



Notes and Materials from Forms Camp Working Session on Plain Language
July 20, 2022

Identify **two things** that your group improved

1. Create section for each: judge (order); respondent; law enforcement.
2. Change “respondent” to “you” in respondent section.
3. Eliminate “hereby” The court hereby finds; the court hereby orders

Designate a person from your cabin to present to the full group.

Identify **two terms** that your group improved

1. **PETITION FOR WRIT OF VACATUR**
Request to set aside/reverse
Charges to be canceled
2. Delinquent
Youth, juvenile offender

Identify
two terms
that your
group
improved

1. Make the most important takeaways prominent, and use visual cues to draw attention to them.
 - Use bullet points (added benefit of breaking up large blocks of text/more white space)
2. Section headings to guide the reader.
 - Make section headings stand out to guide the reader

Identify
two terms
that your
group
improved –
Group 5

1. Indigency (add short phrase or definition of term – person experiencing financial instability), subpoena – Request for a witness (court order for information)
(<https://www.mass.gov/doc/affidavit-of-indigency/download>)
2. Form design – How to capture the story of SRL while capturing their issues correctly
(<https://thinkhumanrights.ca/the-complaint-process/human-rights-application-form/>)

Form 1: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/affidavit-of-indigency/download>

Form 2: <https://thinkhumanrights.ca/the-complaint-process/human-rights-application-form/>

From Theresa Chiong: also for the examples, instead of listing examples, have an example link and a box pops up with examples, so there's not so much text on one page (second bullet point)

Identify
two terms
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group
improved

1. “Come now the Parties, pro se, and respectfully submit...” changed to “We ask the Court to grant our divorce without a hearing.”

2. Title: Affidavit and Agreed Order to Submit for Decree of Dissolution – changed to Agreement to Divorce without Hearing

Identify
two terms
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group
improved

1. Need consistent voice throughout – avoid mixing “I” and “You”

2. Use tables to help identify what needs to be included (not just open-ended fields for detailed information)

3. Use clear and direct titles – what is the form about/what is it asking you to do

Identify
two terms
that your
group
improved

1. Use plain language with legal definitions or statutory language contained in footnotes;
2. Reconcile deceased and decedent for consistency – use decedent;
3. Change format from narrative to bullet point fill-in for ease of use.

Identify
two terms
that your
group
improved

1. Who is the audience for the form? SRLs, Lawyers, Court?
2. What is required v. what did we put in there without really thinking about it? Statute? Language?