



# CANs AND CANNOTs FOR CLERKS AND COURT STAFF IN MISSISSIPPI

**Did you know the Mississippi Constitution provides the right for people to represent themselves in civil matters in Mississippi courts? Yes! See Mississippi Constitution Art. 3 § 25.**

**As Clerks and Court Staff, there are things you can and cannot do for patrons who seek assistance in your office.**

## **YOU CAN:**

- Explain and answer questions about how the court works.
- Provide the telephone numbers of the MS Access to Justice Commission, MS Legal Services Providers, Law Libraries and other services where patrons may be able to get legal information.
- Give general information about where to find court procedures, deadlines, rules and practices.
- Provide court schedules and information about how to get a case scheduled.
- Provide basic information about a court patron's case file.
- Provide approved/authorized court forms and instructions, if available.
- Encourage self-represented litigants to seek legal advice from a lawyer.
- Provide the same services and information to all parties to an action, if requested.
- Provide information about requesting the services of a foreign language or sign language interpreter.

## **YOU CANNOT:**

- Provide legal advice.
- Tell court patrons whether or not they should bring their case to court.
- Tell court patrons what to say in their court papers. (However, you CAN check the papers for completeness as in signatures, proper notarization, correct county name and case number and verify any attachments.)
- Tell court patrons what to say in court.
- Express your opinion to court patrons about what will happen if they bring their case to court.
- Talk to the judge on behalf of court patrons.
- Allow court patrons to talk to the judge outside the courtroom.
- Change an order signed by a judge.