

About These Forms

- 1. In General.** This and the other pleading forms available from the www.uscourts.gov website illustrate some types of information that are useful to have in complaints and some other pleadings. The forms do not try to cover every type of case. They are limited to types of cases often filed in federal courts by those who represent themselves or who may not have much experience in federal courts.
- 2. Not Legal Advice.** No form provides legal advice. No form substitutes for having or consulting a lawyer. If you are not a lawyer and are suing or have been sued, it is best to have or consult a lawyer if possible.
- 3. No Guarantee.** Following a form does not guarantee that any pleading is legally or factually correct or sufficient.
- 4. Variations Possible.** A form may call for more or less information than a particular court requires. The fact that a form asks for certain information does not mean that every court or a particular court requires it. And if the form does not ask for certain information, a particular court might still require it. Consult the rules and caselaw that govern in the court where you are filing the pleading.
- 5. Examples Only.** The forms do not try to address or cover all the different types of claims or defenses, or how specific facts might affect a particular claim or defense. Some of the forms, such as the form for a generic complaint, apply to different types of cases. Others apply only to specific types of cases. Be careful to use the form that fits your case and the type of pleading you want to file. Be careful to change the information the form asks for to fit the facts and circumstances of your case.
- 6. No Guidance on Timing or Parties.** The forms do not give any guidance on when certain kinds of pleadings or claims or defenses have to be raised, or who has to be sued. Some pleadings, claims, or defenses have to be raised at a certain point in the case or within a certain period of time. And there are limits on who can be named as a party in a case and when they have to be added. Lawyers and people representing themselves must know the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the caselaw setting out these and other requirements. The current Federal Rules of Civil Procedure are available, for free, at www.uscourts.gov.
- 7. Privacy Requirements.** Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2 addresses the privacy and security concerns over public access to electronic court files. Under this rule, papers filed with the court should not contain anyone's full social-security number or full birth date; the 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 and taxpayer identification number; the year of someone's birth; a minor's initials; and the last four digits of a financial-account number.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE _____ DISTRICT OF _____
_____ DIVISION

*(Write the District and Division, if any, of
the court in which the complaint is filed.)*

*(Write the full name of each plaintiff who is filing
this complaint. If the names of all the plaintiffs
cannot fit in the space above, please write "see
attached" in the space and attach an additional
page with the full list of names.)*

-against-

*(Write the full name of each defendant who is
being sued. If the names of all the defendants
cannot fit in the space above, please write "see
attached" in the space and attach an additional
page with the full list of names.)*

Complaint for a Civil Case

Case No. _____
(to be filled in by the Clerk's Office)

Jury Trial: Yes No
(check one)

I. The Parties to This Complaint

A. The Plaintiff(s)

Provide the information below for each plaintiff named in the complaint. Attach additional pages if needed.

Name	_____
Street Address	_____
City and County	_____
State and Zip Code	_____
Telephone Number	_____
E-mail Address	_____

B. The Defendant(s)

Provide the information below for each defendant named in the complaint, whether the defendant is an individual, a government agency, an organization, or a corporation. For an individual defendant, include the person's job or title (if known). Attach additional pages if needed.

Defendant No. 1

Name	_____
Job or Title (if known)	_____
Street Address	_____
City and County	_____
State and Zip Code	_____
Telephone Number	_____
E-mail Address (if known)	_____

Defendant No. 2

Name	_____
Job or Title (if known)	_____
Street Address	_____
City and County	_____

State and Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address
(if known) _____

Defendant No. 3

Name _____

Job or Title
(if known) _____

Street Address _____

City and County _____

State and Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address
(if known) _____

Defendant No. 4

Name _____

Job or Title
(if known) _____

Street Address _____

City and County _____

State and Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address
(if known) _____

II. Basis for Jurisdiction

Federal courts are courts of limited jurisdiction (limited power). Generally, only two types of cases can be heard in federal court: cases involving a federal question and cases involving diversity of citizenship of the parties. Under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, a case arising under the United States Constitution or federal laws or treaties is a federal question case. Under 28 U.S.C. § 1332, a case in which a citizen of one State sues a citizen of another State or nation and the amount at stake is more than \$75,000 is a diversity of citizenship case. In a diversity of citizenship case, no defendant may be a citizen of the same State as any plaintiff.

What is the basis for federal court jurisdiction? *(check all that apply)*

Federal question

Diversity of citizenship

Fill out the paragraphs in this section that apply to this case.

A. If the Basis for Jurisdiction Is a Federal Question

List the specific federal statutes, federal treaties, and/or provisions of the United States Constitution that are at issue in this case.

B. If the Basis for Jurisdiction Is Diversity of Citizenship

1. The Plaintiff(s)

a. If the plaintiff is an individual

The plaintiff, *(name)* _____, is a citizen of the State of *(name)* _____.

b. If the plaintiff is a corporation

The plaintiff, *(name)* _____, is incorporated under the laws of the State of *(name)* _____, and has its principal place of business in the State of *(name)* _____.

(If more than one plaintiff is named in the complaint, attach an additional page providing the same information for each additional plaintiff.)

2. The Defendant(s)

a. If the defendant is an individual

The defendant, *(name)* _____, is a citizen of the State of *(name)* _____. *Or* is a citizen of *(foreign nation)* _____.

b. If the defendant is a corporation

The defendant, *(name)* _____, is incorporated under the laws of the State of *(name)* _____, and has its principal place of business in the State of *(name)* _____. Or is incorporated under the laws of *(foreign nation)* _____, and has its principal place of business in *(name)* _____.

(If more than one defendant is named in the complaint, attach an additional page providing the same information for each additional defendant.)

3. The Amount in Controversy

The amount in controversy—the amount the plaintiff claims the defendant owes or the amount at stake—is more than \$75,000, not counting interest and costs of court, because *(explain)*:

III. Statement of Claim

Write a short and plain statement of the claim. Do not make legal arguments. State as briefly as possible the facts showing that each plaintiff is entitled to the damages or other relief sought. State how each defendant was involved and what each defendant did that caused the plaintiff harm or violated the plaintiff’s rights, including the dates and places of that involvement or conduct. If more than one claim is asserted, number each claim and write a short and plain statement of each claim in a separate paragraph. Attach additional pages if needed.

IV. Relief

State briefly and precisely what damages or other relief the plaintiff asks the court to order. Do not make legal arguments. Include any basis for claiming that the wrongs alleged are continuing at the present time. Include the amounts of any actual damages claimed for the acts alleged and the basis for these amounts. Include any punitive or exemplary damages claimed, the amounts, and the reasons you claim you are entitled to actual or punitive money damages.

V. Certification and Closing

Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11, by signing below, I certify to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief that this complaint: (1) is not being presented for an improper purpose, such as to harass, cause unnecessary delay, or needlessly increase the cost of litigation; (2) is supported by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for extending, modifying, or reversing existing law; (3) the factual contentions have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, will likely have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery; and (4) the complaint otherwise complies with the requirements of Rule 11.

A. For Parties Without an Attorney

I agree to provide the Clerk’s Office with any changes to my address where case-related papers may be served. I understand that my failure to keep a current address on file with the Clerk’s Office may result in the dismissal of my case.

Date of signing: _____, 20__.

Signature of Plaintiff _____

Printed Name of Plaintiff _____

B. For Attorneys

Date of signing: _____, 20__.

Signature of Attorney _____
Printed Name of Attorney _____
Bar Number _____
Name of Law Firm _____
Address _____
Telephone Number _____
E-mail Address _____