

Outcome-Focused Self Assessment

for
Pro Bono, Pro Se Assistance &
Other Small Legal Assistance
Programs

Part 2 – Pro Se Assistance Example

Presented by The Resource for Great Programs
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The Self-Help Access Center

- ◆ A court-based *pro se* assistance center established in 2000 by Sonoma County Legal Aid & the Sonoma County court system.
- ◆ Provides:
 - Information and materials
 - Legal advice and counseling
 - Assistance in completing legal forms
 - Referrals

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Step 1: Identify Beneficiaries

- ◆ Low-income litigants
- ◆ Judges
- ◆ Court clerks / staff
- ◆ Law librarian
- ◆ Law school clinics
- ◆ Other legal assistance programs

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Step 2: Identify Results

- ◆ *Outcomes for litigants:*
 - *Understand system better*
 - *Make better decisions about case*
 - *Have a better opportunity to present case*
 - *Do better than they could on their own*

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Step 2: Identify Results (cont'd)

- ◆ *Outcomes for Clerks – SHAC-assisted litigants:*

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Step 2: Identify Results (cont'd)

- ◆ *Outcomes for Clerks – SHAC-assisted litigants:*
 - *File better papers than unassisted litigants*
 - *Understand the filing process better than unassisted litigants*
 - *Require less time to process papers than unassisted litigants*
 - *Are easier to assist / work with than unassisted litigants*

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Step 3: Gather Information

- ◆ *Service statistics*
- ◆ *Exit survey*
- ◆ *Follow-up client interviews*
- ◆ *Court observation*
- ◆ *Court clerk interviews*

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Step 3: Gather Info (cont'd): Observe Pro Se Litigants in Court

- ◆ *Observe court proceeding:*
 - *Adequate preparation of pro se litigant*
 - *Litigants' performance*
 - *Outcomes of the hearing*

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SHAC Tool for Gathering Useful Info

**Exhibit 1:
SHAC Court Observer Checklist**

Client: _____ Date: _____ Client prepared? _____

Observer: _____

Judge: _____ Family/Housing (circle one) Outcome of hearing _____

Complete an observation form for each litigant observed today.

	Yes	Some what	Not much
Was litigant generally well prepared for court?	1	2	3
Did litigant appear confident?	1	2	3
Did litigant appear confident?	1	2	3
Was litigant able to tell their story clearly and convincingly?	1	2	3
Did litigant have the required documentation to present to the judge?	1	2	3
Was litigant respectful to the Judge and other court personnel?	1	2	3
Was a determination made in the case?	1	2	3
If yes, was litigant successful?	1	2	3
Was case set for another hearing?	1	2	3

date for follow-up: _____

General observations and comments:
(What would have helped the litigant present their case more effectively)

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Additional Resources

Our website:
www.greatprograms.org

The Evaluation Toolkit:
www.calegaladvocates.org

Urban Institute – Outcome Management for Nonprofits:
www.urban.org

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