



## Legal Help

Court staff are not allowed to give legal advice. If you want legal help with your case, you may hire a lawyer. You may also visit the court's website, which has a page called "Legal Help & Guides" that has information about how to get legal help. Some of the services are free or low-cost for low-income parties. Visit [www.courts.maine.gov](http://www.courts.maine.gov) for more information.



To learn more visit  
[www.courts.maine.gov](http://www.courts.maine.gov)

# COLLECTING MONEY FROM A COURT JUDGMENT



Maine Judicial Branch  
Administrative Office of the Courts

If the court judgment in your Small Claims or civil case includes money owed to you, you have the right to collect that money. If the money owed is not paid, you can call the other party back to court to order them to pay you. This court event is called a “disclosure hearing.”

At the disclosure hearing you and the person who owes you (the “debtor”) look at the debtor’s money and property to find out what they can pay. You and the debtor might also make a payment plan at the disclosure hearing.

## Steps to Start a Disclosure Case

1. Complete the court forms.
2. Make sure the debtor gets the forms. (“Serve” them.)
3. File the forms at the District Court, with proof that you “served” the debtor.
4. Go to court on the hearing day.

### 1. Complete the court form

**Small claims judgment - You must wait 30 days after the judgment in your Small Claims case** before you can ask the court for a disclosure hearing.

- Get the form “Notice of Small Claims Disclosure Hearing,” from the court

clerk, who will put the date of the hearing on the it and will sign it. There is a small fee for this form.

**Civil case judgment** – If the court judgment in your civil case includes money owed to you you need a “Disclosure Subpoena.” This form tells the debtor to come to court for a hearing on a set date and time. You must get this form from a clerk, it must be signed by the clerk, and you need to get a date from the clerk to put on the form before you can serve it on the debtor. There is a small fee for this form.

**Documents** – both forms have a place to list the documents you need the debtor to bring to the hearing to help figure out what they can pay. Examples are bank statements and tax returns.

When you finish filling out the form, make two copies. Keep one copy for yourself.

### 2. Serve the Debtor

“Service” is giving the debtor notice that you are taking them to court to collect your money. Service is typically done by the Sheriff. Contact your local Sheriff’s office to get service.

**For a small claims disclosure** you must serve the other side at least 7 days before the disclosure hearing date. For an extra fee you can ask the clerk to try to serve the other side. Ask the clerk if you need their help with this.

**For civil disclosure**, you must serve the debtor at least 10 days before the disclosure hearing date.

There are other ways to serve the other side. For more information on other service options, please see the “Service” pamphlet.

The Sheriff will send back to you a document to show that the other side was served. Keep this to file with the court when you file your papers.



### 3. File the Papers with the Court

Take the form you served (either a Notice of Small Claims Disclosure Hearing or a Disclosure Subpoena) and your service document from the Sheriff to the court and file it. There will be a filing fee when you bring the form to the court.

### 4. Go to Court

You will have a hearing on the date the court gave you. At this hearing, both you and the person who owes you money will get to talk to a judge. Go to this hearing. If you do not, the court may make orders without your input.