006-2010
  - 10.7% increase in poverty population over 5 year period from 2006-2010

Family Law Filings in Counties with Population Size of 150,000 or more:

<b>Family (no post-judgment)</b>				
<b>County</b>	<b>2010 Population</b>	<b>Cases Filed by SRLs</b>	<b>New Cases Filed</b>	<b>% of New Cases Filed</b>
Harris	4,092,459	7,513	42,501	17.7%
Dallas	2,368,139	5,702	24,297	23.5%
Tarrant	1,809,034	4,139	19,119	21.6%
Bexar	1,714,773	3,421	21,594	15.8%
Travis	1,024,266	3,091	9,512	32.5%
El Paso	800,647	1,109	8,179	13.6%
Collin	782,341	2,301	6,609	34.8%
Hidalgo	774,769	880	7,408	11.9%
Denton	662,614	1,531	5,673	27.0%
Fort Bend	585,375	983	4,981	19.7%
Montgomery	455,746	1,321	4,979	26.5%
Williamson	422,679	1,241	3,925	31.6%
Cameron	406,220	421	4,083	10.3%
Nueces	340,223	793	4,226	18.8%
Brazoria	313,166	850	3,744	22.7%
Bell	310,235	1,526	5,569	27.4%
Galveston	291,309	1,874	3,470	54.0%
Lubbock	278,831	544	4,076	13.3%
Jefferson	252,273	458	3,329	13.8%
Webb	250,304	197	2,687	7.3%

McLennan	234,906	520	2,446	21.3%
Smith	209,714	684	2,854	24.0%
Brazos	194,851	73	296	24.7%
Hays	157,107	409	1,418	28.8%
Johnson	150,934	1,394	2,143	65.0%

Title IV-D Child Support Cases (custody and visitation are also determined in these orders) in 2011

- The OAG had 243,015 Title IV-D cases with legal filings or dispositions in calendar year 2011.
- 92.5% of non-custodial parents were pro se and 97.2% of custodial parents were pro se.
- A total of **461,147** non-custodial parents and custodial parents represented themselves or 94.9% of Title IV-D cases involved at least one pro se litigant.

**TexasLawHelp Data**, an online self-help website specific to Texas

- In 2011, TexasLawHelp.org had 596,555 visits, averaging 1634 visits a day.
- Top Forms:

Title	Page Views
Do-It-Yourself Court Forms Free	56221
Protective Order Kit	34794
Divorce Without Children in Texas	13200
Divorce With Children in Texas	11766
Divorce - Special Instructions for Filing in Travis County	7559
Common Questions About Divorce	6588
Affidavit of Inability to Pay Costs	5927

- User Income Levels:
  - 24% of LawHelp users make below \$9,570 annually.
  - 62% of LawHelp customers earn less than \$26,000 annually.
- Top Three Reason People Visit TexasLawHelp:
  - The main reason people visit LawHelp is to get forms that they download, print, and fill in later (43%).
  - The second reason is to obtain A2J forms, interactive forms that are completed online and printed (27%).
  - The third top reason people come to LawHelp is to find legal aid organizations (22%).
  - Divorce is by far the most popular resource people are looking for (66%), followed by child support (18%). No other category reaches more than 10%.
- User Demographics:
  - The majority of our users come from the following counties: Dallas (13.6%), Harris (11%), Tarrant (8.3%), and Travis (6%).