

## Legal Advice Disclaimer

At the top and at the bottom of nearly every webpage on the Mount Vernon Municipal Court's website, you will see a disclaimer similar to the following:

DISCLAIMER: The following is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to give legal advice, nor is it intended to be an exhaustive list of all legal and procedural matters and requirements for participating as a party or juror in, or receiving services from, the Mount Vernon (OH) Municipal Court. Court employees cannot give you legal advice. If you have any legal questions that pertain to your situation, then you should contact an attorney.

If you need help finding legal assistance or legal information, please contact the following organizations:

Knox County Bar Association: The Knox County Bar Association's directory of all attorneys that are currently members of the Knox County Bar Association, including office contact information and areas of practice, is available on this page of the Court website: <http://mountvernonmunicipalcourt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/KNOX-COUNTY-BAR-ASSOCIATION-Attorney-Directory-2020.pdf>.

Southeastern Ohio Legal Services® (SEOLS) <https://www.seols.org/> (**external link**), 888.831.9412 (toll free) gives legal help without attorney fees to people with low income and limited savings and assets. SEOLS provides legal assistance in civil matters to eligible low-income individuals and groups in Knox County, Ohio.

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**Court clerks and bailiffs are not attorneys; they cannot give you legal advice.** To avoid the unauthorized practice of law and to maintain the neutrality and impartiality of the court, court staff are only able to help you in certain ways. Below is a list of things that court staff **CAN** do for you:

--Court staff can provide you with general information about court rules, procedures, and practices. For example, court staff can tell you what happens at an arraignment, the procedure for being relieved from jury duty, or how to file a small claims case.

--Court staff can provide you with information on how you may have an attorney appointed to represent you in a criminal case if you are unable to afford one.

--In criminal/traffic, civil, and small claims cases, court staff can provide you with the number of the local bar association and other organizations where you may be able to obtain legal advice or legal information.

--Court staff can provide you with court forms and general instructions on how to complete and file those forms with the court. Additionally, court staff can check your filings for completeness and basic compliance with court rules (e.g., whether the filing has been signed, whether the filing has been notarized, etc.).

--Court staff can provide you with court calendars and schedules, as well as information on how to schedule a hearing.

--Court staff can provide you with information and copies of documents from your case file.

--Court staff can generally answer questions about court deadlines, how those deadlines are computed, and court costs and fines.

On the other hand, below is a list of things court staff **CANNOT** do for you:

--Court staff cannot tell you whether or not you should file a court case. For example, if you are a landlord and your tenant has failed to pay rent, court staff cannot tell you whether or not you should file an eviction to evict your tenant; that decision must be made by you and/or your attorney.

--Court staff cannot recommend a specific attorney that may be able to help you. For example, court staff cannot recommend "the best" OVI attorney in the area.

--Court staff cannot tell you what words to use in your court filings and they cannot fill out forms on your behalf.

--Court staff cannot tell you what you should say in court, or how you might go about proving or defending a case.

--Court staff cannot provide you with an opinion about what might happen with your case.

--Court staff cannot advise you as to the procedures used in another court or in another government office. For example, court staff cannot advise you as to the procedures used by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), how you would file a small claims case in Richland County, Ohio, or how you would file a divorce in the Ashland County Common Pleas Court. However, court staff may be able to refer you to the proper court or government office.

--Court staff cannot talk to the judge on your behalf.

--Court staff cannot let you talk to the judge outside of court.

--Court staff cannot change a document after it has been signed by the judge, or by the clerk of court.