



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

Instructions for Filing a Civil Rights Complaint by an Incarcerated Individual

I. The Filing Fee and 28 U.S.C. § 1915

1. A complaint must be accompanied by the full \$405.00 filing fee, which includes an administrative fee of \$55.00. Prisoners seeking to commence an action without prepayment of fees, must file a motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915. If granted, the administrative fee of \$55.00 is waived, and the prisoner is responsible for \$350.00 only. All questions must be answered clearly and concisely in the appropriate space on the form.
2. Under § 1915, you must also submit a certified copy of your trust fund account statement (or institutional equivalent) for the six-month period immediately preceding the filing of the complaint.
 - a. This can be obtained from the appropriate official of each penal institution at which you are or were confined during the six-month period before the filing of your complaint.
 - b. If you were detained in a state facility during that time period, the counselor at the current facility in which you are confined will be able to provide you with a statement.
 - c. Keep in mind, the Court cannot consider the merits of the claims asserted in the complaint without either 1) the filing fee or, 2) a properly completed motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis and certified copy of your trust fund account statement as required by § 1915.
3. If the motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis is deficient in any way, the Court will issue a Notice of Insufficiency and give you an opportunity to fix any errors.
4. If the Court denies your motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis, you will be notified of this decision and you will have thirty days to submit the filing fee. If you do not pay the filing fee after the thirty days, your case may be dismissed without prejudice.

II. The Complaint

1. The complaint must be typed or legibly handwritten, preferably in ink, and all questions must be answered clearly and concisely in the appropriate spaces on the form.
2. All party names must be listed in full in the case caption (do not use the words et al.). If the names of all the defendants cannot fit in the caption on page 1, please write "see attached" in the space and attach an additional page with the full list of names.
3. The complaint must be signed and dated under penalty of perjury.
4. You do not need to send exhibits, affidavits, grievance or witness statements, or any other materials to the Clerk's Office with this complaint.
5. The public can access electronic court files. For privacy and security reasons, papers filed with the Court should not contain: an individual's full social security number or full birth date; the full name of a person known to be a minor; or a complete financial account number. A filing may include only: the last four digits of a social security number; the year of an individual's birth; a minor's initials; and the last four digits of a financial account number. See Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2.

III. What happens next? Initial Review Order to Issue

After the filing fee has been paid, or the motion to proceed in forma pauperis has been granted, the Court is required to review the merits of your case to be sure that you have stated a plausible (meaning credible or believable) claim for relief. Once this review is completed an Initial Review Order (IRO) will issue.

There is no approximate time for an IRO to issue and it can take a few months.

1. If the Court determines you do not have and cannot state a plausible claim against any or all defendants, the IRO may dismiss specific parties, or the complaint in its entirety.
2. If the Court determines that you could state a plausible claim, but you have not done so, the IRO will indicate a date by which you may file an amended complaint setting forth the allegations clearly and concisely.
3. If the Court determines you have filed a plausible claim, the case can proceed with service. If the Court granted your motion to proceed in forma pauperis, the IRO will include language directing the Clerk to serve the defendants in the case pursuant to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. If you did not file a motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis and instead paid the filing fee, you are responsible for serving the defendants at your own expense.

IV. Prisoner Scanning Program

1. The United States District Court for the District of Connecticut (the Court) and the Connecticut Department of Corrections (DOC) participate in a Prisoner Electronic Filing Program that is available for all inmates currently incarcerated at a Connecticut DOC facility.
2. Prisoners are to bring all documents to the designated counselor at the facility to scan to the Court for filing. All original documents presented for scanning should be stamped with the designated file stamp and returned to the inmate after scanning, as proof of receipt. Originals and/or copies should not be mailed to the Court.
3. Correctional staff will print all Notice of Electronic Filings (NEFs) of filings made in a case and provide them to the prisoners as they are received.
4. Any order that is issued by the Court as a PDF document will be mailed to the prisoner by U.S. Mail.

V. Prisoner Filings in Paper

Inmates who are incarcerated at a facility outside of the State of Connecticut or at Danbury FCI, should mail their filings to one of the three offices below:

Office of the Clerk
United States District Court
915 Lafayette Boulevard
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Office of the Clerk
United States District Court
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Office of the Clerk
United States District Court
141 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

VI. Other

1. The Prison Litigation Reform Act ("PLRA"), 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a), requires that "[n]o action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under section 1983 of this title, or any other Federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility until such administrative remedies as are available are exhausted."
2. The United States District Judges, the United States Magistrate Judges, the clerk of the court, deputy clerks, and staff attorneys are officers of the court and are prohibited from giving legal advice. Legal questions should be directed to an attorney.