

How to Help: A Field Guide

For advocates, family, and friends supporting someone through a legal fight. You do not need a law degree. You need a plan.

DIRECT ANSWER

The most useful help is administrative: copying documents, tracking deadlines, and absorbing paperwork that would otherwise fall on one person. This framework works for any case, criminal, family, or administrative, wherever someone you know is fighting a legal system that is hard to navigate alone.

What Actually Helps

Paperwork. Copying, scanning, postage, chronology building. This saves an attorney billable hours.

Research. Verify docket facts, file FOIA requests, build a public, cited timeline.

Logistics. Transportation, childcare during hearings, regular no-pressure check-ins.

Money, done carefully. Transparent, itemized fundraising with one named administrator and confirmed spending plan.

Public documentation. Share verified facts (case number, court, dates). Route opinions to the attorney, not social media.

What Doesn't Help (and Can Hurt)

- Do not contact the judge directly about the substance of a pending case.
- Do not contact the opposing party, their attorney, or a witness without going through counsel.
- Do not offer legal advice unless you are a licensed attorney in that state.
- Do not make public accusations you cannot document.
- Do not organize a courthouse gathering without confirming assembly and recording rules first.
- Do not share sealed records or anything counsel asked you to keep confidential.
- Do not run a fundraiser with vague terms, no administrator, and no accounting.
- Do not publish home addresses, workplaces, or family details of officials or opposing parties.

Where the Case Stands

Pretrial. Build the record before it needs defending: log every document, date, and deadline.

Active litigation. Court watches, current chronology. Public commentary is riskiest here.

Post-decision or appeal. Pull the order, verify appeal deadlines, connect to any broader pattern.

Family or administrative. Shorter timelines. Meeting deadlines beats public advocacy here.

BUILD YOUR CASE SNAPSHOT

CASE / PERSON: _____
COURT: _____
CASE / DOCKET NO.: _____
CURRENT POSTURE: _____
NEXT DATE: _____