

Please read these instructions for filing a motion carefully. Your money may be taken to pay a debt such as a loan, or medical or credit card bill.

What can I do if I think my money should be protected?

If you get some types of benefits (like Social Security), your bank might already be protecting your money automatically. Call your bank to find out. If your money is not already being protected, keep reading this form.

Ask to protect your money. You can file this form in two steps:

1) Fill out this form.

2) File the form at the court as soon as possible.

If you wait too long, your money could be taken, even if your money should be protected.

You can also call the lawyer for the company that filed a lawsuit against you. Explain that your money is *exempt* (protected). Ask them to release your money. You may be asked to provide documentation proving that your money is exempt.

How can I file this motion?

You can file this motion in any of these ways:

- **File in person** at the **Civil Clerk's Office** branch where the case was filed:
 - **Civil Actions Branch:** 500 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 5000, Washington, D.C. 20001
 - **Small Claims & Conciliation Branch:** 510 4th Street, N.W., Room 120, Washington, D.C. 20001
 - **Landlord & Tenant Branch:** 510 4th Street, N.W., Room 110, Washington, D.C. 20001
- File **online** through the Court's website: <https://www.dccourts.gov/superior-court/e-filing>
- **Mail** the document to the clerk's office for the appropriate branch:
 - Civil Actions Branch: Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Civil Clerk's Office – Room 5000, 500 Indiana Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001
 - Small Claims & Conciliation Branch: Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Small Claims Clerk's Office – Room 120, 510 4th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001
 - Landlord & Tenant Branch: Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Landlord & Tenant Clerk's Office – Room 110, 510 4th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

Does it cost money to file this motion?

Yes. It costs **\$10** to file this motion in the Small Claims or Landlord & Tenant branches. It costs **\$20** to file this motion in the Civil Actions Branch. If you cannot pay, you can ask the Court to **waive this fee** by filling out a form (called **Application to Waive Court Costs and Fees**). You can get this form online at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/forms> or by calling (202) 879-1120.

File the fee waiver application **at the same time** as this motion.

I filed this form with the court. What happens next?

After you file this form, the court will schedule a hearing. You will need to do two things to get ready for the hearing:

- 1) Get your documents ready.** You need to share documents with the court to show that your money should be protected. *Learn more about what types of money are protected on the next page.*
- 2) Participate in your hearing.** If you do not participate, you might lose your money, even if it should be protected.

What types of money can be protected?

Below is a list of some types of money that may be protected. This list is not complete, and you might be able to protect your money or property in other ways. See **D.C. Code §15-501 (a)** for more information about the extent of these protections and possible limitations. You may want to talk to a lawyer for more specific guidance.

- Social Security retirement, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Disability Benefits
- Public Assistance / TANF Benefits
- Worker's Compensation
- Payments under retirement, pension and annuity plans
- Federal Civil Service Retirement Benefits
- Federal Civil Service Survivor Annuities
- Unemployment Benefits
- Alimony, support, or separate maintenance payments
- Payments awarded by a court in a civil or criminal case
- Veterans' Benefits
- Railroad Retirement Act Benefits
- Black Lung Benefits
- Seaman's or Master's or Fisherman's wages
- Any money or property up to \$850 or more (*if you own your home*)

- Longshore and Harborworker's Compensation Act Benefits
- Any money or property up to \$8,625 (*if you do not own your home*)

I own my home, but I want to protect more than \$850. What do I do?

You might be able to protect more than \$850, but every situation is different. **You may want to talk to a lawyer.**

Do these protections apply if I owe alimony or child support?

These protections might not apply if you owe alimony or child support. If someone else pays alimony or child support to you, that money might be protected. **It may be helpful to speak with a lawyer.**

How can I get legal help?

You can find information about how to get free legal help online at the court's website at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/represent-yourself>. If you need help with a debt collection case, you can contact a free lawyer by calling the **Debt Collection Defense Hotline** at (202) 851-3387.

What should I do if I have more questions?

You may contact the:

- Small Claims Clerk's Office (202) 879-1120,
- Civil Actions Clerk's Office (202) 879-1133, or
- Landlord and Tenant Clerk's Office (202) 879-4879.