

Match Maker, Match Maker, Find Me a Match: How to Connect with Pro Se Parties Through the Kiosks for The Middle District of Florida Pro Se Assistance Clinic, Inc.

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For the year ending December 31, 2025, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida was ranked fifth in the nation (out of 90 judicial districts) for pro se bankruptcy filings per authorized judgeship. These pro se individuals frequently need assistance in preparing their bankruptcy schedules and addressing issues that arise in their cases, such as motions for relief from the automatic stay, objections to claims of exemptions, objections to discharge and dischargeability of debts, mortgage loan modifications, etc. Pro se creditors often do not know their rights or understand how to file a proof of claim. The high volume of pro se parties appearing in the Bankruptcy Court is a significant burden on the Court's Clerk's Office and creates a significant demand on judicial resources.

More than three years ago, at the direction of then-Chief Judge Caryl E. Delano (Tampa), current Chief Judge Jacob A. Brown (Jacksonville) chaired a committee including Judge Catherine Peek McEwen (Tampa), Judge Jason A. Burgess (Jacksonville), retired Judge Karen S. Jennemann (Orlando), future Judge Luis E. Rivera II (Tampa and Fort Myers), and bankruptcy practitioners throughout the Middle District. The Committee conferred on a regular basis to develop an improved and convenient mechanism for attorneys to provide pro bono service to pro se individuals—both debtors and creditors—through virtual (Zoom or telephonic) pro bono consultations (the Virtual Clinic).

As a result of the Committee's efforts, the Middle District of Florida Pro Se Assistance Clinic, Inc., a Florida not for profit corporation, was formed and on September 1, 2022, The Middle District of Florida Pro Se Assistance Clinic opened its virtual doors. To date, with the support of more than 200 attorneys across the Middle District of Florida, the Virtual Clinic has served hundreds of clients through virtual or telephonic consultations. In addition, the Clinic now serves as a template for use by bankruptcy courts across the nation.

Thanks to support from the Bench Bar Fund and the Bankruptcy Law Educational Series Foundation (“BLES”), the Clinic’s most recent initiatives include the installation of kiosks at each courthouse in the Middle District. Using an electronic touchscreen device to connect with pro se parties and attorneys, the kiosks provide two primary benefits—first, pro se parties can register for appointments in the virtual clinic before they leave the courthouse, and second, attorneys can create an account to begin their pro bono service with the virtual clinic. The kiosks are also stocked with take-home postcards containing information about the clinic and a scannable QR code linking pro se parties with the clinic’s appointment registration webpage.



As Valentine’s Day approaches, please take a moment to locate the kiosk at your local courthouse and open your heart to volunteering in the virtual clinic. Please select a recurring timeslot to volunteer in the Clinic, so that you can be the match for a pro se party needing your assistance.