

# Public Access to Court Electronic Records



## PACER User Manual for CM/ECF Courts

Updated: June 2017

[pacer.gov](http://pacer.gov)

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## **Quick Start**

1. To create a PACER account, go to [pacer.gov](http://pacer.gov) and click **Register**.
  2. To search for a case, click **Case Search Sign In** and log in.
    - a. If you know the location of the case, go to the [court links](#) page at [pacer.gov](http://pacer.gov) and select the court you want. After logging in at a court's Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) site, click **Query** on the top left. For a business, enter the company name in the **Last Name** field.
    - b. If you do not know the location of a case, you can search a broad range of courts using the PACER Case Locator at <https://pcl.uscourts.gov>.
  3. If you access a **Docket Report** and do not see a link for the docket entry number or an icon next to the docket entry, you must order the documents from the court clerk's office.
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## **Overview**

This manual provides a detailed description of PACER and CM/ECF, and how they both work. CM/ECF allows all appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts to accept filings and provides access to filed documents.

### **PACER Features and Benefits**

- Twenty-four-hour access to case file documents
- Ability to download and print court documents remotely
- Simultaneous access to case files by multiple parties
- Expanded search and reporting capabilities

### **CM/ECF Features and Benefits**

- Ability to file documents/pleadings electronically with the court
  - Automatic email notices of case activity for parties in a case
  - No delays or added expenses associated with mail or courier services
  - Instant access that allows easier case tracking
  - Less physical storage space and document processing times
  - Secure and reliable
  - Immediately updated and available court dockets
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## **PACER Policies and Procedures**

You can find a description of PACER's policies and procedures here:

[https://www.pacer.gov/documents/pacer\\_policy.pdf](https://www.pacer.gov/documents/pacer_policy.pdf). If you have questions, contact the PACER Service Center (PSC) at (800) 676-6856 or [pacer@psc.uscourts.gov](mailto:pacer@psc.uscourts.gov).

Significant changes to policies and procedures will be posted on the PACER site. You should check regularly for changes, as the account holder automatically agrees to them after posting.

## **Introduction to PACER**

Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) allows users to view, print, or download current and recently closed federal cases. If a document is not available through PACER, you may need to contact the court.

### **Fees**

The PSC does not receive appropriations from the federal government to provide electronic public access services. Instead, Congress directed the Judiciary to fund PACER through user fees. As a result, all registered agencies and individuals are charged \$0.10 per page for PACER searches. This includes searches that yield no matches. In addition, audio files generate a \$2.40 per-file charge.

PACER counts billable pages in three ways:

1. For an html-formatted report, a formula determines the number of pages.
2. For a PDF, the actual number of pages is counted.
3. On the PACER Case Locator (PCL), 54 lines are counted as one billable page.

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**NOTE:** If you accrue less than \$15 of charges in a quarter, fees are waived for that period.

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For printed report data from CM/ECF, the print job will not always match the number of pages billed, as settings may vary. All users are charged equally for the same information regardless of settings or printer configurations.

The per-page charge applies whether pages are printed, viewed, or downloaded. The charge for any single document is capped at \$3, or 30 pages. In CM/ECF, most reports obtained through the Reports menu are not case-specific and are not capped at 30 pages.

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**NOTE:** The 30-page cap does not apply to transcripts of federal court proceedings, new case reports, or other non-case-specific reports or searches.

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Each court site provides a transaction receipt and options to review billing history. To review transactions from all courts, log in to Manage My Account at [pacer.gov](http://pacer.gov) and click the View Detailed Transactions option under the Usage tab.

### **Dockets, Case Reports, and Search Results**

Docket reports are generated with the number of pages for a docket sheet before the document is reformatted as a webpage.

Billable pages for docket reports, case reports, and search results are calculated using a formula based on the number of bytes extracted (4,320 bytes = 1 billable page).

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**NOTE:** Docket reports are capped at 30 pages; however, use caution when running case reports, as they are not capped at 30 pages.

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## Images

PACER websites offer images of documents filed. Images are billed according to the number of pages in PDFs (1 PDF page = 1 billable page).

## Usage and Billing

To review PACER usage and billing history on your account:

- 1) Log in to **Manage My Account**.
- 2) Click the **Usage** tab and select the **View Detailed Transactions** option and search using a number of options, including date, court, and client code.

The screenshot displays two overlapping web interface windows. The left window is titled "BILLING HISTORY" and contains a search form with the following fields: "User" (testar2015), "Date" (Wed, Jul 27 10:16:12 2016), "Court" (All Courts), "Client Code" (empty), "Date Range" (07/27/2016 to 07/27/2016), "Sort Order" (Transaction Date), "Transaction Type" (Billable selected), and "Options" (Summary, Summary Details, Download). The right window is titled "MANAGE MY ACCOUNT" and shows account details: Account Number 4299141, Username testar2015, Account Balance \$0.00, Case Search Status Active, and Account Type Upgraded PACER Account. Below this is a navigation bar with tabs for Settings, Maintenance, Payments, and Usage (highlighted in red). Under the Usage tab, there are two links: "View Quarterly Invoice / Statement of Account" and "View Detailed Transactions" (highlighted in red).

The PSC bills quarterly and sends a statement by mail or a notice of billing by email, depending on your account preference. Fees are waived when usage is less than \$15 for the quarter. If you use a client code to track client-specific charges, it will appear in the detailed transaction history. The client code will not appear unless it is entered during the transaction.

Online payments can be made at [pacer.gov](http://pacer.gov) (under Manage My Account), or by calling the PSC at (800) 676-6856 and using VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express.

If you pay by check, please include your account number to ensure payment is posted to the correct account. Send checks to:  
PACER Service Center  
P.O. Box 71364  
Philadelphia, PA 19176-1364

## Billing Errors

If you think there is an error on your bill, you must submit the [Credit Request Form](#). Requests may also be faxed to the PACER Service Center at **(210) 301-6441**.

Never include your password with any correspondence. A PSC representative will contact you during the review process.

## **PACER Registration**

The PSC website ([pacer.gov](http://pacer.gov)) allows users to register for PACER, follow links to PACER websites, and review FAQs.

### **Register**

The registration page allows you to choose which type of PACER account you need.



If you are not sure which type of account you need, click **Start** on the Registration Wizard. This tool will help you decide which registration option is best for you.

Use the left panel on the Register page to select which registration you want:

- 1) **PACER:** PACER search-only account provides read-only access for viewing, searching, and printing federal appellate, bankruptcy, and district court documents.
- 2) **NextGen Attorney Filers:** Attorneys may register to file electronically (e-file) in a next generation (NextGen) CM/ECF court.
- 3) **NextGen Non-Attorney Filers:** Non-attorneys may register to file electronically (e-file) in a next generation (NextGen) CM/ECF court.
- 4) **Appellate or District/Bankruptcy (Legacy<sup>1</sup>):** Users may register to file electronically (e-file). You may also register for admission to practice in federal courts.
- 5) **Firm Billing:** A PACER Administrative Account (PAA) allows groups or firms to manage multiple PACER accounts for billing purposes.

PACER is the most commonly selected option. From that link, select **Register Now** or **Register for a PACER Account Now**. Then complete the registration form. There is no registration fee.

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<sup>1</sup> “Legacy” refers to the first generation case management system that was upgraded as of August 9, 2014.



If you:

- Provide a credit card while registering, case search capability is activated upon successful validation of the credit card provided.

**NOTE:** This same-day registration may not be available on weekends or holidays.

- Do not provide a credit card, an authentication token will be sent by U.S. mail within 7–10 business days to the address provided on the registration.
- Register from outside the United States, type 5 zeroes in the Zip Code field.

## NextGen Attorney Filers

The Federal Judiciary is implementing a nationwide centralized attorney admissions and e-filing registration process in all appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts over the next several years. The following information outlines the registration process.

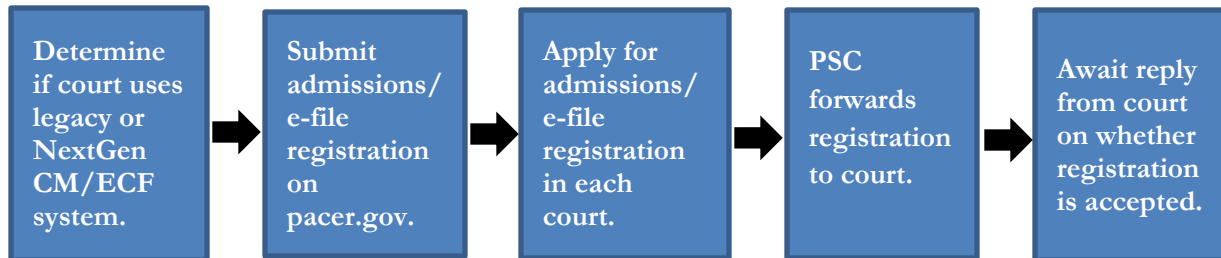
**Determine whether court uses legacy or upgraded CM/ECF system.** If your court uses the next generation Case Management/Electronic Case Files (NextGen CM/ECF) system, you may register to e-file through the PACER site. If the court uses a legacy system, you will need to contact each district/bankruptcy court individually to register. For details, visit the [district/bankruptcy \(legacy\)](#) page, or visit the [appellate court \(legacy\)](#) page. Use the **court links** page to determine if your court is on an upgraded or legacy system.

**Submit admissions/e-file registration on pacer.gov.** If you have an upgraded PACER account, log in to [Manage My Account](#) and select the Attorney Admissions/E-File Registration option. Attorney admissions/e-file registration requirements vary from court to court, but the information you update through [Manage My Account](#) is sent electronically to each court in which you are admitted or registered.

**Apply for admissions/e-file registration in each court individually.** To e-file, you may need to be admitted to practice in the court. Once you complete a registration in one court, you may apply for admissions and/or register to e-file in another court. The same username and password will allow nationwide search access and e-file access in the NextGen CM/ECF courts in which you are admitted and/or registered as an e-filer.

**PSC forwards registration to court.** When your request is complete, the PSC will send it to the court for verification and processing. Document filing and access to restricted cases/documents in a court is not permitted until that court processes the admission and/or registration request.

**Wait for reply from court on whether the registration has been accepted.** Processing time for attorney admissions and/or e-file registration can vary from court to court. Once your request is processed, you will receive an email notification of the court's determination. For additional information regarding attorney admissions and e-file procedures, use our [links map](#) to locate your court. Contact the Clerk's Office if immediate access to file documents is needed.



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### NextGen Non-Attorney Filers

This path is specifically for non-attorneys, i.e., *pro se* filers, court reporters, interested parties, filing agents, creditors, trustees, U.S. Trustees, and other parties who are not attorneys. NOTE: Not all courts accept non-attorney filers and some accept only specific types of non-attorney filers. If the selected court does not allow a specific type of non-attorney filer, you will not be able to register for filing privileges at that court. The following information outlines the registration process.

The Federal Judiciary is implementing a nationwide centralized non-attorney e-filing registration process in all appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts over the next several years.

**Determine whether court uses legacy or upgraded CM/ECF system.** If the court in which you want to practice uses the next generation Case Management/Electronic Case Files (NextGen CM/ECF) system, you may register to e-file through this site. If the court uses a legacy system, you will need to contact each district/bankruptcy court individually to register. For details, visit the [district/bankruptcy \(legacy\)](#) page, or visit the [appellate court \(legacy\)](#) page. [Click here](#) to determine if your court is on an upgraded or legacy system.

**Submit e-file registration on pacer.gov.** If you have an upgraded PACER account, log in to [Manage My Account](#) and select the Non-Attorney E-File Registration option. E-file registration requirements vary from court to court, but the information you update through [Manage My Account](#) is sent electronically to each court in which you are registered.

**Apply for e-file registration in each court individually.** Once you complete a registration in one court, you may register to e-file in another court. The same username and password will allow nationwide search access and e-file access in the NextGen CM/ECF courts in which you are registered as an e-filer.

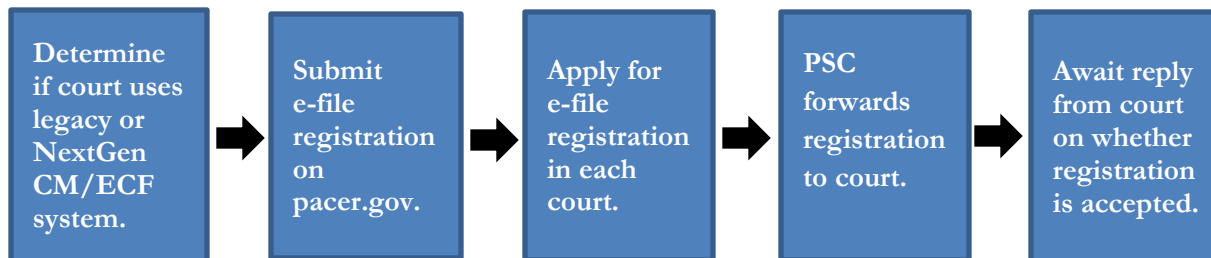
**PSC forwards registration to court.** When your request is complete, the PACER Service Center



will send it to the court for verification and processing. Document filing and access to restricted cases/documents in a court is not permitted until that court processes the registration request.

**Wait for reply from court on whether the registration has been accepted.** Processing time for e-file registration can vary from court to court. Once your request is processed, you will receive an email notification of the court's determination.

For additional information regarding non-attorney e-file procedures, use our [links map](#) to locate your court. Contact the Clerk's Office if immediate access to file documents is needed.



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### Appellate Court E-File Registration (Legacy)

The Federal Judiciary has developed a next generation (NextGen) CM/ECF system functionality that allows you to use the same account for both PACER and electronic filing access. Check the [court links](#) page to see if your court has upgraded to the NextGen functionality.

If you have a legacy PACER account, you must complete a separate ECF registration to request filing privileges via this website. You will not have to register at each court's website separately; however, you must request e-filing privileges from each court in which you want to file.

Registration for appellate ECF is separate from and in addition to PACER registration. PACER access allows you to view docket reports and documents from a court's database, while ECF registration allows you to file electronically.

The following description provides instructions on completing an appellate court e-file registration:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Register for an appellate filer account.</b>    | When registering for ECF filing, you will choose a username, password, and security question. Then, you may request filing privileges in additional appellate courts. The same login information is used to access CM/ECF in all appellate courts in which you are registered. |
| <b>PSC forwards the registration to the court.</b> | When your request is complete, the PSC will send it to the court for processing. Document filing and access to restricted cases/documents in a court is not permitted until that court processes the request.  |
| <b>Wait to receive a reply from the court.</b>     | Processing time for e-file registration varies from court to court. Once your request is processed, you will receive an email with the court's determination.<br><br>Contact the clerk's office if immediate access to file documents is needed.                               |

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**NOTE:** Contact and other information updated on this website is sent to each court in which you are registered. You do not need to contact each court to provide new information.

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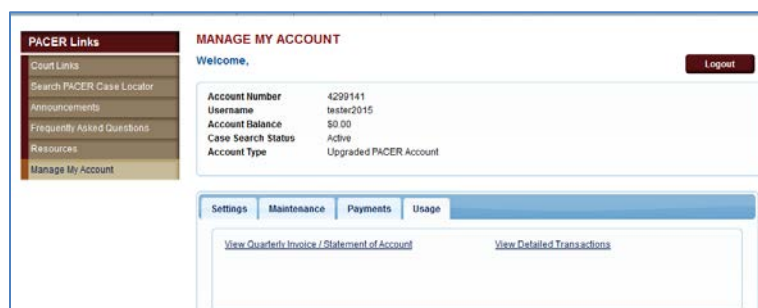
## District and Bankruptcy Court E-File Registration

Registration for district and bankruptcy ECF is separate from and in addition to PACER registration. PACER allows you to view docket reports and documents from a court's database, while ECF registration allows you to e-file.

When you register for a filer account, you must already have a PACER account. Each district and bankruptcy court handles filer registrations individually. To register for filing privileges in one of these courts, you must contact that court directly.

## Manage My Account

When you click Manage My Account and log in, the screen below should appear. The following sections discuss each tab and the links on this page.



### Settings tab

- Change Username
- Change Password: Passwords must be at least 8 characters, which can contain letters, numbers, and special characters such as underscores, periods, and exclamation points. Password changes are immediate.
- Set Security Information: Setting up security questions allows you to reset your forgotten password. You will be prompted to answer the questions on file to reset your password.
- Update PACER Billing Email: Enter the email address where you want to receive billing notices.
- Set PACER Billing Preferences: Set account preferences for use in CM/ECF. This allows you to turn off viewing of transaction receipts and require the use of a client code.

### Maintenance tab

- Update Personal Information
- Update Address Information
- Check E-File Status: Select a court and court type to check your e-file status in that court. This option will only appear if you have submitted an e-file registration at a court.
- Display Registered Courts: See a list of courts in which you are an accepted e-filer. This option will only appear if you have submitted an e-file registration at a court.

- Attorney Admissions/E-File Registration: Apply to e-file at a participating court.
- Non-Attorney E-File Registration: Non-attorneys (i.e., *pro se* filers, court reports, interested parties, or filing agents) may register for e-file privileges at a participating court.
- Update E-Filer Email Noticing and Frequency: Update the email address, delivery method, and formatting options at participating courts for which you are an accepted e-filer.
- E-File Registration/Maintenance History: View a list of all your admissions and e-file registration and maintenance requests. This option will only appear if you have submitted an e-file registration at a court.

### **Payments tab**

- Make One-Time PACER Fee Payment: Pay PACER account balance or another amount.
- Manage My Stored Payment Information: Store a credit card as a default payment method for filing and attorney admissions fees, or for automatic billing for PACER fees.

### **Usage tab**

- View Quarterly Invoice/Statement of Account
- View Detailed Transactions: View details about your searches and PACER fees.

## **PACER Administrative Account**

The PSC has developed the PACER Administrative Account (PAA), a consolidated billing and online account management process for groups such as law firms, financial organizations and educational or research institutions. The PAA includes the following features:

- The PAA administrator chooses which accounts to link to the PAA and sends an invite to the individual user.
- The user may link his/her account to the PAA by accepting the request to join the PAA.
- Each user is an account owner and will take that same account to a new firm, where it can be linked to that organization's PAA.
- Individual users make updates to their own account.
- Either the PAA owner or the individual account owner will be able to unlink the account from a PAA when a user leaves.

### **PAA Administrator**

The PAA can only be used for administrative purposes and does not provide access to case information. A PAA administrator is assigned to the PAA on behalf of the organization. This individual is responsible for the firm billing process.

### **Firm Billing Policies**

- All charges associated with each individual PACER account are billed to the PAA.
- Total charges for all associated PACER accounts must be less than \$15 per quarter in order for the PAA to qualify for the \$15 waiver.
- The organization or firm is financially responsible for all associated PACER accounts.
- If the balance due on the PAA is not paid in full each quarter, access to the PACER service is suspended for all associated PACER accounts.

- The PAA is subject to the collection procedures described in the PACER Policies and Procedures document ([https://www.pacer.gov/documents/pacer\\_policy.pdf](https://www.pacer.gov/documents/pacer_policy.pdf)).
- If the PAA has a past-due balance, new PACER accounts cannot be linked.
- PACER billing occurs in January, April, July, and October.
- One invoice is generated for the PAA. Itemization of charges for each PACER accounts is included in the invoice.
- A notification email is sent to the PAA administrator when the PAA invoice is available on the PACER website.
- Invoices are not generated and sent to PACER users associated with a PAA; however, PACER users have access to view their detailed transaction history.

### Add Existing PACER Account to the PAA

The PAA administrator may request to link an individual PACER account to the PAA through the PACER website.

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**NOTE:** The user must accept the request before an account is added to the PAA. The firm or organization is then responsible for all charges incurred by that account.

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To add an existing PACER account:

1. Log in to **Manage My Account**.

2. Click the **PAA Maintenance** tab and select **Add Existing PACER Account to My PAA**.

3. Enter the last name and PACER account number in the **Account Number** field.
4. Enter a brief message (e.g., Adding you to PAA, request to consolidate billing) that explains the nature of the request in the **Remark** field.

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**NOTE:** Your remark should be between 10 and 200 characters. This is included in the request email sent to the user.

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3. Then select the acknowledgement checkbox and click Submit.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the PACER Service Center at (800) 676-6856 between the hours of 8 AM and 6 PM CT Monday through Friday or by email at [pacer@psc.uscourts.gov](mailto:pacer@psc.uscourts.gov)

Note: All parties involved will be notified of any changes.

Account Number \* 3870825  
Last Name \* Garcia  
Remark \* Adding you to PAA

Click here to acknowledge you have read and understand the policies and procedures listed above. \*  
Click here to download a printable version of the policies and procedures.

Submit Cancel

5. Select the acknowledgement checkbox, and then click **Submit**.

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**NOTE:** An email is sent to the PACER user containing a link to accept the request to join the PAA. The request expires after 15 days.

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The PACER user must:

6. Log in to **Manage My Account**.
7. Under Settings, click **View Pending Requests to Join a PAA**.
8. Enter a brief message in the **Remark** field (e.g., accept PAA invite).

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**NOTE:** Your remark should be between 10 and 200 characters. This is included in the request email sent to the user.

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9. Click the **Select** checkbox to select the desired request. Click **Accept**.

Remark \* Accepting PAA invite

Review All My Requests

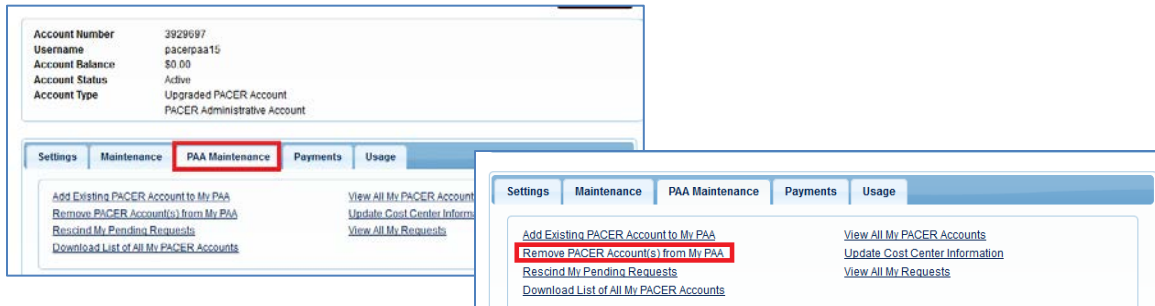
Account Number	Firm Name	Administrator	Status	Date	Remark	Select
						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Accept Reject Cancel

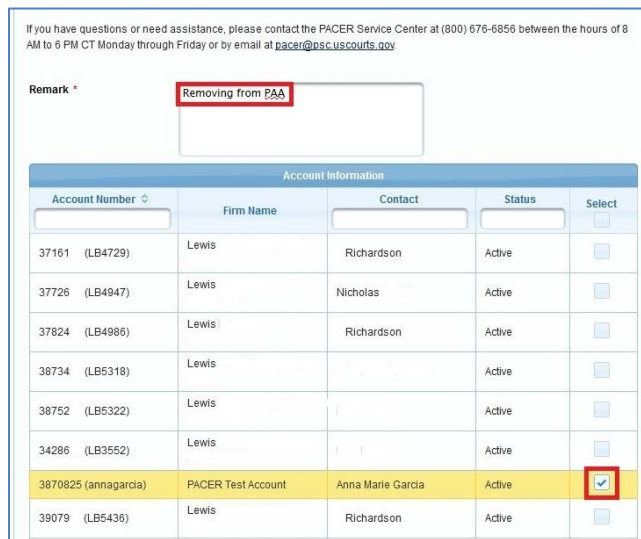
### Unlink a PACER Account

The PAA administrator must:

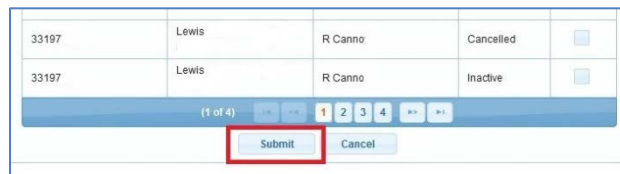
1. Log in to **Manage My Account**.
2. In the PAA Maintenance tab, click **Remove PACER Account(s) from My PAA**.



3. Enter a brief message in the **Remark** field (e.g., Removing PAA).
4. In the Account Information section, click the **Select** checkbox next to the user you want to unlink from your PAA.



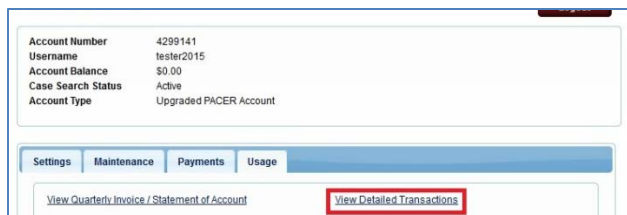
5. Click **Submit**.



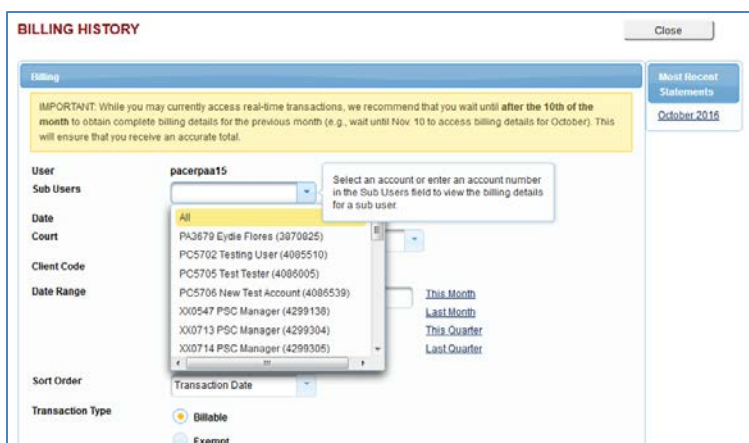
## View Billing Information and/or View Quarterly Invoice

The PAA administrator may view detailed transactions for all PACER users associated with the PAA and download the quarterly invoice.

1. Log in to **Manage My Account**.
2. Click the **Usage** tab, and select **View Detailed Transactions** to view or download usage for all PACER accounts in one report or for each account, including sorting by client code.



3. Click the Sub Users dropdown. Then select the All option or an individual account, or enter an account number to view billing details for a sub-user.



## Change the Client Field to Mandatory

The Client Code option allows you to track charges for future billings. The PAA administrator may require that each PACER user associated with the PAA enter a client code at login by completing the following:

1. Log in to **Manage My Account**.
2. In the Settings tab, click **Set PACER Billing Preferences**.

**MANAGE MY ACCOUNT**

Welcome. Logout

Account Number	4290141
Username	tester2015
Account Balance	\$0.00
Case Search Status	Active
Account Type	Upgraded PACER Account

Settings | Maintenance | Payments | Usage

[Change Username](#)      [Update PACER Billing Email](#)  
[Change Password](#)      [Set PACER Billing Preferences](#)  
[Set Security Information](#)

3. Select the **Yes** option next to Require Client Code? When you do this, two additional fields will appear.
4. Use the instructions at the top of the page to decide on the client code format. Enter the **client code format** in the Client Code Format field.
5. Enter text in the Client Code Text field that will appear if the incorrect format is entered.
6. Click **Submit**.

number, or other meaningful entry up to 32 characters. This option allows users to make the use of the client code mandatory and even specify the format of the client code using a boolean expression. The default for accounts is for the client code to be an optional field. To require a client code, set the **Require Client Code** flag to "Yes." This will make the use of a client code mandatory in any format upon login. To require the client code in a specific format, set the **Require Client Code** flag to "Yes" and use the following grammar to set the **Client Code Format**.

A	alphabetic character, A-Z or a-z
N	numeric digit, 0-9
	space character
.	period character

Show Receipts?  Yes  No

Require Client Code?  Yes  No

Client Code Format

Client Code Text



## **PACER Case Locator**

The PACER Case Locator (PCL) is a national index for district, bankruptcy, and appellate courts. You can reach the PCL (<https://pcl.uscourts.gov>) from the PACER Case Search Sign In link or in the Find a Case tab at [pacer.gov](http://pacer.gov).

The PCL serves as a search tool for PACER, and you may conduct nationwide searches to determine whether or not a party is involved in federal litigation. Each night, subsets of data are collected from the courts and transferred to the PCL.

### **Search Criteria and Options**

You may search the PCL for case information in a number of ways. These search criteria vary with court type. For example, only bankruptcy allows you to search by SSN, while appellate and civil courts include an option to search by nature of suit.

You may select one of the tabs at the top of the Case Search section to get started with your search.



The screenshot shows the PACER Case Locator search interface. At the top, there are navigation links for "Court Information", "Statistics", "My Account", and "Logout". Below this is the "PACER Case Locator" logo. A horizontal menu contains tabs for "All Courts", "Appellate", "Bankruptcy", "Civil", "Criminal", and "Multi-District Litigation". The "All Courts" tab is selected. The search area is divided into "Case Search" and "Party Search". Under "Case Search", there is a "Region" dropdown menu, a "Case Number" input field, and a "Map" button. Under "Party Search", there is a "Party Name" input field, a "Format: last, first" dropdown, an "Exact Matches Only" checkbox, and a "Show Case Title" checkbox. "Search" and "Clear" buttons are at the bottom.

The search results display one page at a time by default. One billable page contains up to 54 matches. You may download all search results to a file in XML, text, or CSV formats.



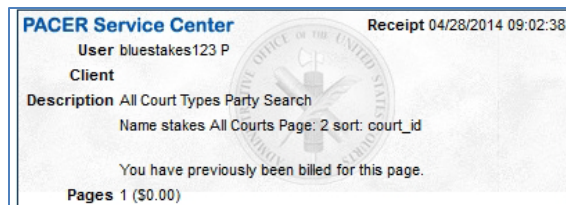
The screenshot shows the search results page for "All Court Types Party Search". It displays the search date and time: "Mon Apr 28 08:46:45 2014" and "86 records found". There are buttons for "Filter Results", "Download", and "New Search". The search criteria are shown as "Client: Search: All Court Types Party Search Name stakes All Courts Page: 1". Navigation links for "Previous", "1", "2", and "Next" are present. The results are categorized under "Bankruptcy Results". A table header is shown with columns: "Party Name", "Court", "Case", "Ch", "Date Filed", "Date Closed", and "Disposition". The "Case" column header is highlighted with a red box.

Party Name	Court	Case	Ch	Date Filed	Date Closed	Disposition
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**NOTE:** A page that shows “no matches found” is still one billable page.

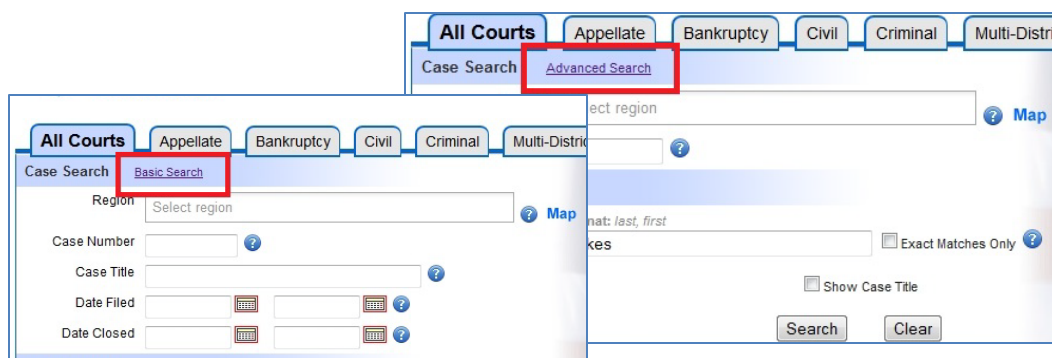
The Case column contains a direct link to the full case information. Clicking the case number link in this column will take you to the CM/ECF site for the court in which the case is located. The \$.10 per page charge, separate from charges incurred at the PCL, will apply for information accessed at the court’s site.

A receipt at the bottom of the screen shows the number of billable pages and the cost for the data on the current viewable page only. It does not include the cost for previously viewed pages.



## Basic and Advanced Searches

The PCL search form defaults to a basic search, which includes frequently used search criteria fields. You can toggle between the Basic and Advanced forms by clicking the link near the top of each.



A basic search simplifies your options by presenting a subset of the fields you would see in an advanced search. The advanced form includes all possible search fields.

**NOTE:** This document describes the search fields for the All Courts option. The other court types have most fields in common with All Courts. Any fields not contained in All Courts are covered with an individual explanation.

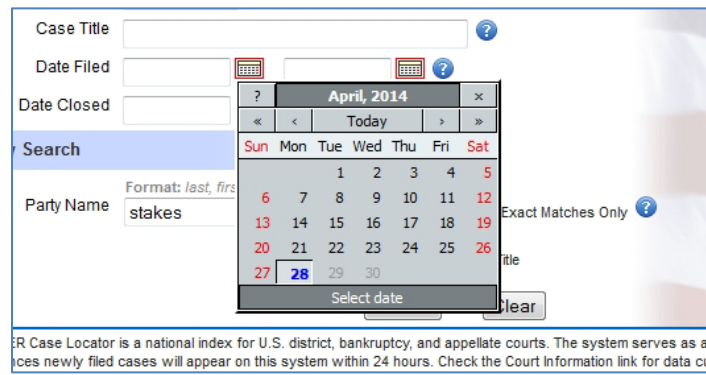
## Search Criteria—All Courts Tab

- Region:** Courts are organized geographically into 12 circuits. States and divisions may also qualify as regions in certain instances, so available regions depend on the type of search.

You may search one or more regions from the list. Press **Ctrl** while clicking the region list to select multiple regions. Use an interactive map by clicking the Map link. Then click a state or numbers to select a circuit. You may make multiple selections for states and districts.



- **Case Number:** Each case number follows a pattern: **yy-nnnnn** or **yyyy-nnnnn**. The y's indicate the year (e.g., 06-nnnnn or 2006-nnnnn). The case numbers may follow either pattern and may include additional information, such as the case type.
- **Case Title:** You may enter any combination of lowercase and uppercase letters. If you enter a single word or portion of a word, the system will find all matches. For example, if you search for "US," you will receive results for "US," "USA," "USA vs. Mickey Mouse," etc. The more specific you are, the fewer matches you will receive.
- **Date Filed, Date Closed:** Both a start and end date are preferable, as long as the range is not too big. If you select only a start date, you will get matches up to the present date. If you only select an end date, you will receive matches up to that date.
- **Drop-down calendar**



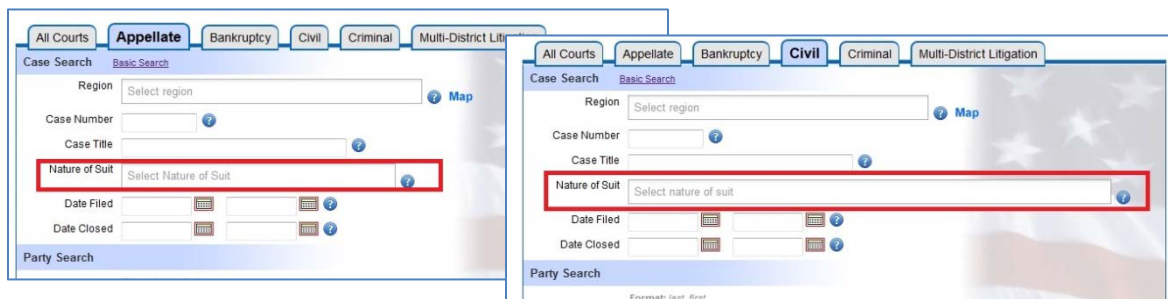
- **Party Name:** This field is not case sensitive, so you may enter lower and uppercase letters. The format of a name search is <lastname>, <firstname>, so anything you type before a comma (with or without the comma) is assumed to be a last name or the name of a business. Not everyone follows this convention when filing a case, so there may be unexpected results.
- **Search results:** The search produces a list of cases that match the selected criteria. The court in which the case is located is abbreviated.  
**Ex:** 01CA = First Circuit Court of Appeals, 01 = circuit, "CA" = "Court of Appeals"  
Click **Court Information** to find court codes.

Bankruptcy Results						
Party Name ▼	Court	Case	Ch	Date Filed	Date Closed	Disposition
1 Mouse & Flippers Aloha (db)	okwbke	<a href="#">5:03-bk-22697</a>	7	11/17/2003	05/13/2004	Standard Discharge 02/27/2004

The results of an All Courts search can return cases from multiple categories. In this case, the first results are from bankruptcy courts.

## Search Criteria—Appellate and Civil Tabs

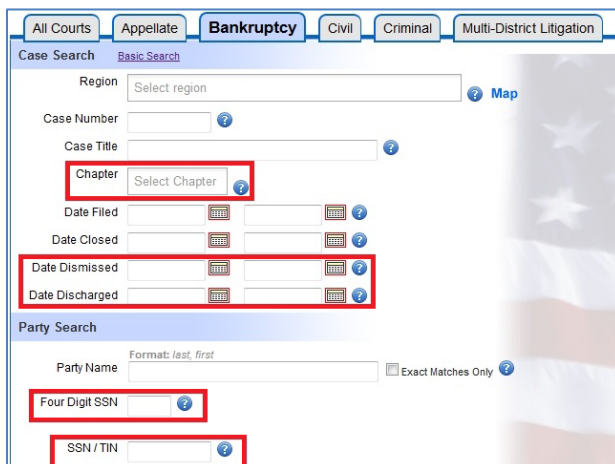
The Nature of Suit field is unique to appellate and civil courts.



Nature of Suit: Leave this field blank to find a match for all nature of suit codes. Or select from the drop-down list. Choose multiple entries by holding **Ctrl** and clicking.

**NOTE:** The codes in the Nature of Suit field in civil courts are not the same as the codes in appellate courts.

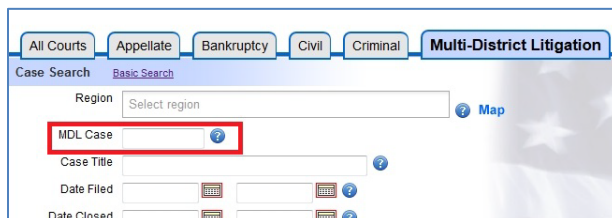
### Search Criteria—Bankruptcy Tab



- Chapter: This field is unique to bankruptcy courts. To select all chapters, leave this field blank. Select multiple chapters by holding down the **Ctrl** key while clicking.
- Date Dismissed/Date Discharged
- Four Digit SSN: If you know that last four digits of the Social Security number of the party, you can enter it here to find the cases for that party.
- SSN/TIN: If you know the SSN or federal tax ID for the party, enter it here.

### Search Criteria—Multi-District Litigation Tab

The MDL Case field is unique to the Multi-District Litigation tab. This replaces the Court Number field in the other tabs.



The MDL case number begins with “F” and is followed by five digits (e.g., F01234). Enter the full case number, or omit the letter and/or leading “0” (e.g., F01234, 01234, 1234). In each case, you will find “F01234.” The search is not case sensitive, so you may use either a capital or lowercase “f.”

## Filter Results

If your search yields more cases than expected, use filters to narrow your search. We will search for a party name with any combination of uppercase and lowercase letters. We will use a business name in the Party Name field: Thomas Nelson Publishers. Then click **Search**.

The screenshot shows a search interface with a 'Party Search' section. The 'Party Name' field contains 'Thomas Nelson Publishers' and is highlighted with a red box. There is also an 'Exact Matches Only' checkbox.

To narrow down the results, click **Filter Results**. The Filter Results popup should appear.

The screenshot shows the PACER Case Locator search results page. The search criteria are 'All Court Types Party Search' for 'Thomas Nelson Publishers'. The results are divided into 'Bankruptcy Results' and 'Civil Results'.

Bankruptcy Results						
Party Name	Court	Case	Ch	Date Filed	Date Closed	Disposition
1 Thomas Nelson Publishers (dft)	ilnbke	1:97-ap-00829		06/12/1997	07/30/1997	Dismissed or Settled Without Entry of Judgment
Civil Results						
Party Name	Court	Case	NOS	Date Filed	Date Closed	
2 Thomas Nelson Publishers (dft)	nysdce	1:1991-cv-07445	840	11/01/1991	03/18/1992	
3 Thomas Nelson Publishers (dft)	tnmdce	3:1998-cv-00355	190	04/21/1998	10/28/1999	
4 Thomas Nelson Publishers (dft)	tnmdce	3:1998-mc-00013	190	04/21/1998	03/04/2000	

Since we already entered a specific party name, we will use other categories to filter our search.

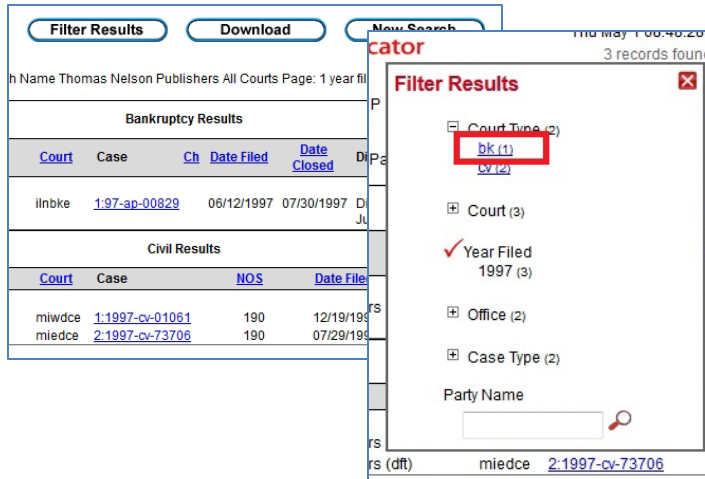
Each filter is followed by a number in parentheses, indicating the matching records for that category.

Click the plus (+) sign next to Year Filed to expand the results for that category.

Then, we will choose the results for 1997—the screen indicates there are three results.

The screenshot shows the 'Filter Results' popup with several filters expanded. The 'Year Filed' filter is expanded, and the year '1997' is selected and highlighted with a red box. The results table on the right shows the following counts:

Filter Category	Count
Court Type (3)	3
Court (6)	6
Year Filed (4)	4
1991 (1)	1
1997 (3)	3
1998 (2)	2
1999 (1)	1
Office (4)	4
Case Type (3)	3
Party Name	190



You can filter the 1997 results further. Click on **Filter Results** again.

The checkmark shows that you have already selected 1997 as a filter, so you can now choose one of the other categories. Select **bk (1)** for bankruptcy under Court Type.

You should get one matching result.

Bankruptcy Results						
Party Name	Court	Case	Ch	Date Filed	Date Closed	Disposition
1 Thomas Nelson Publishers (dft)	ilnbke	<a href="#">1:97-ap-00829</a>		06/12/1997	07/30/1997	Dismissed or Settled Without Entry of Judgment

### Other Filter Fields—Party Role

There are other filter choices depending on the type of court you search. For example, a bankruptcy search will offer filters such as chapter and party role.

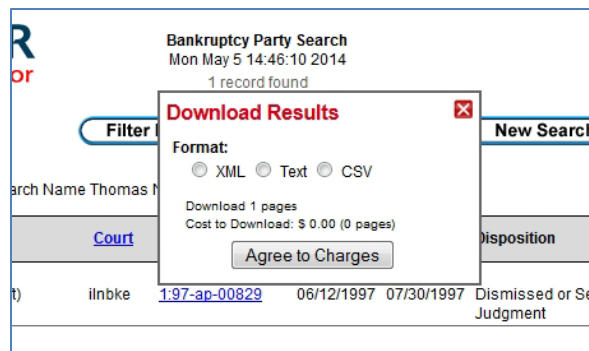
You can filter by party role for bankruptcy, civil, and criminal court searches. See the sample filter dialog box from a bankruptcy search.

There are two sets of party roles: one for bankruptcy searches, and one for civil and criminal court searches. Individual courts are responsible for creating and maintaining a list of party roles.

### Download

You can download the results of any search by clicking **Download** near the top of the screen. When the dialog box appears, select the format for your download.

After reviewing the number of pages to download, the cost of the download, and have the selected format, click the **Agree to Charges** button.





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**NOTE:** Remember to check the pages and cost of download before you click Agree to Charges. Click X to close the dialog box without downloading and being charged. If your search was too broad, you may download a large file for which you will pay more than if you narrowed your search first.

---

Once you click Agree to Charges, you will have the option to open or save the file

## PCL Menu Bar



**Court Information:** See a list of the court abbreviations used by the PCL, from the earliest to the most recent court date. Click on the link to go directly to the court's website.

**Statistics:** You may purchase the F-2, F-5A, and Civil Justice Reform Act reports. Additional statistical reports are available at [www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov), under the Statistics tab—click on **Judicial Business of the United States Courts**.

The F-2 report is updated quarterly and includes total business and non-business bankruptcy filings by chapter, district, and circuit.

The F-5 report provides a summary of the number of business and non-business bankruptcy petitions filed by chapter of the bankruptcy code for the 12-month period.

The Civil Justice Reform Act Reports include the following:

- District Summary Report
- Report of Social Security Case Appeals Pending for Over 6 Months Circuit Summary Report
- Report of Civil Cases Pending Over 3 Years
- Report of Motions Pending Over 6 Months/Bench Trial Submitted Over 6 Months
- Report of Bankruptcy Appeals Pending for More Than 6 Months District and Circuit Averages
- CJRA—Nature of Suit Report/National Summary CJRA—Nature of Suit Summary Report
- CJRA—Status Codes Report/National Summary CJRA—Status Codes Summary Report
- CJRA—Judges/Magistrates Report 30 or More 3-Year-Old Cases

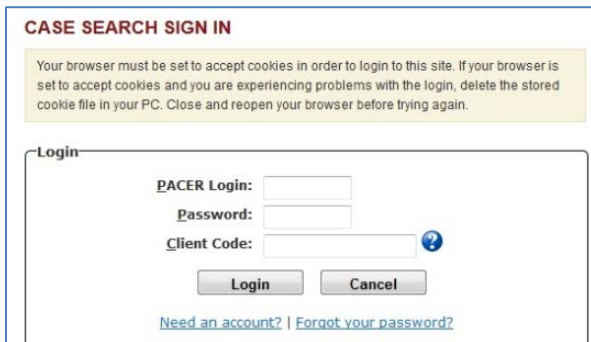
The PCL only contains older versions of these reports. New and more recent reports can be found at [www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov) for free.

**My Account:** View a drop-down list of user options.

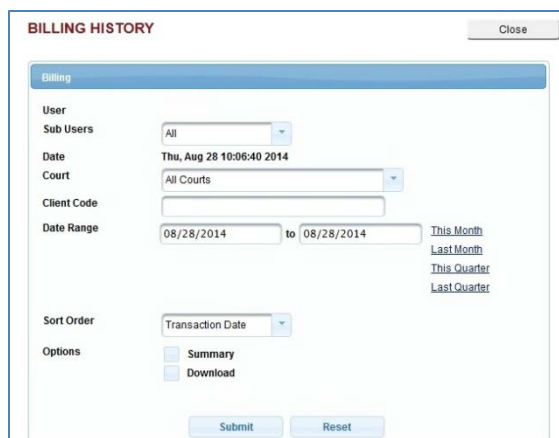


The Change Client Code option allows you to update the client code already entered, or enter a client code to track charges for future billings. The client code will appear in your billing history details when entered prior to a search.

When you click **Change Client Code**, you are redirected to the sign-in page where you should log in again and enter your desired client code in the **Client Code** field.



The **Billing History** option takes you to the Billing History screen in Manage My Account. Here you can view transactions for one or all courts during a selected time period sorted by date, client code, or court.



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**NOTE:** The totals provided in Billing History also include charges from accessing a docket report from a court.

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## **CM/ECF and PACER**

The Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) allows courts to accept electronically filed documents and provides access to filed documents online.

The Federal Judiciary has developed a next generation (NextGen) CM/ECF system functionality that allows you to use the same account for both PACER and electronic filing access. Check the [court links](#) page to see if your court has upgraded to the NextGen functionality.

### **General Information**

The PACER system is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including weekends and holidays. PACER account specialists are available to assist you at (800) 676-6856 between the hours of 8 AM and 6 PM CT Monday through Friday, or by email at [pacer@psc.uscourts.gov](mailto:pacer@psc.uscourts.gov).

### **Security**



The PACER login screen uses software that encrypts and protects your information. If you leave a PACER page for an unsecured webpage, you may see a notice stating you are moving to an unsecured document. You may disregard this message.

### Information Updates

All CM/ECF systems are updated instantly once the update is complete. This provides real-time access to information entered into the court's database. If you have questions about the information provided by the court, contact the court directly.

### Saving and Printing a File

To save a file, click File on the top menu and select **Save As**, or select **Edit** on the browser menu to copy and paste the information to a desired location. You can save the file in HTML, plain text, or PDF. For the latter, you will need a PDF writer.

To print, click **File** on the top menu and select **Print**. If there is a frame at the top of the screen (in Query, case information is separated from the rest of the screen by a line called a frame), click on the lower half of the screen before clicking Print. If there is no frame, click in the body of the document before clicking Print.

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**NOTE:** If the **Save As** or **Print** option is not available, the document is opening within the browser. Contact the PSC for assistance at (800) 676-6856 between 8AM and 6PM CT Monday through Friday, or by email at [pacer@psc.uscourts.gov](mailto:pacer@psc.uscourts.gov).

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### Logging In to CM/ECF

1. Find the court you need on the court links page of [pacer.gov](http://pacer.gov).



Most courts can be located at this address: [http://ecf.court\\*.uscourts.gov](http://ecf.court*.uscourts.gov).

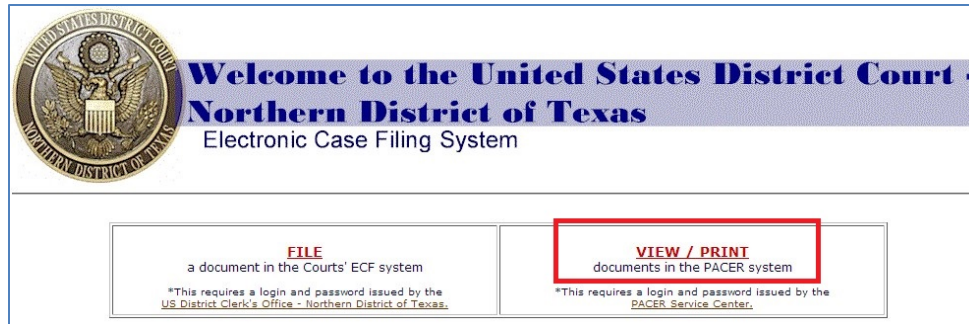
---

**NOTE:** The “\*” in the court address should be the state, abbreviation of the district (if applicable), and the first letter of the type of court (e.g., Texas Northern Bankruptcy would be <http://ecf.txnb.uscourts.gov>).

---

You can also find a case through the PCL. Click a case to go to the court's website.

- Not every court runs the same version of CM/ECF or formats pages in the same way. In most cases, you should use the court website link that includes the “Document Filing System” option or something similar to the “View/Print” option in the screen shot below.



- If you have not already logged in at a court, enter your PACER username and password.

After logging in, you will be able to go to any other PACER site without having to log in again.

## U.S. District Courts (Civil or Criminal) for CM/ECF

Your search on the Query screen may produce multiple pages of results. A well-defined search will yield specific results and fewer fees. Use the search tips on how to use each of the fields efficiently.

- Case Number:** Full case numbers for district courts contain a number that looks like this: **1:05-cv-06794**.
  - 1 = the office. If a court has more than one divisional office, there is a code for each division (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.).
  - 05 = the year. All cases opened in a given year have the last two digits of the year as the second part of the case number.
  - cv = case type. The case type will be either “cv” for civil or “cr” for criminal.
  - 06794 = case number. If the case type and office number are omitted, all cases that match the year and case number are displayed.

- Case Status: Select a button based on the status of a case.
- Filed Date: Search by date range. All cases will be displayed in billable pages.
- Last Entry Date: You may search by a date range based on the case activity. All cases with activity during the specified date range are displayed in billable pages.
- Nature of Suit: This area provides a drop-down menu selection screen with common Nature of Suit codes and a brief explanation of each. To view a list of all these codes, go to the following link on the PACER website: <http://www.pacer.gov/psc/hresources.html>.
- Last Name: Enter at least two letters to search by party name. This field may also be used to enter a company name search.
- First Name: This field is not required. Enter an initial or full first name to narrow the results.
- Middle Name: This field is not required and is not case sensitive. Enter an initial or full middle name to narrow the results. Enter a name in any combination of uppercase and lowercase letters and the search will extract all names that have any matching combination.
- Type: This is not a required field. The role for the party name may be selected. The drop-down list may vary from court to court. Enter at least three letters of the last name or company name to search for a specific type.

---

**NOTE:** You may use only one search criterion. If there are entries for two or more of the search options, the latter is used. For example, if you enter a case number and last name, the case number is not used in the search.

---

## Query Menu

Click Run Query to see search results. You will see a list of names or cases. Select from this list, or click the back button to enter more data or run another search.

Click the scroll bar on the right to view additional results. When you select a case, a new screen selection menu will appear with a header that looks like this:

<p><b>3:00-cv-01686-M</b> Frosty Bites Distrib, et al v. Dippin Dots, Inc, et al          Barbara M.G. Lynn, presiding  <b>Date filed:</b> 08/03/2000  <b>Date terminated:</b> 11/30/2000  <b>Date of last filing:</b> 01/02/2001</p>
---

You should also see the Query option menu, which provides a variety of information pertaining to the person or case. Click each option to find any additional information you may need.

### [Mobile Query](#)

#### Query

- [Alias](#)
- [Associated Cases](#)
- [Attorney](#)
- [Case File Location...](#)
- [Case Summary](#)
- [Deadlines/Hearings...](#)
- [Docket Report ...](#)
- [Filers](#)
- [History/Documents...](#)
- [Party](#)
- [Related Transactions...](#)
- [Status](#)
- [View a Document](#)

Deadlines/Hearings			
Doc. No.	Deadline/Hearing	Event Filed	Due/S
<a href="#">4</a>	 Objections to R&R Deadline	04/28/2014	05/14/2014

The **Deadlines/Hearings** link displays the pending deadlines/hearings for the case. The “silver bullet” next to deadline/hearing results show docket text for this entry.

Assigned to: Honorable Judge Myron H. Thompson Referred to: Honorable Judge Terry F. Moore Cause: 42:1983 Prisoner Civil Rights	Jury Demand: None Nature of Suit: 555 Habeas Cor Jurisdiction: Federal Question
<b>Plaintiff</b> Ernest Edward Bladel	represented by: Ernest Edward Bladel HOUSTON COUNTY JAIL 901 E. Main Street Dothan, AL 36501 PRO SE
V:	
<b>Defendant</b> Houston County	
<b>Defendant</b> Sgt. Turner	
<b>Defendant</b> Officer De LaPaul	
<b>Defendant</b> Sgt. Jones	
<b>Defendant</b> Sgt. Brainer	
Date Filed	# Docket Text

**Docket Report:** The typical docket report contains information from the civil or criminal cover sheet submitted by the plaintiff for each complaint filed.

This report also includes an option to view or print multiple documents. After retrieving the docket report, you may place a checkmark next to the document(s) you wish to view.

---

**NOTE:** The maximum download size is 10MB. Exceeding this amount will cause an error message.

---

## Reports Menu Options

Clicking Reports on the CM/ECF menu takes you to the reports page, where you will see the following screen and options.

ECF		Query	Reports	Utilities	Logout
Reports					
<a href="#">Docket Sheet</a>	<b>Criminal Reports</b>				
	<a href="#">Criminal Cases</a>				
<b>Civil Reports</b>					
<a href="#">Civil Cases</a>	<b>Civil and Criminal Reports</b>				
<a href="#">Judgment Index</a>	<a href="#">Calendar Events</a>				
	<a href="#">Docket Activity</a>				
	<a href="#">Written Opinions</a>				

The **Docket Activity** option lists the docket activity for one or more cases within the date range entered. If a specific case number is entered, the maximum fee will not exceed 30 pages (\$3.00). However, omitting the case number will not cap the results.

---

**NOTE:** Hundreds of new documents are submitted daily to each court; therefore, the results may be substantial.

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## Utilities Menu

The options on this menu may vary from court to court.



## Logout

Use this option to log out of CM/ECF.

## U.S. Bankruptcy Courts for CM/ECF

Your search on the Query screen may produce multiple pages of results. A well-defined search will yield specific results and fewer fees. Use the search tips on how to use each of the fields efficiently.

- **Case Number:**
  - Full case numbers for district courts contain a number that looks like this: **1:05-bk-06794**.
  - 1 = the office: If a court has more than one divisional office, there is a code for each division (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.).
  - 05 = the year: All cases opened in a given year have the last two digits of the year as the second part of the case number.
  - bk = case type
  - 06794 = case number: If the case type and office number are omitted (e.g., 05-06794), all cases that match the year and case number are displayed.
- **Last/Business Name:** Enter at least two letters to search by last name or company name.
- **First Name:** This field is not required. Enter an initial or full first name to narrow the results.

- **Middle Name:** This field is not required and is not case sensitive. You may enter an initial or full middle name to narrow the results when searching by party name.
- **SSN/TIN:** You may search by the full Social Security Number (SSN). Use of a wildcard is not permitted. Enter dashes when entering SSNs.
- **Type:** This is not a required field. The role for the party name may be selected. Enter at least three letters of the last name or company name to search for a specific type.

---

**NOTE:** You may use only one search criterion. If there are entries for two or more of the search options, the latter is used. For example, if you enter a case number and last name, the case number is not used in the search.

---

## Query Menu

Click Run Query to see search results. You will see a list of people or cases. Select from this list, or click the back button to enter more data or run another search.

Click the scroll bar on the right to view additional results. When you select a case, a new screen selection will appear with a header that looks like this:

<p><b>98-47185-dm113</b> Kenneth Joe McGowan and Connie Lynn McGowan  <b>Case type:</b> bk <b>Chapter:</b> 13 <b>Asset:</b> Yes <b>Vol:</b> v <b>Judge:</b> D. Michael Lynn  <b>Date filed:</b> 11/25/1998 <b>Date of last filing:</b> 01/22/2004  <b>Date terminated:</b> 07/29/2003</p>
---

<p><b>Query</b></p> <p><a href="#">Alias</a> <a href="#">Trustee</a></p> <p><a href="#">Associated Cases</a> <a href="#">Claims Register</a></p> <p><a href="#">Attorney</a> <a href="#">Creditor Mailing Matrix</a></p> <p><a href="#">Case Summary</a></p> <p><a href="#">Creditor</a></p> <p><a href="#">Deadline/Schedule</a></p> <p><a href="#">Docket Report ...</a></p> <p><a href="#">Filers</a></p> <p><a href="#">History/Documents</a></p> <p><a href="#">Notice of Bankruptcy Case Filing</a></p> <p><a href="#">Party</a></p> <p><a href="#">Related Transactions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Status</a></p>
--

The left side of the Query menu displays an alphabetical list of report options—these options may differ depending on the site.

## Appellate Courts CM/ECF

The query screen below shows the options you can use to search for a case in appellate courts.

**ECF** [Case Search](#) [Calendar](#) [Opinions](#) [Orders/Judgments](#) [Logout](#) [Help](#)

### Case Search - Advanced

Warning: you will be billed for the total number of pages (this query is not subject to the 30-page limit on PACER charges).

Case Number / Range:   (yy-nnnn or yy-nnnnn)

Party / Attorney:  (Last, First)

Party  Attorney  Exact Matches Only

Case Type:  1292  
1292(b) petition

Origin:  Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau  
Benefits Review Board

Originating Case Number:

Nature of Suit:  -  
1110 Insurance

Cases Filed Between:  09/04/2014   Open Cases Only

Cases Closed Between:    Closed Cases Only

Docket Activity Between:    Both

Sort by:  Case number  Ascending order  
 Descending order

[Court Information](#) [Court Home](#) [PACER Service Center](#) [Change Client](#) [Billing History](#) [Contact Us](#)

In this section, you may notice that the nature of suit code (NOS) is 4 digits (e.g., 1110) instead of 3 digits in other courts. The additional digit before the NOS is:

- 1 = USA is a plaintiff
- 2 = USA is a defendant
- 3 = Private lawsuit
- 4 = Diversity
- 5 = Local—state issue