
**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRO SE (NON-PRISONER) LITIGANTS FILING
CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINTS IN ACTIONS
UNDER 28 USC §1331 OR §1346 OR 42 USC §1983**

United States District Court
Northern District of Florida

(Rev. 1/20)

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USFLND'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINTS

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, FLORIDA, NORTHERN DISTRICT
PRO SE 15.1

[-INTRO-]

Civil rights actions commenced by pro se litigants will not be considered by the Court unless the "Civil Rights Complaint Form for Pro Se (Non-Prisoner) Litigants In Actions Under 28 U.S.C. §1331 or §1346 or 42 U.S.C. §1983" has been completed by the litigant as explained below.

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[-CONTENTS-]

1. This packet includes a complaint form which should be completed as instructed below. Also included is an in forma pauperis application which you must complete if you cannot pay the filing fee.

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[-NAME, ADDRESS-]

2. Your complaint must be legibly handwritten, typewritten, or computer generated. Answer all questions on the complaint form. You must furnish your full and correct name as Plaintiff. When listing Defendants, provide name and either job title or position; i.e., Officer R. Smith. You must furnish an address for each Defendant. If you need additional space to answer a question, you may use additional blank pages, but do not write on the reverse side of any page. You must sign the complaint on the last page of the complaint form. ANY FALSE STATEMENT MADE ON THIS FORM MAY RESULT IN SANCTIONS AND MAY ALSO SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR PROSECUTION FOR PERJURY. You must keep a copy of the complaint for your records, but the complaint that is sent to the Court for filing must contain your original signature. Do not send service copies of the complaint until directed to do so by the Court.

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[-SUBSTANTIVE FACTS-]

3. State the facts which support your claims in Section III of the complaint form. The claims raised in this action must relate to the same basic incident or issue. Any other claims must be addressed in a separate civil rights complaint. When presenting the facts, do not make legal arguments or provide case citations. If you desire to make a legal argument, you should do so by filing a separate memorandum of law. Such argument is unnecessary at the initiation of a case, however. You will be advised when the submission of evidence or argument in support of your claim is appropriate. Do not attach evidence or exhibits to the complaint form.

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[-FILING FEE-]

4. If you are financially able to do so, you must submit a filing fee of \$400.00 at the same time you submit your complaint in order for the complaint to be filed. If you can pay the fee, you are also responsible for the costs of service of the complaint upon Defendants, although you may seek assistance from the Court. If you are unable to pay the filing fee and service costs for this action, you may petition the Court to proceed in forma pauperis using the forms included in this packet. The forms must be submitted with your complaint.

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[-SUMMONS-]

5. Those who are allowed to proceed in forma pauperis are entitled to service of the complaint upon Defendants by the United States Marshal. If you are granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis, you should not attempt to effect service of the complaint by yourself, nor should you mail to any Defendant a request for waiver of formal service pursuant to Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The Court will order the Marshal to serve the complaint on the Defendants at the appropriate time.

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[-PROCESSING-]

6. After receiving notice from the Clerk of your case number, you must include the case number on all documents you file with the Court. You must keep a copy of every document you send to the Court (including a copy of this complaint) as you are not entitled to free copies from the Clerk even if you are proceeding in forma pauperis. You must immediately advise the Court of any change of address by filing a "Notice to the Court of Change of Address." This notice should contain the address change and the effective date and must be signed. FAILURE TO NOTIFY THE COURT OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS COULD RESULT IN THE DISMISSAL OF YOUR CASE!

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[-DIVISIONS-]

7. The complaint will be prosecuted in either the Gainesville, Panama City, Pensacola, or Tallahassee Division of the Court, depending on the county of residence of one or more of the Defendants or the place where the events forming the basis of the complaint occurred. You should name the appropriate division of the Court in the space provided at the top of the complaint form.

The following counties comprise the **Gainesville** Division: Alachua, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, and Levy. Cases to be filed in the Gainesville Division should be mailed to:

CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
401 S.E. FIRST AVENUE
ROOM 243
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32601-6895

The following counties comprise the **Panama City** Division: Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, and Washington. Cases to be filed in the Panama City Division should be mailed to:

CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
ONE NORTH PALAFOX STREET
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA 32502-5658

The following counties comprise the **Pensacola** Division: Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton. Cases to be filed in the Pensacola Division should be mailed to:

CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
ONE NORTH PALAFOX STREET
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA 32502-5658

The following counties comprise the **Tallahassee** Division: Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, and Wakulla. Cases to be filed in the Tallahassee Division should be mailed to:

CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
111 N. ADAMS STREET
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32301-7730

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APPENDIX

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Congratulations! You're now **booked up** on how to fill out the Federal Complaint Form (*Pro Se 15*) for federal court lawsuits!