



SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CIVIL DIVISION



HANDBOOK FOR PEOPLE WHO REPRESENT THEMSELVES IN CIVIL CASES

OPEN TO ALL
TRUSTED BY ALL
JUSTICE FOR ALL

MOULTRIE COURTHOUSE
ROOM 500C
500 INDIANA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20001

PHONE: (202) 879-1133
FAX: (202) 879-8335

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APPENDIX

GENERAL QUESTIONS

WHY SHOULD I READ THIS HANDBOOK?

This handbook provides basic information about what happens in civil cases in the DC Superior Court. It explains some of your basic rights and responsibilities if you represent yourself in a civil case – either as a plaintiff or as a defendant.

For additional information, please go to the Civil Division's webpage: <https://www.dccourts.gov/superior-court/civil-division>. The Civil Actions Branch live chat feature is available at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/civil-matters/requesting-over-10k>, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. To access the feature, click the rectangular blue icon on the right-hand side of the screen. You can find forms for many documents on the court's website: <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/forms>.

WHAT HAS CHANGED DURING THE PANDEMIC?

The main change is that the court is conducting all hearings, except for jury trials, virtually. You should not come to the courthouse unless you have a jury trial. During the pandemic, the clerk's office is not open for in-person business, but it is accepting filings and answering questions by phone and on-line.

For jury trials, the court has implemented a wide range of safeguards to keep everyone safe, including you, witnesses, and jurors.

Changes in the law affect several types of cases. For example, although some eviction cases can proceed, D.C. law prohibits landlords from evicting residential tenants during the public health emergency, except in limited circumstances. Most mortgage foreclosure and debt collection cases are on hold until the public health emergency ends.

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE REMOTELY IN HEARINGS?

You have two options: (1) video using a computer, tablet, or smartphone, or (2) audio with any telephone. If you are using video, you will need broadband internet access. The court will send instructions explaining how you can participate remotely and will provide instructions explaining how to access the virtual courtroom for your hearing.

Laptop or Desktop Computer: If you are using a laptop or desktop computer, click on the WebEx direct link provided by the court. This link will take you directly to the page to join the remote hearing. If you have difficulty using the direct link, you may also go to <https://dccourts.webex.com> and type the WebEx Meeting ID provided by the court. You may also open your internet browser and copy and paste or type the WebEx site URL provided by the court. After you open WebEx, click on "Join Meeting."

Smartphone, Tablet, or iPad: If you are using a smartphone, tablet, or iPad, you must download the WebEx App called “Cisco WebEx Meetings.” Enter the WebEx Meeting number or WebEx Direct URL link provided by the court. Type your name and email address and click “join.”

Telephone: You may call (202) 860-2110 or the toll-free number (844) 992-4726 and enter the WebEx Meeting ID provided by the court.

More detailed information and a tipsheet are included at the end of this handbook and are also available online at <https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/DC-Superior-Court-Remote-Court-Participants-WebEx-Instructions.pdf> and <https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/Civil%20Remote%20Hearing%20Tip%20Sheet.pdf>.

If you have questions, call the Civil Clerk’s Office at (202) 879-1133. For technical issues or questions, call the IT Division at (202) 879-1928.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I CANNOT PARTICIPATE FROM MY HOME?

The court has set up five sites around the city where you can participate in remote hearings with a free computer and free Wi-Fi. The remote sites are open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:00pm. Safety and security measures have been put in place. Information about the sites is on a sheet at the end of this handbook and is also available online: <https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/Remote-Hearing-Sites-Tip-Sheet-3.pdf>

To reserve a remote access computer station for your hearing, call (202) 879-1900 or email DCCourtsRemoteSites@dcsc.gov at least 24 hours before your hearing. If you require special accommodations, such as an interpreter, please call (202) 879-1900 at least 24 hours before your hearing so that the court can make the arrangements.

Please bring the following items with you: (1) your case number and any hyperlinks for your hearing provided by the court; (2) any documents you need for your hearing (evidence such as exhibits, receipts; photos; contracts, etc.); (3) pen and paper for notetaking; and (4) a mask or facial covering will be required; (if you do not have a mask, one will be provided for you).

DOES THIS HANDBOOK COVER ALL KINDS OF CIVIL CASES?

No. If your claim is for \$10,000 or less and you are asking only for money, you must file your case in the Small Claims and Conciliation Branch. Different rules and procedures apply to small claims cases. A separate handbook for these cases is available online: https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/matters-docs/Small_Claims_Handbook_Revised_May_2015.pdf. You may also call (202) 879- 1120 for additional information about small claims cases.

The Landlord and Tenant Court generally handles cases in which landlords are trying to evict tenants. If you want more information about these cases, go to: <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/civil-matters/landlord-tenant> For free legal services, you can call the Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network at (202) 780-2575.

Different procedures may apply in mortgage foreclosure cases. For more information, go to <https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/matters-docs/Notice-Mortgage-Foreclosure-Courtroom.pdf>.

DO I NEED A LAWYER TO REPRESENT ME?

An individual does not have to have a lawyer, but a corporation has to have a lawyer represent it in court. Almost everyone is better off with a lawyer. A lawyer can advise you about what your rights are. A lawyer can help you understand the court's rules and procedures, which are often hard for a non-lawyer to understand and follow.

If you cannot afford to hire a lawyer, you may be able to find one willing to represent you for free in the list at the end of this booklet or if you visit the DC Bar's website, www.lawhelp.org/dc.

CAN THE COURT APPOINT A LAWYER TO REPRESENT ME?

No. The court cannot appoint lawyers to represent people who cannot afford a lawyer in civil cases. Although the court can provide information about finding a lawyer, it is up to you to find a lawyer willing to represent you.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES IF I REPRESENT MYSELF?

Everyone who comes to court must comply with the rules of court. In general, the same rules apply to parties who do not have lawyers as to parties who do have lawyers. The court expects self-represented parties to make themselves familiar with the court's rules. The judge cannot give you legal advice. However, the judge may provide basic information about how the court works and what the rules are.

WHAT ARE THE DC SUPERIOR COURT RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE?

The Rules of Civil Procedure are a detailed set of rules that apply to civil cases from start to finish. This handbook only summarizes parts of the Civil Rules that are most important or that come up frequently for people who do not have a lawyer.

A copy of the DC Superior Court's Rules of Civil Procedure is available online here: <https://www.dccourts.gov/superior-court/rules>.

HOW SHOULD I BEHAVE IN HEARINGS?

Whether a hearing is in-person or remote, follow these simple rules:

- Show up on time
- Check in with the court clerk
- After you check in with the clerk, wait quietly to wait for your case to be called
- Put your device on mute until your case is called.
- Act respectfully to the judge and the other party
- Listen to the judge's questions and do your best to answer them
- Wait your turn to speak
- Don't interrupt the judge or another party when they are speaking – you will get your chance
- Do not argue with the other party in front of the judge

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR WHEN I HAVE A HEARING?

Wear clothes that you would wear to an important occasion – like a job interview.

GETTING ANSWERS

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HANDLING MY CASE, AND FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE?

For more information regarding civil legal services, a referral guide can be found at the back of this handbook. For example, one legal service provider, the Consumer Law Resource Center provides information about debt collection, home improvement, security deposit, used car or car repair, and other consumer-related disputes.

The Superior Court website, www.dcourts/superior-court has information about specific types of civil cases and helpful forms. Look at the tabs for “Civil Division,” and “Services.” For example, information about the Housing Conditions Calendar can be found under the “Civil” or “Services” tab on the “Housing Conditions Calendar” page, or by clicking on this link: <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/civil-matters/housing-conditions-calendar>

CAN I CALL OR WRITE THE JUDGE IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO?

No. Court rules prohibit anyone, lawyers and non-lawyers, from calling or writing a judge or the judge's staff for assistance or guidance. The rules also prohibit all court employees from giving legal advice to anyone. The purpose of the rule is so that everyone is treated equally and both sides get a chance to be heard before the court makes a decision. Court employees may be able to provide basic information about procedures.

If you want the judge to do something, you must file a written motion and provide a copy to the other side. The procedures for filing a motion are explained later in this handbook. The rules also strictly prohibit judges and their staff from discussing a case with only one side – communications that are sometimes called *ex parte* communications.

HOW DO I GET INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN MY CASE?

You can get information online about what documents and orders have been filed in individual cases. Visit court cases online at: <https://www.dccourts.gov/superior-court/cases-online>.

FILING DOCUMENTS

HOW DO I FILE DOCUMENTS?

During the pandemic, you have three options to provide documents to the court.

First, you can mail them to the Civil Actions Branch Clerk's Office Room 5000, Moultrie Courthouse, 500 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

Second, you can put the documents in the drop box in the lobby of the Moultrie Courthouse at 500 Indiana Avenue, N.W. It is advisable to check a few days later to determine if your documents have arrived in the Civil Actions Branch Clerk's Office by calling (202) 879-1133 or (202) 879-1134.

Third, you can file the document electronically. The court encourages people who represent themselves to file electronically if they can. For more information about e-filing and how to create a free CaseFileXpress account, go to <https://www.dccourts.gov/superior-court/e-filing>, or call File & Serve Xpress at (877) 433- 4533. CaseFileXpress (CFX) offers a training video that explains its core features in addition to best practice tips. Go to: <https://www.fileandservexpress.com/dc/#DCTraining>

If you are filing a complaint and you are also filing a request for a waiver of court fees and/or a motion for a temporary restraining order, you can email the documents to civilefilings@dcsc.gov.

WHEN CAN I FILE DOCUMENTS AT THE CLERK'S OFFICE?

During the public health emergency, you cannot come to the clerk's office to file documents in person. When the clerk's office reopens for in-person business, you can file documents in Room 5000, Moultrie Courthouse, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I CANNOT AFFORD THE FEES TO FILE DOCUMENTS?

The court allows you to file a complaint, motions, and other documents without paying the fees if you show that you cannot pay the fees without substantial hardship to you or your family. To get a waiver of these fees, you must submit an affidavit or declaration like Civil Actions Form 106A. You can find this form online at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/judge-in-chambers/in-forma-pauperis-fee-waiver>.

You may be allowed to file papers without paying fees even if you have a job. If you show that you receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or other public benefits, you can get a waiver without providing additional information. Otherwise, you may have to provide information about your income, assets, and expenses.

If you want to file a complaint without paying the filing fee, you can email the complaint and the fee waiver application to civilefiling@dcsc.gov. The form is sent to the Judge in Chambers for a decision. If you want a waiver of fees after you have filed, you have to get the waiver from the judge assigned to your case.

STARTING A CASE

HOW DO I SUE SOMEONE?

You have to prepare a document called a complaint and file it with the court. The person who files the case is called the "plaintiff." The person who gets sued is called the "defendant."

In the complaint, you have to explain what you think the person you are suing did wrong, and what you want the court to do about it. The complaint must contain a short and plain statement of the claim showing that you are entitled to money or some action by the defendant. You do not have to include detailed factual information, but it is not enough for you to say only that the defendant unlawfully harmed you.

If you want more than \$10,000 from the defendant, you must file your complaint in Room 5000 of the Moultrie Courthouse. That is also where you file cases seeking equitable relief, meaning that you want the court to order someone to do something (other than pay money) or not to do something.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO FILE A COMPLAINT?

You must file four documents and pay the filing fee, unless you get permission not to pay the fee because you cannot afford to do so.

The four documents you have to file are:

- (1) an original complaint that includes your name, home address, email address and the name and address of each defendant;
- (2) one copy of the original complaint for each defendant;
- (3) a summons form for each named defendant in the complaint; and
- (4) a Civil Case Information Sheet.

The complaint and subsequent papers must be on white paper, size 8-1/2" x 11." Here is an example of what the top of the first page should look like:

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA
Civil Division

[Name and address of plaintiff(s)],	:
Plaintiff(s),	:
	:
v.	:
	:
[Name and address of defendant(s)],	:
Defendant(s).	:

COMPLAINT

If you do not have a lawyer, you must sign the complaint and include your address, email address, and telephone number. Your signature means that to the best of your knowledge, everything in the complaint is true and you are not filing your complaint to harass the other party. If a judge finds that you violated this commitment, the judge may impose monetary or other penalties. See Civil Rule 11.

If your contact information changes, you must notify the Court and the other side.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I NEED TO FIX SOMETHING IN MY COMPLAINT?

If you realize that you need to correct or add information, you have the right to change it one time without getting permission from the judge, as long as you do it within 21 days after you serve the defendant with the complaint or after the defendant responds. Otherwise, you need to file a motion asking the judge to allow you to amend your complaint. See Civil Rule 15.

HOW DO I GET A JURY TRIAL?

You will not get a jury trial unless you ask for it. If you are the plaintiff, you should include a demand for a jury trial in your complaint. Other parties must file a jury demand not later than 14 days after the service of the last document filed directed to the issue that the party wants a jury to decide. See Civil Rule 38(b)(1).

WHAT IS A SUMMONS?

A summons is the paper that gives a defendant formal notice of your case. When you file a complaint, you must complete a summons for each defendant in the case. The Civil Actions Branch Clerk's Office provides a blank summons to the filing party. You must complete the summons, including the name and address of each defendant. In addition, you must print your name, address and telephone number in the lower left corner of the summons.

WHAT IS THE CASE INFORMATION FORM?

In addition to the complaint, you are also required to file a Case Information Form. The Case Information Form, which may be found online, lists the different categories of civil cases – for example, breach of contract or personal injury. You should check the category that describes the type of case you are filing. The plaintiff must also include whether there are any pending related cases and whether any defendant(s) is/are being sued in their official capacity.

WHAT IS THE CASE NUMBER?

When you file a complaint, the clerk assigns a Civil Action Number to the new case. You need to have the case number for any future filings in the case or if you want to get information about the case.

WHO WILL DECIDE MY CASE?

A judge will decide your case. New cases are randomly assigned to one of the judges who handle civil cases. The judge to whom the case is assigned handles the case from beginning to end, unless the case is reassigned to a different judge.

WHAT IS AN INITIAL ORDER?

Once your case has been assigned to a judge, the Civil Actions Branch Clerk's Office prepares an Initial Order that it attaches to the original complaint and summons.

The Initial Order is a form generated by the computer that includes the following information:

- when you must file proof that you served each defendant
- when the defendant must file an answer to the complaint
- the name of the judge to whom the case is assigned
- the number and location of the courtroom of the judge to whom the case is assigned
- the time and date of the initial scheduling conference

You must serve the initial order on each defendant along with the complaint and summons.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO FILE A NEW CASE?

It costs \$120.00 to file a complaint, unless you get permission not to pay the fee because you cannot afford it (see page 8 of this handbook). You have to pay this \$120.00 filing fee before the clerk provides you the copy of the complaint, summons and Initial Order to serve on each defendant.

Filing fees can be paid by cash, credit card (American Express, Discover, Visa or MasterCard), certified check, or by personal check, or money order made payable to: "Clerk, D.C. Superior Court." To pay by personal check, you must provide a copy of your driver's license. To pay by credit card, you must have an invoice from the clerk's office.

SERVING THE COMPLAINT

HOW DO I SERVE THE COMPLAINT ON THE DEFENDANT?

Serving the complaint, summons, and Initial Order, means that you arrange to provide a copy of these documents to each defendant.

You cannot serve a defendant yourself. The person who serves this paperwork (sometimes called a "process server") can be anyone who is 18 years of age or older and who is not a party to the case. See Civil Rule 4(c)(2).

In every case, you must file an affidavit or declaration completed by the process server with information about the process server and when and how the process server served the defendant.

Unless you qualify for one of the alternative methods of service described later in this handbook, a defendant can be served in any of four ways. The first way to serve a defendant is when the process server gives the papers directly to the defendant.

The second way is when the process server gives the papers to a person over the age of 18 living at the defendant's residence, or to an agent authorized by appointment or law to receive service of process. See Civil Rule 4(e)(2).

The third way is to have the process server send a copy of the papers by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested. See Civil Rule 4(c)(4). If you get back the "green card" signed by the defendant acknowledging receipt of the certified letter, you must file an affidavit or declaration with the green card or a copy.

The fourth way to serve a defendant is to have the process server send a copy of the papers to the defendant by first-class mail, postage prepaid. The process server must also include two copies of a Notice and Acknowledgment Form 1-A, available online, and a return envelope, postage prepaid, addressed to the sender. See Civil Rule 4(c)(5). You are responsible for filing the Acknowledgment Form, which must contain the defendant's signature acknowledging receipt.

If you get a waiver because you cannot afford to pay court fees without substantial hardship, the court will try to serve a defendant by registered or certified mail. However, if this method of service is not successful, you are responsible for serving the defendant, except in exceptional circumstances. See page 12 of this handbook.

ARE THERE SPECIAL RULES FOR SERVING CERTAIN DEFENDANTS?

Yes. There are special rules for serving defendants that are organizations and not people.

Corporations and associations. To serve a corporation or association, you must mail a copy of the complaint, summons and Initial Order to a person authorized to accept service for that corporation or association. An authorized person means an officer, managing agent, general agent, or any other agent of the corporation or association authorized by appointment or law to receive service of process. See Civil Rule 4(h)(1). To find out who is designated as the authorized agent for service for a corporation, you can call or visit the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, Corporations Division. The telephone number is (202) 442-4430.

Partnerships and unincorporated associations. If you sue a partnership or other unincorporated association, you generally have to serve the people who are partners or who make up the association. Those people must be sued and served like any other natural person. See Civil Rule 4(h)(1).

The District of Columbia and its officers or agencies. You can serve the District of Columbia and its officers or agencies by either delivering (by special process server) or mailing (certified or registered mail, return receipt requested) a copy of the complaint, summons and Initial Order to the Mayor of the District of Columbia (or designee) and to the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. See Civil Rule 4(j)(3).

To determine the person designated by the Mayor for service of process, you should call (202)727-7306. For the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, you should call (202)727-6295. The address for the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia is 441 4th Street, N.W., 6th floor south, Washington, DC 20001.

The United States and its officers or agencies. The most common and easiest way to serve the United States and its officers or agencies is by sending a copy of the complaint, summons and Initial Order by registered or certified mail to (1) the civil process clerk at the Office of the United States Attorney, Moultrie Courthouse, 500 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001, and (2) the Attorney General of the United States, U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20530. Other methods of serving the United States and its officer and agencies are explained in Civil Rule 4(i)(2) and (3).

WHAT DO I DO IF I CANNOT SERVE THE OTHER SIDE USING ONE OF THE FOUR METHODS DESCRIBED ABOVE?

If you cannot serve the other side using the ways described in earlier answers, you may ask the court for permission to use a different **method**. You must file a motion explaining what methods you tried and what alternative methods you think will work. Examples include serving the other side using email or delivering the documents to the individual's workplace. For more specifics, please read Civil Rule 4 (e)(3).

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO SERVE THE COMPLAINT?

You generally have 60 days from the date of filing to serve the complaint, unless you get an extension. See Civil Rule 4(m).

WHAT DO I DO IF I NEED MORE TIME TO SERVE THE COMPLAINT?

You can file a motion for an extension of time for service. However, you must file the motion **before** the end of the allotted time for service expires.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER I SERVE THE DEFENDANT?

Proof of service must be filed. Proof of service consists of an affidavit or declaration under penalty of perjury that provides information about how service was made. Civil Rule 4(l) describes the information you must provide. You must file proof of service with the court within 60 days after you file your complaint. For an alternative method of service, the court may specify how to submit the proof of service.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT SERVE THE DEFENDANT?

If you do not serve the defendant within the allowed time, or if you do not file proof that you served the defendant, your case will be dismissed. See Civil Rule 4(m).

If your case is dismissed for these reasons, you can file a motion to reinstate the case. You generally must file the motion within 14 days after the dismissal, and unless you got a waiver of fees (as explained on page 8), you must pay a \$20.00 filing fee. See Civil Rule 41(b)(3).

ANSWERING THE COMPLAINT

WHAT DOES THE DEFENDANT HAVE TO DO AFTER BEING SERVED?

The defendant usually has 21 days after being served with the complaint, summons and Initial Order to file an answer or a motion to dismiss the complaint. See Civil Rule 12(a)(1). If the defendant is the District of Columbia, it has 60 days to answer the complaint. The 21-day or 60-day period begins on the day the defendant is served with the summons. If the defendant does not specifically deny an allegation made in the complaint, the judge will treat that as an admission of the allegation. See Civil Rule 8(b)(6).

The defendant must file his answer or motion to dismiss with the court and provide a copy to the plaintiff. Motions to dismiss are discussed on page 14 of this handbook. If a defendant files a motion to dismiss, he or she does not have to file an

answer unless the court denies the motion. If the court denies the motion, the defendant then has 14 days to file an answer. See Civil Rule 12(a)(4).

If the defendant thinks he or she has a claim against the plaintiff, the defendant may be able to file a counterclaim. If the counterclaim involves the same circumstances as the complaint, the defendant may have to choose between filing a counterclaim and losing the opportunity to do so at a later time. See Civil Rule 13.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE DEFENDANT DOES NOT RESPOND?

If the defendant fails to answer or does not file a motion for extension of time to answer within this time period, the Clerk will enter a default against the defendant. A default generally means the plaintiff will win the case and needs to prove only the amount of the claim.

If the court says you defaulted, you may file a motion to remove the default. See Civil Rule 55(c). You must include with your motion a verified answer setting forth any defenses that you have to the complaint. See Civil Rule 55(c)(2). You must pay a \$20.00 fee – unless you got a waiver of fees (as explained on page 4).

WHAT DOES THE PLAINTIFF DO IF A DEFENDANT DEFAULTS?

Once the Clerk enters a default, the plaintiff has 60 days to do one of two things:

First, the plaintiff can request a default judgment from the Clerk by filing an affidavit or declaration (which are discussed on page 20 of this handbook) stating a specific amount in damages that is owed by the defendant. The plaintiff must also serve a copy of the affidavit on the defendant at least 21 days before requesting the default judgment. In addition, the plaintiff needs to prove the defendant is not in the military.

Second, the plaintiff can file a motion asking the judge to issue an order that gives you a default judgment. See Civil Rule 55(b)(2).

You may need to request an *ex parte* proof hearing. At that hearing, you have an opportunity to prove that you were injured and what your damages are. See Civil Rule 55-II. The party seeking damages must show proof of his or her damages. Even if the other side defaults, the defendant is entitled to notice of the hearing and a chance to challenge your evidence and to present its own evidence.

If the judge agrees with you at the *ex parte* proof hearing, the court will enter a default judgment. A default judgment gives you the same rights as a judgment entered in your favor after a trial.

HOW DO I PROVE THAT THE DEFENDANT IS NOT IN THE MILITARY?

A federal law requires proof that the defendant who defaulted is not serving in the military before the judge can issue a final default ruling against the defendant. You must complete a form called the "Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Affidavit" verifying that the defaulting party is not in the military. This form is available online at <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/forms>. See Civil Rule 55(b)(1). If you have information that proves he or she is not in the military, you can submit an affidavit explaining how you know from your personal knowledge that the defendant is not in the military. You may be able to get proof from a U.S. government database if you have the defendant's date of birth or Social Security number. You may look up whether the defendant is in the military at the following website <https://scra.dmdc.osd.mil/scra/#/home>.

MOTIONS

WHAT IS A MOTION?

To ask a judge to make a ruling, you generally have to make a motion. A motion can be oral or written.

WHAT DO I DO TO FILE A WRITTEN MOTION?

All motions and related papers must contain the following information:

- the name of the court across the top
- the case name and number
- the judge's name and calendar number
- a title that clearly states the action you are requesting the judge to order
- a statement of the reasons why the judge should do what you want (referred to as points and authorities)
- a statement in your motion that you tried to get the opposing party to agree to what you are requesting in your motion (Civil Rule 12-I(a))
- your signature
- your home address, telephone number and email address
- a statement called a “certificate of service” confirming that you sent a copy to every party in the case
- a proposed order for the judge to sign

Here is an example of the format for a motion or document:

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Civil Division

[Name of plaintiff(s)],	:	
Plaintiff(s),	:	2018 CA 00XXXX
	:	Judge [name of judge]
v.	:	Calendar 11
	:	Next court date:
[Name of defendant(s)],	:	[next
event] Defendant(s).	:	
		[TITLE OF MOTION]

Before you file a motion, you must try to get the opposing party to agree to the relief that you are requesting in any motion. See Civil Rule 12-I(a). If you do not try to get the other parties to agree, the judge can deny the motion for that reason alone. If the motion involves seeking information from the other party, there are special rules for meeting to try to resolve the dispute before going to the judge. See Civil Rules 26(h) and 37(a)(1)(A).

You must mail a copy of the motion for the Clerk and another copy for the judge (a “chambers copy”). See Civil Rule 5(d)(4).

You must also pay a filing fee of \$20.00, unless you got a waiver of fees (as explained on page 4.). Parties may pay filing fees by cash, money order, or personal check. Personal checks are only accepted for cases filed in the Civil Actions Branch and must be presented in person with proper ID. The Superior Court also accepts payments for certain fees and other costs using an electronic portal, PayPort. For more information, go to:

<https://www.dccourts.gov/services/online-payment>.

HOW DO I SERVE A MOTION?

You can serve a motion on the other side by mailing a copy. If you have Internet access and sign up, and the other side is represented by a lawyer, you can serve motions electronically. For information about how to sign up, go to: <https://www.dccourts.gov/superior-court/e-filing>
<https://www.fileandservexpress.com/dc>

WHAT DO I DO TO OPPOSE A MOTION?

If you oppose another party's motion, you must file a written response explaining the reasons for your opposition.

You must file and serve your opposition to a motion within 14 days after you receive it. See Civil Rule 12-1(e). If you receive the motion by mail, you have an additional 3 days to file and serve an opposition. See Civil Rule 6(d).

Your opposition must include:

- A statement of the reasons for your opposition
- A proposed order for the judge to sign
- A statement called a “certificate of service” confirming that you sent a copy to every party in the case

If you mail a paper copy of your opposition to the Civil Actions Branch Clerk’s Office to file, you must also mail a copy for the judge. You may mail the judge’s copy directly to the judge’s chambers.

WHAT IF I NEED MORE TIME TO FILE OR OPPOSE A MOTION?

If you need more time than the rules ordinarily allow, you must file a motion to request additional time from the judge. Before you prepare your motion, you should contact the other side and see if you can get them to agree to give you extra time. If the other side agrees, the motion should say in the title that it is a “consent motion.” Judges usually grant consent motions.

If you want to extend another deadline that the judge set in an order in your case, you also need to file a motion to get the judge’s approval, and you should say in the motion whether or not the other side agrees.

WHAT IS AN AFFIDAVIT?

An affidavit is a written statement that you sign before a notary public after you swear or affirm that the information in the statement is true.

Instead of filing an affidavit, you can file a declaration swearing or affirming under penalty of perjury that the facts stated in the document are true

and correct. See Civil Rule 9-I(e). Verification by an individual party may be in the form set out in CA Form 101. At the end of the document, include the following statement: "I declare [or certify, verify, or state] under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on [date]." Then sign the document.

DISCOVERY

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE OTHER SIDE'S POSITION BEFORE TRIAL?

You have the right to get information directly from the other side about the issues in the case. This is called discovery. Two types of discovery more commonly used by people without lawyers are (1) asking the other side for significant documents, photographs, or videos and (2) sending a list of written questions for the other side to answer in writing under oath. Civil Rules 26 – 37 explain these and other types of discovery in detail. You can also talk to the judge at a hearing about getting information that you need before trial.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I THINK THE OTHER SIDE'S DISCOVERY REQUESTS ARE UNREASONABLE?

You can object to another party's discovery requests. You generally have 30 days to object, and you have to object in writing. If the other party wants to pursue the request, it must (with a few exceptions) schedule a face-to-face meeting with you to try to resolve the disagreement before the other party asks the judge to get involved. See Civil Rules 26(h) and 37(a).

If you are concerned about giving the other side personal or confidential information, you can ask for a protective order – a court order that allows the other side to use or disclose the information only for the case.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I NEED EVIDENCE FROM SOMEONE WHO IS NOT A PARTY TO THE CASE?

If you need testimony or documents from a person or organization that is not a party, and that person or organization will not cooperate voluntarily, you can subpoena a witness or the records. Civil Rule 45 contains the rules for subpoenas.

You can get a blank subpoena online at, <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/forms/forms-by-location?location=civilactions> and you should complete it before serving it.

WHAT ARE EXPERT WITNESSES?

Expert witnesses are people with special training or experience who are allowed to give their opinions. In some cases, a party may need an expert witness to prove his or her case. Any party who may want to call an expert to

testify at trial has to give notice to the other side – identifying the person and stating the substance of the opinion and summarizing the grounds for the opinion. See Civil Rule 26(a)(2).

BEFORE THE TRIAL

WHEN IS THE FIRST HEARING BEFORE THE JUDGE?

The first hearing before the judge is the Initial Scheduling Conference. This conference usually occurs within 90 to 120 days after the filing of the complaint. This time is necessary in order to make sure that the defendant will have been served. The date and time of the first court hearing are included in the Initial Order which is issued to the plaintiff when the complaint is filed.

All parties must participate personally, or have their lawyer represent them, at the Initial Scheduling Conference. See Civil Rule 16(b). The Initial Scheduling Conference usually is held on a Friday morning and lasts approximately 5 to 10 minutes. At this conference, the judge assigns the case to a track. The track determines the deadlines for filing motions, completing discovery, and scheduling an effort to resolve the case through settlement. The judge generally does not set a trial date at the Initial Scheduling Conference; scheduling the trial usually happens at the pretrial conference.

Some judges have additional written rules and procedures. They are available online: <https://www.dccourts.gov/services/civil-matters/general-orders-civil-cases>. You also can ask the judge at the Initial Scheduling Conference for a copy of any special rules and procedures.

WHAT IF I NEED THE JUDGE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT AN EMERGENCY BEFORE THE TRIAL?

If you have a problem with the other side that you think the judge needs to deal with immediately, you can ask for an emergency order. The main purpose of an emergency order is to stop the other side from doing something that cannot be undone and that would hurt you in a way that cannot be fixed at trial by money or in another way. See Civil Rule 65.

You can get a form to request an emergency order online.

CAN A DEFENDANT ASK THE JUDGE TO DISMISS THE CASE AT THE BEGINNING?

The defendant may believe that the plaintiff's claim or claims are false. That does not mean the judge can dismiss the case at the very beginning. Whether allegations are true or false is determined at trial, and the judge cannot short-circuit the process by dismissing the case before each side has a chance to present evidence at trial.

However, if the defendant believes that the plaintiff would lose even if everything he or she says in his complaint were true, the defendant can file a motion to dismiss. See Civil Rule 12(b)(6). The judge may give the plaintiff an opportunity to provide more specific allegations that justify going forward with the case.

The defendant can also move to dismiss the case on other grounds – for example, because the judge does not have authority to hear the case or because the plaintiff did not serve him properly. See Civil Rule 12(b).

If the defendant counter-sues the plaintiff, the plaintiff has the option to move to dismiss the counterclaim.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE OTHER SIDE CANNOT WIN AT TRIAL?

Either side can file a motion for summary judgment. See Civil Rule 56. Motions for summary judgment are usually filed after the case is ready for trial. The party seeking summary judgment must submit affidavits or other materials that establish that there is no genuine dispute of fact to be resolved at trial and that the judge or jury would have to return a verdict for that party at trial based on all the evidence. If the party seeking summary judgment submits such evidence, the opposing party must submit evidence that would permit a judge or jury to rule in its favor.

WHAT IS MEDIATION?

Mediation is your chance to have a neutral person help you to try to find a way to resolve your case in a way that is satisfactory to you and that does not involve the delays and burdens of a trial and possible appeal. In mediation, an experienced mediator helps the parties communicate their positions on issues and explores possible solutions or settlements. There is no charge for mediation. Mediation is one type of Alternative Dispute Resolution or “ADR.”

During the public health emergency, all mediations are conducted online or over the telephone. A mediation session is scheduled after all discovery is complete and the judge has decided any motions that could resolve the case. A specific date for the session will be scheduled by the judge at the Initial Scheduling Conference or later by the court’s Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division.

At the Initial Scheduling Conference, the parties have the option to select two other types of ADR. In case evaluation, an experienced person provides the parties with a non-binding opinion about the likelihood of success at trial and the settlement value of the case. In arbitration, the arbitrator issues a written ruling for one side or the other after a hearing. If the parties select non-binding arbitration and a party is dissatisfied with the award, the party can request a trial. In binding arbitration, the arbitrator’s award resolves the case.

For more information, contact the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division at (202) 879-1549.

WHAT IS THE PRETRIAL CONFERENCE?

The judge holds a pretrial conference when a case is ready for trial and efforts to resolve it through mediation have failed. If the parties fail to reach a settlement in mediation, they select a date for the pretrial conference in the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division. In most cases, the pretrial conference is scheduled approximately 60 days after the last mediation session.

Civil Rule 16 tells people what they have to do in the weeks leading up to the pretrial conference – including meeting with the other side and filing a joint pretrial statement a week before the pretrial conference.

At the pretrial conference, the judge schedules the trial – usually 2-6 months after the pretrial conference. The judge also sets guidelines for the trial. The judge may also try to help the parties reach a settlement. Each party has to attend in person, unless the judge excuses them. If you fail to attend, the judge may dismiss the case, enter a default, or impose a fine. See Civil Rule 16-II.

THE TRIAL

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE TRIAL?

At the trial, each side has a chance to present evidence about its side of the story. You must be ready to present all the evidence you have that will convince a judge or a jury to decide in your favor. It is usually too late to present new information after the trial has ended.

A trial usually starts with opening statements where each party explains what he or she wants the judge or jury to do and summarizes the evidence he or she intends to present. Each party then presents evidence to convince the judge or jury to rule in his or her favor. The plaintiff presents evidence first because the plaintiff has the burden of proof. That means it is up to the plaintiff to prove that it is more likely than not that his claim is true. The defendant has the burden of proof on any counterclaim. The plaintiff may testify and call other witnesses to testify. The defendant gets to ask questions of the plaintiff and his or her witnesses. After the plaintiff presents his case, the defendant can call additional witnesses and present other evidence. The plaintiff has the right to question any witnesses the defendant calls. After all of the evidence is presented, each party may make closing arguments explaining why the judge or jury should rule in his or her favor. To find out how to present exhibits during a virtual hearing, ask the judge in your case.

WHAT COUNTS AS EVIDENCE?

Evidence includes all of the things you tell or show the judge or jury to prove your case at trial. The kind of evidence you need depends on the kind of case. Ask yourself: what information will convince the judge or jury to do what I am asking?

Usually, a witness can testify only about what the witness saw or heard with his or her own eyes and ears. You can also use documents and photographs as evidence.

The judge decides what evidence the judge or jury will consider. The judge uses rules of evidence to decide what evidence can be considered. A party can object to another party's question to a witness or to a document the other party wants the judge or jury to consider. If the judge does not explain a ruling, you can ask for an explanation.

The judge is not allowed to give either party advice about how to get specific evidence admitted or excluded.

The rules of evidence used in the Superior Court are not collected in one official book. However, with some exceptions, the Superior Court's rules are the same as the Federal Rules of Evidence, which are available online at <http://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/fre>.

HOW DOES THE JURY GET PICKED?

The basic rules for jury selection are in Civil Rules 47 and 48. Individual judges generally have additional rules and procedures for jury selection. Juries in civil cases usually have 8 jurors, and they must all agree on the verdict.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR TRIAL?

Here is a checklist that may be helpful:

- Do you have a clear explanation of your case?
- Are you ready to address all the factors the court must consider in your type of case?
- If the trial is a jury trial, have you made sure all of the witnesses you need at trial will be at the courthouse?
- Do you have all of the documents you intend to use at trial?
- Have you prepared questions for each of your witnesses?
- Have you met with each of your witnesses?
- Have you prepared questions for each of your opponent's witnesses?
- Have you prepared your opening statement?
- Have you prepared your closing argument?

AFTER THE TRIAL

HOW DO I COLLECT MONEY THE LOSING PARTY IS SUPPOSED TO PAY?

It is up to the winning party to collect money that the judge ordered the losing party to pay in a judgment.

If you want to get money from the employer or bank of the losing party, you may apply for a writ of attachment.

If you do not know whether the losing party has any money or property, you may request an oral examination to find out what assets the defendant has.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I LOSE AT TRIAL?

The losing party – either the plaintiff or the defendant – may appeal any decision to the DC Court of Appeals. To begin the appeal, you must file a Notice of Appeal within 30 days after the docketing date of the judgment order. The Notice of Appeal form may be found online.

To appeal a decision by a magistrate judge, the losing party must file a motion for review under Civil Rule 73(b) within 14 days of the decision.

LawHelp.org/DC

Understand your legal issue, solve your problem.

LawHelp.org/DC provides FREE information for D.C. residents in the following legal subject areas:

- » Landlord/Tenant
- » Employment
- » Divorce & Custody
- » Public Benefits
- » Immigration
- » Military & Veterans
- » Evictions
- » Consumer
- » Wills, Estates & Power of Attorney

Go to www.LawHelp.org/DC to find:

- » Referrals to free legal services programs
- » Information about your civil legal rights
- » Self-help court forms and interactive interviews
- » Links to social services and government agencies



LawHelp.org/DC/ced

LawHelp.org/DC/ced provides FREE information for small business and nonprofits in legal subject areas including:

- » IRS Compliance
- » Start-up Information
- » Contracts
- » Commercial Leases
- » Risk Management
- » Intellectual Property

Go to www.LawHelp.org/DC/ced to find:

- » Legal alerts on law changes
- » In-depth resource manuals on specific legal topics
- » Event calendars for trainings and brief advice clinics
- » On-demand webinars



Tips for Attending Remote Hearings-Civil Division

Courtrooms are closed because of the COVID-19 or coronavirus pandemic. Your court hearing may be held remotely. This means that you will participate by phone or by video conference instead of coming to the courthouse. Here are some tips on how to prepare.

How do I know if I have a remote hearing?



The Court will contact you to tell you that your hearing is remote. They may contact you by sending you an email, letter in the mail, or by calling you.

How do I take part in a remote hearing?

The Court will give you step-by-step instructions on how to take part in the remote hearing. If you lose your written notice, call the Civil Division for instructions at:



(202) 879-1148

Is there anything that I should do before the day of the hearing?

- Let the court know immediately if you cannot join a hearing because you do not have a phone or computer.
- You may want to contact an attorney for legal help.



Small Claims Resource Center at
(202) 849-3608

- You can also find the list of legal services providers at dccourts.gov/coronavirus by clicking on the link that says "List of Legal Service Providers for Those Without an Attorney."
- Evidence: If you want to use photos, video or documents, let the judge know as soon as possible.
- Witnesses: Tell the judge as soon as possible if you want a witness to testify.
- Accommodations & Language Access: Let the court know if you need an interpreter or other accommodation for your hearing.



Tips for the Hearing

- Join the hearing a few minutes early!
- Charge your computer or phone and make sure you have enough minutes to join the call. Find a private and quiet space. If possible, be alone in a room during the hearing. Try to limit distractions as much as possible. If others are in the room with you, ask if they can be quiet during the hearing.
- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Mute all sounds on your phone or computer.
- Say your name before you speak so the record is clear. Be prepared to identify your role in the hearing (e.g., plaintiff, defendant, witness, etc.).
- Speak slowly and clearly so everyone hears what you are saying.
- Pause before speaking in case there is a lag. Use a headset or headphones, if you can. This will free up your hands and sound better.
- Try not to talk over anyone else. Only one person can speak at a time. If you talk while someone else is talking, the judge will not be able to hear you.
- Have all your documents for the hearing in front of you.
- Have a pen and paper to take notes.
- If you are not ready for your hearing or want to speak with an attorney, you can ask the judge to postpone your hearing for another date.
- If your sound or video freezes during the hearing, use the chat feature or call the Clerk's Office to let them know that you are having technical issues.



Special Tips for Video Hearings

[\(Click here for more information\)](#)

- Download the court's hearing software, WebEx, in advance and do a test run! The Court will provide you with a WebEx link in advance of the hearing.
- Set up the camera at eye level. If you are using your phone, prop it up so you can look at it without holding it.
- Look at the camera when you speak and avoid moving around on the video.
- Wear what you would normally wear to court.
- Sit in a well-lit room with no bright lights behind you.
- If possible, find a blank wall to sit in front of. Remember the judge will be able to see everything on your screen, so pick a location that is not distracting.



Civil Remote Hearing Instructions for Participants

The following instructions are for participants who are scheduled to have cases heard before a Civil Judge in a **Remote Courtroom**

When connecting to the WebEx System, there are several options to connect to the court hearing remotely. Please follow the instructions below:

Option 1: (AUDIO ONLY/Dial-in by Phone):

Toll 1 (844) 992-4726 or (202) 860-2110, enter the Meeting ID from the attachment followed by #, press # again to enter session.

- *Please call in no sooner than 5 minutes before your scheduled hearing time. Once you have joined the session, please place your phone on mute until directed otherwise. If you should happen to get disconnected from the call, please call back in using the phone number and access number provided and the courtroom clerk will mute your call until the appropriate time.*

If you select **Option 2** or **Option 3** use the **Audio Alternative**

Option 2: (LAPTOP/DESKTOP USERS 1):

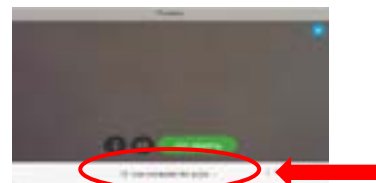
Open Web Browser in Google Chrome and copy and paste following address from the next page:
<https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/XXXXXXXXXX>

Option 3: (LAPTOP/DESKTOP USERS 2):

Open Web Browser in Google Chrome and copy and paste following address:

<https://dccourts.webex.com> Select **Join**, enter the Meeting ID from the next page

AUDIO ALTERNATIVE: Instead of automatically using **USE COMPUTER FOR AUDIO**, select **CALL-IN** and follow the **CALL-IN** prompt window. Use a cell phone or desk phone. You will be heard clearer if you **do not** place your phone on **SPEAKER**. It is very important that you enter the **ACCESS ID#** so that your audio is matched with your video.



Option 4: (Ipad/SMARTPHONE/TABLET):

- Go to App Store, Download WebEx App (Cisco WebEx Meetings)
- Sign into the App with your Name and Email Address
- Select Join Meeting
- Enter address from the next page: <https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/XXXXXXXXXX>
- Click join and make sure your microphone is muted and your video is unmuted (if you need to be seen). If you only need to speak and do not need to be seen, use the audio only option.
- When you are ready click "Join Meeting". If the host has not yet started the meeting, you will be placed in the lobby until the meeting begins.

For Technical Questions or Issues Call: (202) 879-1928, Option 2

Superior Court of the District of Columbia
Public Access for Remote Court Hearings
(Effective August 24, 2020)

The current telephone numbers for all remote hearings are: 202-860-2110 (local) or 844-992-4726 (toll free). After dialing the number, enter the WebEx Meeting ID as shown below for the courtroom. Please click a WebEx Direct URL link below to join the hearing online. Audio and video recording; taking pictures of remote hearings; and sharing the live or recorded remote hearing by rebroadcasting, live-streaming or otherwise are not allowed

Courtroom	Types of Hearings Scheduled in Courtroom	Public Access via WebEx	
		WebEx Direct URL	WebEx Meeting ID
100	Civil 2 Scheduling Conferences; Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb100	129 846 4145
205	Civil 2 Scheduling Conferences; Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb205	129 814 7399
212	Civil 2 Scheduling Conferences; Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb212	129 440 9070
214	Foreclosure Hearings	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb214	129 942 2620
219	Civil 2 Scheduling Conferences; Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb219	129 315 2924
221	Civil 1 Scheduling Conferences; Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb221	129 493 5162
318	Civil 2 Scheduling Conferences; Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb318	129 801 7169

320	Civil 2 Scheduling Conferences;	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb320	129 226 9879
400	Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials Judge in Chambers Matters including Temporary Restraining Orders, Preliminary Injunctions and Name Changes	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb400	129 339 7379
415	Civil 2 Scheduling Conferences; Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb415	129 314 3475
516	Civil 2 Scheduling Conferences; Status, Motion and Evidentiary Hearings including Bench Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb516	129 776 4396
517		https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb517	129 911 6415
518		https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb518	129 685 3445
519		https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctb519	129 705 0412
JM-4		https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctbjm4	129 797 7557
A-47		https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctba47	129 906 2065
B-52	Debt Collection	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctbb52	129 793 4102
B-53	Landlord and Tenant Matters	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctbb53	129 913 3728
B-109	Landlord and Tenant Matters	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctbb109	129 127 9276
B-119	Small Claims Hearings and Trials	https://dccourts.webex.com/meet/ctbb119	129 230 4882



District of Columbia Courts

Tips for using DC Courts Remote Hearing Sites



The DC Courts have **remote hearing sites** available in various locations in the community to help persons who may not have computer devices or internet service at home to participate in scheduled remote hearings. The Courts are committed to enhancing access to justice for all. There are five remote access sites throughout the community which will operate: **Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm.**

The remote site locations are:

<p>Remote Site -1 Balance and Restorative Justice Center 1215 Capitol Street SW Washington, DC 20003</p>	<p>Remote Site - 2 Balance and Restorative Justice Center 118 Q Street, NE Washington, DC 20002</p>	<p>Remote Site - 3 Balance and Restorative Justice Center 1110 V Street, SE Washington, DC 20020</p>
<p>Remote Site - 4 Balance and Restorative Justice Center 920 Rhode Island Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20018</p>	<p>Remote Site - 5 Reeves Center 2000 14th Street, NW, 2nd Floor – Community Room Washington, DC 20009</p>	



If you want to use a remote site location for your hearing, call **202-879-1900** or email DCCourtsRemoteSites@dcsc.gov **at least 24 hours before your hearing to reserve a remote access computer station.** If you require special accommodations such as an interpreter for your hearing, please call **202-879-1900** **at least 24 hours in advance of your hearing so the Courts can make arrangements.**

You should bring the following items when you come to your scheduled site location

1. Your **case number** and any **hyperlinks** provided by the Courts for your scheduled hearing.
2. Any documents you need for the hearing (evidence), including exhibits, receipts, photos, contracts, etc.
3. Materials for notetaking, including pen and paper.
4. A facial covering will be required for entry into the remote hearing location; if you do not have a facial covering one will be provided.

***Safety and security measures are in place at the remote sites.**

Contact information to schedule your remote access computer station:

Call: **202-879-1900**

Email: DCCourtsRemoteSites@dcsc.gov

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES REFERENCE GUIDE

CONTACT INFORMATION

Organizations are listed by topic area. Centralized numbers (if available) are included in each section and are listed together at the end of the document. Otherwise, organizations are listed by name. Some phone lines may be voicemail only but are being checked.

Appeals

- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia – 202-628-1161

Child Support

- Child Support Resource Center Hotline-staffed by Bread for the City & Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia) (8:30-12:30 Monday-Friday) – 202-791-3996
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577

Consumer Law (security deposits, home improvement/contractor disputes, auto repair disputes, scams/unfair trade practices)

- Catholic Charities Legal Network – 202-350-4305
- D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center Consumer Law Resource Center – 202-780-2574
- Legal Counsel for the Elderly (60+ only) – 202-434-2120
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
- Tzedek DC (scams/unfair trade practices) – 202-274-7386

Custody

- Family Law Assistance Network (“FLAN”) (joint project of D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, Legal Aid, & D.C. Affordable Law Firm) – 202-844-5428
- Catholic Charities Legal Network – 202-350-4305
- Children’s Law Center (Non-parent caregivers of children only) – 202-467-4900
- DC KinCare Alliance (Non-parent caregivers of children only) – 202-505-5803
- D.C. Volunteer Lawyers Project – 202-425-7573
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577

Debt Collection/Credit

- DC Debt Collection Defense Hotline – 202-851-3387 (joint project of Legal Aid & Tzedek DC, in collaboration w/ Catholic Charities Legal Network, D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, & Neighborhood Legal Services Program)

Disability/Individuals with Disabilities

- Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services – 202-547-4747
- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia (public benefits, health insurance) – 202-661-5962
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
- Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities – 202-448-1450

Discrimination

- First Shift Justice Project – 202-241-0897
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
- Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs – 202-319-1000
- Whitman-Walker Health Legal Services (LGBTQ or HIV only) – 202-939-7630

Domestic Violence & Related Family Matters (Petitioners/Survivors)

- Emergencies: Call 911 or DC Victim Hotline at 1-844-4HELPDC
- Ayuda – 202-387-4848
- Bread for the City – 202-386-7616
- Break the Cycle (Age 24 and younger) – 202-849-6282
- D.C. Volunteer Lawyers Project – 202-425-7573
- Joint Law School Clinic Helpline (George Washington Univ. Law School, Georgetown Law Center, Catholic Univ. Columbus School of Law) – 202-603-9760, 202-603-5870
- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia – 202-628-1161
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
- Network of Victim Recovery of D.C. – 202-742-1727
- Victim Legal Network of D.C. (coordinated service line) – 202-629-1788

Domestic Violence (Respondents)

- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
- Rising for Justice – 202-638-4798

Education

- Advocates for Justice in Education – 202-678-8060
- Children’s Law Center – 202-467-4900

Elders

- Legal Counsel for the Elderly (60+ only) – 202-434-2120

Eviction/Landlord & Tenant (Tenants)

- Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network (joint project of Bread for the City, D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Neighborhood Legal Services Program, & Rising for Justice) – 202-780-2575

Eviction/Landlord & Tenant (Tenants & Small Landlords)

- Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network (joint project of Bread for the City, D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Neighborhood Legal Services Program, & Rising for Justice) – 202-780-2575
- Catholic Charities Legal Network – 202-350-4305
- Christian Legal Aid of D.C. – 202-710-0592

Foreclosure

- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia – 202-628-1161
- Legal Counsel for the Elderly (60+ only) – 202-434-2120
- DC Foreclosure Prevention Hotline (access to free housing counseling & referrals to lawyers, including free legal services organizations) – 202-265-CALL(2255)

Homelessness

- Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless – 202-328-5500

Housing Conditions/Civil

- Children’s Law Center – 202-467-4900
 - Christian Legal Aid of D.C. – 202-710-0592
- Howard University School of Law, Fair Housing Clinic (clinics.husl@gmail.com)
- Landlord Tenant Resource Center (D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center) – 202-780-2575
 - Legal Aid Society for the District of Columbia Tenant Hotline – 202-851-3388
 - Legal Counsel for the Elderly (60+ only) – 202-434-2120

- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
 - Rising for Justice – 202-638-4798
- UDC David A. Clarke School of Law, Housing and Consumer Law Clinic – 202-274-5073

Housing/Subsidized Housing Issues

- Bread for the City – 202-386-7616
- Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network – 202-780-2575
- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia Tenant Hotline – 202-851-3388
- Legal Counsel for the Elderly (60+ only) – 202-434-2120
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
- Rising for Justice – 202-638-4798
- Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless – 202-328-5500

Immigration

- Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center – 202-395-3572
- Ayuda – 202-387-4848
- CARECEN – 202-328-9799
- Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services – 202-772-4352
- DC Affordable Law Firm (Income Restrictions) – 202-844-5430
- D.C. Volunteer Lawyers Project – 202-425-7573
- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia – 202-628-1161
- Rising for Justice – 202-638-4798
- Whitman-Walker Health Legal Services (LGBTQ or HIV only) – 202-939-7630

Policing

- Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs – 202-319-1000

Probate/Estate Planning

- Catholic Charities Legal Network – 202-350-4305
- Christian Legal Aid of D.C. – 202-710-0592
- DC Affordable Law Firm (Income Restrictions) – 202-844-5430
- Legal Counsel for the Elderly (60+ only) – 202-434-2120
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program (Wills, Advance Directives) – 202-832-6577
- Whitman-Walker Health Legal Services (LGBTQ or HIV only) – 202-939-7630

Public Benefits/Health Insurance and Health Care Access

- Bread for the City – 202-386-7616
- Catholic Charities Legal Network – 202-350-4305
- DC KinCare Alliance (Non-parent caregivers of children only) – 202-505-5803
- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia – 202-628-1161
- Legal Counsel for the Elderly (60+ only) – 202-434-2120
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
- Whitman-Walker Health Legal Services – 202-939-7630

Record Sealing

- Christian Legal Aid of D.C. – 202-710-0592
- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia – 202-628-1161
- Neighborhood Legal Services Program – 202-832-6577
- Rising for Justice – 202-638-4798

Small Claims

- DC Debt Collection Defense Hotline (joint project of Legal Aid & Tzedek DC, in collaboration w/ Catholic Charities Legal Network, D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, & Neighborhood Legal Services Program) – 202-851-3387
- Small Claims Resource Center Hotline (project of Neighborhood Legal Services Program) (for general questions about small claims court proceedings for both plaintiffs and defendants) – 202-849-3608

Unemployment/Worker's Rights

- Catholic Charities Legal Network – 202-350-4305
- Claimant Advocacy Program – 202-974-8150
- First Shift Justice Project – 202-241-0897
- Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia – 202-628-1161
- Washington Lawyers' Committee Workers Rights Clinic – 202-319-1000

Victims of Crime

- Victim Legal Network of D.C. (coordinated service line) – 202-629-1788
- Amara Legal Center – 240-257-6492
- Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center – 202-395-3572
- Ayuda – 202-387-4848
- Network of Victim Recovery of D.C. – 202-742-1727
- Tzedek DC (Financial Crimes Only) – 202-274-7386

OTHER LEGAL INFORMATION

- **D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center's Advice & Referral Clinic:** Information about the status and availability of the clinic is available at <https://www.dcbbar.org/pro-bono/free-legal-help/help-for-individuals/advice-referral-clinic>
- **D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center Legal Information Help Line** – 202-626-3499 (Recorded listing of legal services providers, by topic, in English, Spanish, Amharic, and French)
- **Legal Information and Legal Services Provider Directory** – www.Lawhelp.org/DC
- **DC REFERS** - Online directory of lawyers offering reduced-fee services to people of modest means – www.dcrefers.org

Summary of Resource Centers and Centralized Intake/Hotlines:

- o Child Support Resource Center Hotline (8:30-12:30 M-F) – 202-791-3996
- o D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center Consumer Law Resource Center – 202-780-2574
- o DC Debt Collection Defense Hotline – 202-851-3387
- o DC Foreclosure Prevention Hotline (access to free housing counseling & referrals to lawyers, including free legal services organizations) – 202-265-CALL(2255)
- o Family Law Assistance Network (“FLAN”) – 202-844-5428
- o Landlord Tenant Legal Assistance Network/ Resource Center – 202-780-2575
- o Small Claims Resource Center Hotline – 202-849-3608 (for general questions about small claims court proceedings for both plaintiffs and defendants)
- o Victim Legal Network of D.C. (coordinated service line) – 202-629-1788