

Notice to the Defendant: A lawsuit has been filed against you in justice court!
You have rights and responsibilities in this lawsuit. Read this notice carefully.

1. In a justice court lawsuit, individuals have a right to represent themselves, or they may hire an attorney to represent them. A family member or a friend cannot represent someone in justice court unless the family member or friend is an attorney. A corporation has a right to be represented by an officer of the corporation, and a limited liability company (“LLC”) can be represented by a managing member. A corporation or an LLC can also be represented by an attorney.

If you represent yourself, you have the responsibility to properly complete your court papers and to file them when they are due. The clerks and staff at the court are not allowed to give you legal advice. If you would like legal advice, you may ask the court for the name and phone number of a local lawyer referral service, the local bar association, or a legal aid organization.

2. You have a responsibility to follow the Justice Court Rules of Civil Procedure (“JCRC”) that apply in your lawsuit. The rules are available in many public libraries, at the courthouse, and online at the Court Rules page of the Arizona Judicial Branch website, at <http://www.azcourts.gov/>, under the “AZ Supreme Court” tab.
3. A “plaintiff” is someone who files a lawsuit against a “defendant.” You must file an answer or other response to the plaintiff’s complaint **in writing** and **within twenty (20) days** from the date you were served with the summons and complaint (or thirty (30) days if you were served out-of-state.) If you do not file an answer within this time, the plaintiff can ask the court to enter a “default” and a “default judgment” against you. Your answer must state your defenses to the lawsuit. Answer forms are available at the courthouse, and on the Self-Service Center of the Arizona Judicial Branch website at <http://www.azcourts.gov/>. You may prepare your answer electronically at <http://www.azturbocourt.gov/>; this requires payment of an additional fee. You may also prepare your answer on a plain sheet of paper, but your answer must include the court location, the case number and the names of the parties. You must provide to the plaintiff a copy of any document that you file with the court, including your answer.
4. You may bring a claim against the plaintiff if you have one. When you file your answer or written response with the court, you can also file your “counterclaim” against the plaintiff.
5. You must pay a filing fee to the court when you file your answer. If you cannot afford to pay a filing fee, you may apply to the court for a fee waiver or deferral, but you must still file your answer on time.
6. You may contact the plaintiff or the plaintiff’s attorney and try to reach an agreement to settle the lawsuit. However, until an agreement is reached you must still file your answer and participate in the lawsuit. During the lawsuit, the court may require the parties to discuss settlement.
7. Within forty (40) days after your answer has been filed, you and the plaintiff are required to provide a disclosure statement to each other. The disclosure statement provides information about witnesses and exhibits that will be used in the lawsuit. A party may also learn more about the other side’s case through discovery. Read the Justice Court Rules of Civil Procedure for more information about disclosure statements and discovery.
8. The court will notify you of all hearing dates and trial dates. You must appear at the time and place specified in each notice. If you fail to appear at a trial or a hearing, the court may enter a judgment against you. To assure that you receive these notices, you must keep the court informed, in writing, of your current address and telephone number until the lawsuit is over.