



**MEDIA RELEASE
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MEDIA CONTACT:
Rita Miller
Community Relations Manager
RMiller@LeeClerk.org
239-533-2766

Clerk Doggett announces opening of county's first Self Help center

FORT MYERS, FLA (April 10, 2018) – Getting access to justice is about to get easier in Lee County. Clerk of Courts Linda Doggett is opening the county's first Self Help Center on **April 18 at 10 a.m.** to assist people wishing to represent themselves in civil court. The Self Help Legal Center will provide its patrons with computers and software to assist in the filing of civil actions, and staff to provide assistance instructing patrons how to utilize the services. Additionally, attorneys have partnered with the Clerk's Office to provide low cost limited consultation services to patrons at the rate of \$1 per minute in the Self Help Center.

"We've partnered with local attorneys to provide citizens with low-cost attorney consultations to help them file small claims, evictions, and other civil matters," Clerk Doggett said. "The new center will give people the proper guidance they need to confidently represent themselves in court."

The Self Help Center will also assist customers with obtaining and e-filing court documents, getting certified and notarized copies of documents, and obtaining child/family support payment history documents. Customers can also get assistance with filing small claims or eviction cases through an online system, TurboCourt.

"The Self Help Center is designed to be a one-stop shop for a variety of legal matters." Clerk Doggett said.

The Self Help Center will be open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. To schedule an appointment with an attorney, call 239-533-5000 or stop by the center. Attorney appointments are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. A non-refundable payment is required at the time of scheduling. The center is located on the first floor of the Justice Center's east entrance, 1700 Monroe Street in Fort Myers.

Attorney consultations will be scheduled in 15-minute sessions, for up to 30 minutes, per case. The cost for an attorney consultation is \$1 per minute and must be paid at the time the appointment is scheduled. The attorneys that provide legal assistance at the Self Help Center cannot represent the individual in court. Fees also apply for copies of documents.

For more information about the Self Help Center or free legal seminars provided at the Clerk's office, visit LeeClerk.org or call 239-533-5000.

This event is open to the media and public.

ABOUT THE CLERK'S OFFICE:

The Florida Constitution established the Clerk of the Circuit Court as a public trustee, responsible for safeguarding public records and public funds. Clerk Linda Doggett is directly elected by and accountable to Lee County residents. In addition to the role of Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Clerk is the County Recorder and Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, and the Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer and Auditor for Lee County.

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