

**Model Document: Letter from Family Court Chief Judge to
Self-Represented Litigants Explaining Unbundled Legal Services
and Promoting Use**

Dear Petitioner or Respondent:

You have a family law case in [*INSERT applicable court*]. You may be faced with a number of very important issues that will affect your future and the future of your children, including how your property will be divided, how much time you will spend with your children, and who will make decisions regarding the children. This can be a very difficult time, and our court is dedicated to making the process as easy as possible for you and your family.

We understand that you may be under a great deal of financial strain at the moment. If you are going through the process without a family law attorney, the court has a number of resources that may be of help to you in preparing your case. [*INSERT court resources for self-represented litigants.*]

These resources are not a substitute for the individualized advice and counsel of an experienced attorney. Having the help of your own attorney can decrease the confusion of the legal process for you and lead you to a more informed and better resolution of your case. Some people hire an attorney to represent them for their whole case, from beginning to end. It is also possible to hire an attorney for certain parts of your case only, such as helping to write legal documents. This type of legal service is called “unbundled legal services,” in which you and your attorney divide the work in a way that makes sense to you and is more affordable for you.

With an attorney offering unbundled legal services, you could receive help with different parts of your case, including:

- Help writing the initial divorce petition
- Help completing financial documents
- Advice about parenting time options
- Help preparing for negotiation or mediation sessions
- Help writing settlement documents
- Representation in one or more court hearings

Through unbundled legal services, it is possible to obtain the legal help you need to resolve your case at a cost you can afford. If you would like more information about

how unbundled legal services can help you, please visit the clerk's office [*OPTIONAL* for a list of attorneys who provide these services].

As a last word, I urge you to remember, throughout your case, that no matter how you decide to move forward, your actions during this time can greatly affect your children, if you have them. Consequently, it is very important for you to keep in mind that you and your former partner must do all that you can to avoid involving the children in your disagreements. Even if you don't have children, working through your issues together and in a constructive manner will surely lead to a better outcome.

Sincerely,

Family Court Chief Judge