

January 18, 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

D.C. Superior Court opens Small Claims Resource Center – Center offers assistance to unrepresented litigants –

Washington, DC – A Small Claims Resource Center opened this week at the D.C. Superior Court. The Center is located in Room 102, Court Building B, 510 4th Street, N.W., and is open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to noon. On Tuesdays, attorneys from the Neighborhood Legal Services Program staff the Resource Center. On Thursdays, law students, accompanied by their supervising attorneys from The George Washington University Law School and The Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America staff the Center. The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program coordinates the Resource Center's activities. The Resource Center assists parties in small claims cases, as well as persons seeking information about filing or defending small claims lawsuits. The judge presiding in Small Claims Court will advise those present each morning of the Center's services.

"This is the latest in a series of initiatives at the Superior Court to enhance access to the justice system for litigants without lawyers," said Chief Judge Rufus G. King, III. "We greatly appreciate the assistance of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program, the Neighborhood Legal Services Program, as well as the law schools at George Washington and Catholic Universities. They are helping us to advance the Courts' vision of being 'Open to All, Trusted by All, and providing Justice for All.'"

The Resource Center volunteers will:

- help self-represented persons understand court proceedings
- advise them on how best to present cases in court;
- assist them with preparing *pro se* pleadings and other court documents;
- provide them with information on how to obtain continuances and retain counsel; and,
- make referrals for legal representation to legal service providers in appropriate cases.

Small Claims Court handles cases in which the damages sought are \$5,000 or less. For more information, see http://www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/superior/civil/small_claims_faq.jsp.

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