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Special Civil Part officers are the only ones able to enforce an eviction. Any other attempt at eviction is illegal.

Forms and Process

Quick Access to All Landlord-Tenant Forms

Landlord Forms:

| CN | Title |
|-------|--|
| 10512 | <u>Certification by Landlord - Appendix XI-T</u> |
| 10513 | <u>Certification by Landlord's Attorney - Appendix XI-U</u> |
| 10822 | <u>Tenancy Summons and Return of Service - Appendix XI-B</u> |
| 11252 | <u>Verified Complaint Landlord Tenant - Appendix XI-X</u> |
| 11947 | <u>How to Apply For a Writ of Possession (Order to Remove an Illegal Occupier From Your Property - Ejectment Action)</u> |
| 12770 | <u>Landlord Case Information Statement (LCIS)</u> |

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12817 [Warrant of Removal - Commercial - Appendix XI-G \(2\)](#).

12818 [Warrant of Removal - Notice to Tenants - Appendix XI-G \(3\)](#).

12819 [Warrant of Removal - Execution - Appendix XI-G \(4\)](#).

12836 [Request for Residential Warrant of Removal](#)

12842 [Certification of Lease and Registration Statement](#)

Tenant Forms:

CN Title

10288 [Information for Residential Tenants](#)

12778 [Tenant Case Information Statement \(TCIS\)](#)

Process for Filing

Landlord tenant cases are filed in the special civil part of Superior Court.

Any landlord that is a business entity must be represented by a New Jersey attorney in landlord tenant cases. A business entity is a corporation, a limited liability company, or a partnership.

Sole proprietors and general partnerships are allowed to file papers and represent themselves in court. Still, it is a good idea to get a lawyer if you can.

While you have the right to represent yourself in court, you should not expect any special treatment, help, or attention from the court. You must still comply with the Rules of the Court, even if you are not familiar with them. The following is a list of some things the court staff can and cannot do for you. Please read it carefully before asking the court staff for help.

- We *can* explain and answer questions about how the court works.
- We *can* tell you what the requirements are to have your case considered by the court.
- We *can* give you some information from your case file.
- We *can* provide you with samples of court forms that are available.

legal advice.

- We *cannot* tell you whether or not you should bring your case to court.
- We *cannot* give you an opinion about what will happen if you bring your case to court.
- We *cannot* recommend a lawyer, but we can provide you with the telephone number of a local lawyer referral service.
- We *cannot* talk to the judge for you about what will happen in your case.
- We *cannot* let you talk to the judge outside of court.
- We *cannot* change an order issued by a judge.

How to File a Complaint in Landlord Tenant Court

1 Complete Forms

◦ Verified Complaint

The landlord (you) must provide the correct name(s) address(es), and email address(es), if known, for each tenant named as a defendant. Also, the complaint must identify the landlord(s) as individuals, proprietorship, partnership, or corporation. You must complete the entire **mandatory** complaint form, providing an answer for each question 1 through 11, and any other applicable questions, and must attach all required documents.

◦ Tenancy Summons and Return of Service

The court will insert the trial date on the summons. It will be at least 21 days from date of service of the summons.

2 You must file the following documents with the complaint.

◦ Landlord Case Information Statement(LCIS)

- You must complete a Case Information Statement and file it with the court with the complaint. The information contained in the Case Information Statement is not admissible as evidence.
- Do not include personal identifiers such as social security numbers on the copy of the documents that you file with the court. Complete the forms, make a copy, and then redact the personal identifiers on the copies you will submit to the court.

- A copy of the lease, (or, if the lease exceeds 10 pages, the relevant portions of the lease), including:
 - any provisions specifying fees and charges as "additional rent."

rental assistance program.

- Registration Statement, unless exempt pursuant to N.J.S.A. 46:8-27.
- **Certification of Lease and Registration Statement**
- For cases involving something other than non-payment of rent, include all notices that were sent to the tenant or Public Housing Authority which will be used at the trial.

3 Attach the filing fee or request a fee waiver:

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| One defendant | \$50 |
| Each additional defendant | \$5 |

- 4** Service fee: \$7 for delivery of the court papers by a special civil part officer. Check the forms to make sure they are complete. Sign the forms.
- 5** Make copies of all of the documents that will be submitted to the court and put one copy in a safe place. The landlord should keep a copy for their records and two copies for each tenant named as a defendant in the complaint.
- 6** Check that the personal identifiers are redacted on the copies prepared for court.
- 7** Upload the documents into the **Judiciary Electronic Document Submission** (JEDS) system. Use a credit card to pay the fee or mail the verified complaint, the summons, the LCIS, any notices, and the fee to the **Superior Court** where the rental property is located. You can also deliver the papers in person or by mail.
- You must include**
- The summons
 - The LCIS
 - A copy of the lease, (or, if the lease exceeds 10 pages, the relevant portions of the lease)
 - Registration Statement
 - Certification of Lease and Registration Statement
 - For cases alleging **other than** non-payment of rent, any required notices

Note that attorneys must use the eCourts system to file landlord tenant cases.

Tenant Response

The tenant is the defendant in a landlord tenant case. The defendant must go to court to defend against the landlord's claims. Written responses are not acceptable.

Tenants must complete the [Tenant Case Information Statement \(TCIS\)](#) and file it with the court as soon as possible after receipt of the complaint. However, the TCIS shall be accepted for filing through the date of trial.

Does the tenant need a lawyer in landlord tenant court?

The tenant must be represented by a lawyer if it is a business. Any corporation, company, or limited liability partnership must have an attorney in landlord tenant court cases.

Even if you are not a business, it is a good idea to get a lawyer if you can. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you can contact the legal services program in your county to see if you qualify for free legal services.

Legal Services of New Jersey maintains a directory of [regional legal services offices](#).

The New Jersey State Bar Association also maintains a list of county [lawyer referral services](#) that might be helpful.

While you have the right to represent yourself in court, you should not expect any special treatment, help, or attention from the court. You must still comply with the Rules of the Court, even if you are not familiar with them. The following is a list of some things the court staff can and cannot do for you. Please read it carefully before asking the court staff for help.

- We *can* explain and answer questions about how the court works.
- We *can* tell you what the requirements are to have your case considered by the court.
- We *can* give you some information from your case file.
- We *can* provide you with samples of court forms that are available.
- We *can* provide you with guidance on how to fill out forms.

- We *cannot* tell you whether or not you should bring your case to court.
- We *cannot* give you an opinion about what will happen if you bring your case to court.
- We *cannot* recommend a lawyer, but we can provide you with the telephone number of a local lawyer referral service.
- We *cannot* talk to the judge for you about what will happen in your case.
- We *cannot* let you talk to the judge outside of court.
- We *cannot* change an order issued by a judge.

Settlement

It is important to come to the scheduled court date. Both parties might be able to work out a settlement as long as they are both present.

Settlement is often the best solution. It gives both parties the chance to compromise. In a settlement meeting with trained court staff, each party can get something that they want out of the case. Even if a tenant is facing eviction, the tenant and landlord might be able to work out a plan that will give the tenant more time to move out.

If the landlord and tenant agree on a settlement, the court staff will help them submit the correct form to the judge.

If the judge approves the settlement, the case is over. The landlord and tenant can move forward according to the settlement terms.

You have nothing to lose by trying to settle with the other party.

Preparing for Trial

Watch this [video](#) on landlord tenant cases before you attend court.

What to present

Documents

Be prepared to present or submit all records that will help you prove your case, such as:

- rent receipts, estimates, repair bills
- dishonored checks from the tenant (bounced checks)
- letters and notices to, or from, the tenant(s)
- photographs**

****Photographs, emails and text messages must be submitted to the court. You should print these out if you are appearing in person or contact the court in advance to arrange to submit them if you are attending virtually. Contact the Civil Division in your county to arrange to submit evidence in advance of the trial.**

Witnesses.

Your witnesses can attend court to help you prove your case; the court will not accept a written statement signed by a witness.

If you are attending to court without a lawyer, you will have to question your witnesses. Prepare any questions you will ask your witnesses in advance.

What to expect at the trial:

- If the landlord does not attend, the case will be dismissed. This means the case will not proceed.
- If the tenant does not attend, the case will be marked "Default." This means the landlord can apply for a judgment against the tenant.
- If you both come to court, you will be asked to work with trained, neutral court staff to try to settle your case.

OR

- a. If the landlord and the tenant come to an agreement, the court staff will help complete the right form to finalize the settlement. The judge must review and approve the forms before the court will accept your agreement.
- b. If you do not come to an agreement, a judge will hear the case. The judge will either grant or deny a judgment for possession. A judgment for possession is the first step toward eviction.

[Read the instructions that the judge will give in court](#)

After the Trial

Unpaid rent:

A tenant cannot be evicted if the full amount of rent is paid. The landlord also can charge for other costs if the judge approves. Even after a judgment of possession is issued by the court, the tenant has three business days to pay the rent and the approved costs to avoid

The judgment of possession does not entitle the landlord to the outstanding rent. To seek back rent, the landlord must file a claim in the special civil part or small claims section to collect the outstanding rent.

- [How to file a special civil case](#) for any amount of unpaid rent
- [How to file a small claims case for amounts \\$5,000 and under](#)

Judgments for Possession and Warrants of Removal

If a judgment for possession is entered, the landlord can take steps to have the tenant evicted. After the three business days pass from the date of the judgment for possession, the landlord may request a warrant of removal from the court.

If the tenant does not leave the property, a special civil part court officer, not the landlord, will serve the tenant(s) with a warrant of removal.

Residential tenants have three business days to leave the property after they are served with a warrant of removal. If they do not leave, the landlord can ask the court officer to evict them. The special civil part officer will carry out the warrant of removal unless the tenant pays everything in full. The residential tenant can also pay the landlord everything in full up to three business days after an eviction and have their case dismissed.

Unlike residential tenants, business tenants must leave immediately when served with a warrant of removal.

Landlords need to submit the following to move towards eviction:

Residential

| CN | Title |
|-------|--|
| 12816 | Warrant of Removal - Residential - Appendix XI-G (1) |
| 12818 | Warrant of Removal - Notice to Tenants - Appendix XI-G (3) |
| 12819 | Warrant of Removal - Execution - Appendix XI-G (4) |
| 12836 | Request for Residential Warrant of Removal |

Commercial

12817 [Warrant of Removal - Commercial - Appendix XI-G \(2\)](#)

12818 [Warrant of Removal - Notice to Tenants - Appendix XI-G \(3\)](#)

12819 [Warrant of Removal - Execution - Appendix XI-G \(4\)](#)

After Judgment for Possession

There are still things that a tenant can do after the court date that could delay or prevent an eviction. The tenants must notify their landlord if they decide to pursue any of these actions with the court:

- Tenants can request an Order for Orderly Removal, [How To Apply for an Order for Orderly Removal](#) which grants them more time to move out. This could give them up to seven calendar days to move.
- They can request a hardship stay [How to Apply for a Hardship Stay](#). This could stop the eviction for up to six months. Tenants cannot apply for a hardship stay unless they pay all the money they owe to the landlord, plus any costs. If they pay all the money they owe and they are granted a hardship stay, they must still comply with the original lease and pay all of the rent during the stay.
- Tenants can apply to the court to vacate (cancel) the judgment for possession [How to Apply for an Order to Show Cause](#). This request is not granted often and requires unique legal circumstances.
- Tenants can ask the court to dismiss the case if they give the landlord all the money that is due within three business days of the judgment of possession or eviction. The court must dismiss the complaint.
- Tenants can file an Order to Show Cause if the landlord refuses to accept payment from a rental assistance program or charity that has agreed to pay the overdue amount.

Tenants should contact the [Special Civil Part Office](#) as soon as possible to apply for any of the above.

Laws and Legal Research

Key facts:

civil part of the Superior Court and get a judgment for possession from the court before an officer can be directed to evict any residential tenant.

- If the landlord does not have a judgment for possession, and attempts to have the tenant evicted, this is an illegal lockout. If the eviction is not carried out by a special civil part officer, this is also an illegal lockout.
- Tenants have the right to attend court on the scheduled trial date to defend themselves against a possible eviction. Those cases are heard in the county courthouse where the rental property is located.
- The judge may send the parties to a trained neutral settlor on the trial date to try to settle the case.

Landlord Tenant Laws:

There are two New Jersey statutes that apply to eviction cases. The laws differ on when and why a renter can be evicted.

See N.J.S.A. 2A:18-53 for commercial tenants (not homes) and for residential properties with no more than two rental units (such as a two-family home, or a three-family home if the landlord also lives in one of the units).

N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1 et. seq. applies to all other residential tenants, except for hotels, motels, and seasonal renters.

Laws Protecting Tenants

Some reasons a landlord might file a complaint in landlord tenant court:

In most cases, a landlord must give a tenant a written notice to cease, or stop, their disorderly conduct or other violation. The landlord can only move forward with an eviction if the tenant continues the conduct after receiving the notice to stop. See N.J.S.A. 2A:18-61.1 for more information.

Also, complaints for reasons other than non-payment of rent generally require notice ending the tenancy. These notices must be attached to the complaint at the time of filing. Under federal law, public housing residences require the landlord to send a copy of the complaint and any eviction notice to the Public Housing Authority ("PHA") on the same day or before the complaint is filed in court.

Common Defenses in Eviction Cases

There are many ways that tenants can defend themselves in eviction cases. Both tenants and landlords should research these issues in order

Habitability

A rental property must be “habitable,” meaning that people can live in it safely and comfortably. In New Jersey this is also called the Marini Doctrine. Common problems that affect habitability:

- Lack of hot water or heat
- Non-working toilet
- Mold, bed bugs, or rodents
- Lead paint, broken windows, unfinished floors
- Broken appliances such as a stove or a refrigerator
- Unsafe common areas such as a lobby, stairs, or elevator
- Anything else that makes it hard for a tenant to live there normally

A tenant might withhold rent because of a habitability issue. But habitability cannot be used to avoid eviction for a pattern of late rent payments, noise or pet violations, or any other reason the landlord might give for an eviction.

To make a habitability defense, a tenant must:

- Deposit all rent due with the court.
- Be able to show the court, with photos or other evidence, that some part of the living space is uninhabitable.
- Be able to show the court that they told the landlord about the problem and gave the landlord a chance to fix it.
- Be able to show the court that they are not the cause of the issue. If the tenant broke the window, for example, that cannot be the reason for not paying rent.

Unregistered Rental Property

The property might not be registered as a rental property. If the landlord lives on the property and there are three units or fewer, the property must be registered with the Community Development Authority.

If the landlord does not live on the property OR the property includes more than three units, the property must be registered with the Bureau of Housing Inspection.

Proof of registration is done through a Registration Statement, which the landlord must file with the complaint.

Illegal Tenancy

A tenant could argue that the tenancy is illegal. Reasons could include:

- The property is condemned.

basement with only one escape route.

Abatement

The judge could decide to give the tenant an “abatement”, meaning the tenant does not owe the full amount of the rent because of a problem with the property. For example, the tenant is paying for a 2-bedroom apartment but one of the bedrooms has no windows and is not a real room.

Section 8 Subsidized Housing

A landlord cannot evict a tenant without first telling any public agencies that subsidize the tenant’s rent. The landlord must attach proof of this notice when the eviction complaint is filed with the court. The case could be dismissed if the landlord did not notify the agency about the case.

Certain Business Landlords That Require Attorneys

Landlords that are corporations, limited liability companies (LLC), or limited partnerships (LLP), are not permitted to file landlord/tenant lawsuits without an attorney. When these business landlords appear in court, they must also have an attorney representing them.

Notices Required If Landlord Is Suing for Something Other Than Non-Payment of Rent

If the landlord has sued a tenant for a reason other than non-payment of rent, the landlord is required to send the tenant certain notices. The landlord must attach copies of the notices to the complaint before filing with the court. Each notice can have different legal requirements depending on the reason for seeking eviction. Tenants must receive these notices when they are served with the summons and complaint.

Payment of All Rent Due by 4:30 p.m. on Trial Date (for Non-Payment of Rent Case Only)

The case may be dismissed if the tenant pays to the court by 4:30 p.m. on the scheduled trial date the entire amount of rent due and owing. This includes the court costs (landlord’s filing fees) and any other costs lawfully permitted by the lease agreement. This is only if a landlord has sued on the basis of non-payment of rent only,

Pay All Rent up to Three Days After an Eviction (Landlord Must Accept)

For residential non-payment of rent cases only, a landlord must accept payment as long as it includes:

1. The total amount of rent due and owing, plus
2. Permissible costs and charges under a valid lease agreement.

tenant by a charitable organization.

After receipt of payment, the landlord must advise the court within two days that the rent due and owing was paid or be subject to a \$500 fine.

Illegal Evictions

How to File for the Return to Your Rental Premises

A landlord cannot evict tenants or remove their belongings from a rental home without first getting a judgment for possession and then a warrant of removal from the court. Only a special civil part officer can perform the eviction on behalf of a landlord.

It is illegal for the landlord to force a tenant out by changing the locks, padlocking the doors or by shutting off gas, water or electricity.

A landlord also cannot take possession of a tenant's personal belongings or furniture to try to force them to pay rent. Tenants who have been locked out of their home illegally can file a complaint in the special civil part of Superior Court. In the complaint, the tenant can request to be allowed back into the home. They also can request monetary damages.

Security Deposits

Maximum security deposit is 1 ½ months' rent.

In New Jersey, a landlord can only charge up to 1½ months' rent as a security deposit. The landlord requires the security deposit in order to pay for any damage done to the unit or to cover unpaid rent after the tenant leaves. The landlord must deposit the security deposit into an interest-bearing account within 30 days of receiving the money from the tenant.

Security deposit must be kept in an interest-bearing bank account.

The landlord must notify the tenant in writing, within 30 days of receiving the deposit, the following information:

- The name of the bank or savings and loan association in which the deposit is made
- The type of account in which the security deposit is deposited
- The current rate of interest for that account
- The amount of such deposit

The landlord must send the tenant an updated statement providing the same information on an annual basis, or within 30 days of:

- The transfer or conveyance of ownership or control of the property

The interest must be paid or credited to the tenant each year.

The landlord must either pay you the amount of the annual interest in cash or must credit the amount of the annual interest toward the payment of rent.

The security deposit cannot be touched until the tenant moves out.

The landlord cannot deduct any money from a tenant's security deposit until after the tenant moves out of the home. If the landlord wants to use the security deposit to pay for damage or for unpaid rent, they must notify the tenant in writing within 30 days after eviction or after the tenant moves out of the home. The tenant must provide the landlord with their new address so that the landlord can contact them about their security deposit.

If the tenant owes more money than the amount of the security deposit, or if the damage caused by the tenant was beyond normal wear and tear, the landlord can sue the tenant in court for the additional amount.

If the tenant believes the landlord kept all or part of the security deposit without good cause, the tenant can sue the landlord for security deposits up to \$5,000 in [small claims court](#). Lawsuits for security deposits greater than \$5,000 must be filed as special civil cases.

Foreclosures

A residential tenant will not be forced to move because the property is in foreclosure if the tenant has a valid lease and is in good standing. The purchase at the sheriff's sale will take over the building subject to the tenants' rights.

If the property they are renting goes into foreclosure, tenants should receive the Notice to Residential Tenants of Rights During Foreclosure.

- [The law protects tenants from discrimination and sexual harassment.](#)
- [Tenants cannot be denied housing because of their gender identity or expression](#), race, or other types of bias.
- [Tenants are permitted to have emotional support animals](#) in their rental homes. They cannot be discriminated against if they qualify for an emotional support animal.
- [Landlords cannot discriminate against tenants based on the lawful source of the money](#) used to pay their rent.

based on actual or perceived race or national origin.

- You can find more anti-discrimination protections listed on the [Division of Civil Rights](#) webpage.

 - The tenant failed to pay rent.
 - The tenant is often late in paying rent.
 - The tenant has repeatedly acted in a disorderly manner.
 - The tenant has caused destruction or damage to the property willfully or through gross negligence.
 - The tenant has violated the terms of the lease or other document.
 - The landlord is required to board up or demolish the property for health and safety reasons.
-
- a. Lack of heat
 - b. Mold, bedbugs, or rodents
 - c. No running water, no hot water, or a toilet that doesn't work
 - d. Lead paint, broken windows, unfinished floors
 - e. Broken appliances such as a stove or a refrigerator
 - f. Unsafe common areas such as a lobby, stairs, or elevator
 - g. Anything else that makes it hard for a tenant to live there normally
-
- h. Be able to pay the full amount of rent due on the scheduled court date. They might be asked to give the rent money to the court to hold until the case is over.
 - i. Be able to show the court, with photos or other evidence, that some part of the living space is uninhabitable.
 - j. Be able to show the court that they told the landlord about the problem and gave the landlord a chance to fix it.
 - k. Be able to show the court that they are not the cause of the issue. If the tenant broke the window, for example, that cannot be the reason for not paying rent.
-
- l. The property is condemned.
 - m. There are zoning violations. For example, the property has been divided into more units than it was approved to have.
 - n. The property violates other laws. For example, it might be in a basement with only one escape route.
-
- o. The total amount of rent due and owing, plus
 - p. Permissible costs and charges under a valid lease agreement.
-
- q. The name and address of the bank where the money has been deposited.
 - r. The amount of the deposit.
 - s. The type of account.

- The deposit is moved to another account or bank.
- The bank merges with another bank.
- The rental property is sold.

Housing Assistance

- **Resource Navigators.** Resource Navigators from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) can give the parties information about assistance with rent, utilities, and other issues. They are often available at trials.
- **Rental Assistance.** Rental assistance may be available [through the DCA](#). The [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) provides information about rental assistance in each state.
- **Pending Rental Assistance Applications.** If you filed an application for rental assistance and are awaiting the outcome, be prepared to provide proof of the application to the court before the trial.
- **Legal Assistance.** The court system can be confusing. It is a good idea to get a lawyer if you can. If you can't afford an attorney, you can contact the [Legal Services](#) office near you to see if they can help. Call the Statewide Hotline at 1-888-LSNJ-LAW (1-888-576-5529) or [apply online](#).
- If you are not eligible for free legal assistance, refer to a [lawyer referral program in your county](#).
- You will also find helpful information in LSNJ's [Tenants' Rights Manual](#).
- [Contact your local ombudsman](#) for information on other resources, such as the Volunteer Lawyers for Justice and the Community Health Law Project.
- **DCAid.** DCA has assistance programs to help with heating costs, prevention of eviction, reduction of utility bills, and removal of lead hazards from your home. [Use their screening tool](#) to see if you qualify.
- **New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA).** HMFA can provide [free financial counseling related to eviction or possible foreclosure](#).
- **County and Municipal Welfare Agencies.** County and municipal welfare agencies have programs to help with food and medical expenses. Visit the [NJHELPS.gov](#) website to learn more.
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).** HUD has [resources for both landlords and tenants in New Jersey](#). This includes help with finding a subsidized apartment, applying for public housing, and other affordable housing programs.

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| What Happens on the Day of Trial for Landlord/Tenant? |
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Glossary

Answer : A written response explaining why the defendant disagrees with or denies what the plaintiff said in the complaint.

Appeal : A written request asking a higher court to review a judge's decision and possibly change it.

Certification : A written statement submitted to the court swearing that the information you've provided is true. It does not need to be notarized.

Complaint : A *complaint* is a document in which you briefly tell the court the facts in your case and the relief you want the court to grant.

Damages : The amount of money the plaintiff sues for in a lawsuit is called *damages*.

Default : When the defendant does not appear for trial to respond to the complaint or does not file an answer, a judge could rule in the plaintiff's favor. This is called a *default*. Also, if the plaintiff does not appear for trial, the court could dismiss the plaintiff's case.

Defendant : The person, business, or organization against whom a case is filed.

Dismiss : If a lawsuit is dismissed by a judge, there is no longer a court case. This can happen if the plaintiff does not serve the papers to the defendant properly, fails to appear at a scheduled court event, or otherwise fails to follow through with their case.

Ejectment : An ejectment is a lawsuit seeking to remove an unlawful occupant who is neither a legal tenant nor an owner of a property

Eviction : An eviction is the removal of a renter performed by a special civil part officer during court business hours. It can be performed only after a judgment for possession and a warrant of removal is used and served on the tenant by a special civil part officer.

Fee waiver : The court does not charge a filing fee for litigants who can prove that their income is no more than 150% of the current poverty level and that they have no more than \$2,500 in cash and bank accounts.

File : To submit forms and fees to the court to officially start or continue your case.

Judgment : A judgment is the official decision of a court in a case.

Judgment for possession : A landlord can go to court to seek a judgment for possession to evict tenants who have failed to pay rent, failed to abide by a lease agreement, or other reasons allowed by law.

Litigant : A *litigant* is person in a court case, either suing or being sued.

Motion : A *motion* is a written request in which you ask the court to issue an order, or to change an order it has already issued.

Order : A signed paper from a judge that requires someone to do (or stop doing) something.

Party : Any person, business, or government agency involved in a court case.

Personal Identifier : Personal information that is unique to one person, such as:

- Social Security number
- Driver's license number

Because court documents are public, you must not include personal identifiers when filing papers.

Plaintiff : The person or entity who starts a lawsuit by filing the complaint.

Redact : To hide or remove private or sensitive information from a document before filing it with the court.

Return Date : The *return date* is the date the plaintiff and defendant are told to appear in court.

Service : *Service* is mailing or delivering copies of your papers to the lawyer for the other party or to the other party directly if they have no lawyer.

Service of Process : *Service of Process* is the official delivery of the papers to the other party.

Summons : A *summons* is the paper that notifies the defendant that he or she is being sued and briefly explains the steps they need to take once they have received this notice.

Tenant : A Tenant is a person or business that entered into a lawful agreement with a landlord or property owner that gives them the right to peaceful possession of a habitable rental property.

Testimony : A *testimony* is a formal statement given in a court of law.

Transcript : A *transcript* is a written record of everything that was said during a court hearing.

Warrant of Removal : A warrant of removal is an order by the court that allows an eviction of a tenant at the request of the landlord.

Writ : A *writ* is an document issued by a court that orders a person, business or organization to do something.