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DC SUPERIOR COURT ENHANCES ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN SMALL CLAIMS CASES

- LOWER COST, MORE EXPEDITIOUS PROCESS -

On January 3, 2017, the DC Superior Court raised the dollar amount limit for cases that may be filed in the Small Claims Branch from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This change allows hundreds more civil cases to be resolved in the faster, inexpensive and informal Small Claims court setting. The Court estimates that the change will provide improved access to justice by approximately 1,000 more cases to be filed in the Small Claims Branch each year.

“I am pleased that we can allow more DC area residents to take advantage of the expedient and cost-effective solution of filing in the Small Claims Branch. This change will help expedite cases seeking between \$5,000 and \$10,000 and thereby improve access to justice for those with limited means,” said Chief Judge Robert E. Morin.

Previously the limit for cases to be filed as a Small Claim was \$5000 and all suits seeking higher dollar amounts had to be filed in the Civil Division, where filing fees are higher, rules and procedures are more complex, and attorneys are often required. The Court’s increase in the limit will save parties time and money. Small claims cases tend to be resolved far more quickly than civil actions and have more streamlined processes, with less complex rules.

To learn more about the Small Claims Branch, and/or to chat with a court employee see http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/public/aud_civil/smallclaims.jsf (there is a link to Live Chat in the lower right).

To learn more about the Court’s Small Claims Resource Center, see <http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/documents/SmallClaimsResourceCenterFlyer.pdf>

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