

**U.S. DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA**



**Attorney's Guide:
Opening a Civil Case**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
GETTING STARTED	1
Prepare Your Documents	1
Convert Documents to PDF Format	1
THE FILING FEE	2
To Request a Waiver of the Filing Fee:	2
OPENING YOUR CIVIL CASE	2
EMERGENCY MATTERS	6
ADDING PARTIES	7
ADDING ADDITIONAL ATTORNEYS	11
ADDING AN ALIAS	13
CORPORATE PARENT OR OTHER AFFILIATE	15
CREATE CASE	15
DOCKETING THE LEAD EVENT	16
PAYING THE FILING FEE	24
COMPLETING THE CASE OPENING PROCESS	25

INTRODUCTION

Using this guide, you will learn how to electronically open and file a new civil action through the Electronic Case Filing system.

GETTING STARTED

Prepare Your Documents

Your next step is to prepare and convert your filing documents to PDF.

Prepare an initiating document, such as a:

- **Complaint**
- **Notice of Removal**
- **Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus**

Prepare as an attachment to your initiating document:

- **Civil Cover Sheet**

Prepare these documents as additional attachments if they apply to your case:

- **Summons(es)**

Download and save the **Summons** form found on the court's website at <http://www.alsd.uscourts.gov/forms/all-forms>. Use this fillable form each time you docket a summons to the court docket.

- Docket each summons separately.
- Summons(es) will be issued by the court electronically the following day.
- You will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) of the summons when the Clerk's Office enters it on the docket.
- Use the NEF hyperlink to retrieve the issued summons form to effect service of process.

The following forms are also available for downloading from our court website:

<http://www.alsd.uscourts.gov/forms/all-forms> .

- Civil Cover Sheet
- Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees

Convert Documents to PDF Format

Convert a document by:

- Scanning to PDF
- Using the conversion software included in word processing programs such as Word.
- Downloading PDF conversion software, such as Adobe Standard or Professional.

THE FILING FEE

- **As of October 1, 2019**, the filing fee for a standard civil case is **\$350.00 plus a \$50.00 administrative fee for a total of \$400.00.**
- **NOTE:** The administrative fee **does not** apply to :
 - **Miscellaneous civil cases,**
 - **Habeas corpus cases, or**
 - **Cases filed by pro se prisoner plaintiffs who have been provisionally granted permission to proceed *in forma pauperis*.**
- You must pay the filing fee through **Pay.gov**
- During case opening, you will be prompted for this payment and be guided through the **Pay.gov** screens, so have your card ready.
- See [Paying the Filing Fee](#) for details.

To Request a Waiver of the Filing Fee:

- Have your **Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees** prepared to file as a separate filing after you file your initiating documents.
- For detailed instructions, see [Docketing the Lead Event](#).

OPENING YOUR CIVIL CASE

Do not start opening your case unless you are prepared to post your initiating document(s).

- Remember they must be in **PDF format** and saved on your computer.
- Be sure you have a copy of your civil cover sheet available. You will need to refer to it later in this process.

Now that you are ready to open your case, let's get started. Log into CM/ECF as you normally would to file documents. (Remember, you don't need a client code.)

On the blue tool bar select "**Civil.**"



Under "**Open a Case**" you will see the link to: "**Attorney Case Opening.**" Click on this link to begin opening your case.



On the “**Open a Civil Case**” screen, select the “**Office**” (Division) and the “**Case type**”. Please DO NOT modify anything below “**Date filed:**”.

Note: Selma is the Northern Division of the Southern District and is comprised of Dallas, Hale, Marengo, Perry and Wilcox counties.

Mobile is the Southern Division of the Southern District and is comprised of Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, and Washington counties.

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of the "Open a Civil Case" form. Both screenshots show the "Office" dropdown menu with "Selma" selected on the left and "Mobile" selected on the right. The "Case type" dropdown menu is set to "cv" on the left and "mc" on the right. The "Date filed:" field is populated with "12/19/2019" on the right. A large red "X" is drawn over the "Lead case number", "Association type", "Other court name", "Other court number", and "Related cases" fields in both screenshots, indicating that these fields should not be modified.

Once you have entered your case data information, select the “**Next**” button to move to the next screen. If you need to start over on this page, select the “**Clear**” button and it will erase all of your entries.

This next screen asks for information which can be taken directly from your Civil Cover Sheet. Make sure to have it available so you can refer to it.

The first box is the “**Jurisdiction**” box. Use the dropdown list to select the case jurisdiction information for your case. This box defaults to “**3: Federal Question**”.

The image shows a screenshot of the "Open a Civil Case" form. The "Jurisdiction" dropdown menu is open, showing the following options: 1 (U.S. Government Plaintiff), 2 (U.S. Government Defendant), 3 (Federal Question), 4 (Diversity), and 5 (Local Question). The "Cause of action" field is set to "0 (zero)", "Origin" is set to "1 (Original Proceeding)", and "County" is set to "Mobile". The "Jury demand" field is set to "n (None)", "Class action" is set to "n (No Class Action Alleged)", and "Demand (\$000)" is set to "0". The "Fee status" field is set to "pd (paid)", "Fee date" is set to "12/19/2019", and "Date transfer" is set to "0". The "Next" and "Clear" buttons are visible at the bottom.

For this example, we will select “**4 (Diversity)**” for the case jurisdiction.

Now you will select the “**Cause of Action**” for your case. For this example, we are going to select “**Diversity – Personal Injury 28:1332pi**”. You can start typing the cause of action in the “**Filter:**” box and it will search the list for you instead of having to scroll through the entire list.

Open a Civil Case

Jurisdiction 4 (Diversity) [dropdown]

Cause of action 28:1332pi (28:1332 Diversity-Personal Injury) [dropdown] **Filter:** 28:133 [input] **Clear filter** [button]

Nature of suit 0 (zero) [dropdown] **Filter:** [input] **Clear filter** [button]

Origin 1 (Original Proceeding) [dropdown]

The next box is the “**Nature of Suit**”. Start typing the nature of suit in the “**Filter:**” box. For this example, we will select “**350 (Motor Vehicle)**” for the nature of suit.

At the “**Origin**” dropdown list, select either:

- **1 Original Proceeding** (Default) or
- **2 Removal from State Court.**

Please note that there are other options in the “**Origin**” dropdown list; however, you will only utilize the two listed above.

For this example, we are going to use “**1 (Original Proceeding)**”.

Open a Civil Case

Jurisdiction 4 (Diversity) [dropdown]

Cause of action 28:1332pi (28:1332 Diversity-Personal Injury) [dropdown] **Filter:** 28:133 [input] **Clear filter** [button]

Nature of suit 350 (Motor Vehicle) [dropdown] **Filter:** 350 [input] **Clear filter** [button]

Origin 1 (Original Proceeding) [dropdown]

If you are requesting a Jury Demand you will select the requestor(s) in the dropdown list.

Nature of suit 350 (Motor Vehicle) [dropdown] **Filter:** 350 [input] **Clear filter** [button]

Origin 1 (Original Proceeding) [dropdown]

Citizenship plaintiff [dropdown]

Citizenship defendant [dropdown]

Jury demand [dropdown] **Class action** n (No Class Action Alleged) [dropdown] **Demand (\$000)** [input]

Arbitration code [dropdown] **County** Mobile [dropdown]

Fee status pd (paid) [dropdown] **Fee date** 12/19/2019 [input] **Date transfer** [input]

Remember: If you are including a Jury Demand in your case, you must also demand this in your Complaint.

The “**Class action**” box defaults to “**n (No Class Action Alleged)**”. Use the dropdown to change to “**y (Class Action Alleged)**”, if appropriate.

If applicable, enter the monetary “**Demand**” (\$000) of the plaintiff. This must be entered in thousands, rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. For this example, the demand is for \$149,800, so we will enter “150.” Do not include the dollar sign.

Origin 1 (Original Proceeding)

Citizenship plaintiff

Citizenship defendant

Jury demand n (None)

Class action ☒ n (No Class Action Alleged) ☐ y (Class Action Alleged)

Demand (\$000) 150

Arbitration code

County

The “**Fee Status**” box has five choices in the dropdown list:

- **pd (paid):** Payment of the regular civil filing fee through Pay.Gov.
- **pend (IFP pending):** When filing an Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees as a separate filing after filing your complaint.
- **wv (waived):** When you are a US Attorney for the Department of Justice filing a case on behalf of the United States.
- **none (no fee required):** When filing a case that does not require a fee
- **fp (in forma pauperis):** When filing a case after a provisional grant of a Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees

Please leave the fee status “pd (paid)” unless you are a US Attorney or filing a Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees

Jury demand n (None)

Class action n (No Class Action Alleged)

Demand (\$000)

Arbitration

County Mobile

Fee status ☒ pd (paid) ☐ pend (IFP pending) ☐ wv (waived) ☐ none (no fee required) ☐ fp (in forma pauperis)

Filing date 12/23/2019

Date transfer

Next

The “**Citizenship plaintiff**” and the “**Citizenship defendant**” dropdown boxes are used only in diversity cases. You would leave these boxes blank unless your case is a diversity case.

For this example, we are going to select “**1 (Citizen of This State)**” for the plaintiff and “**4 (Incorporated/Principal Place of Business – Other State)**” for the Defendant.

Citizenship plaintiff 1 (Citizen of This State)

Citizenship defendant ☒ 1 (Citizen of This State) ☐ 2 (Citizen of Another State) ☐ 3 (Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country) ☐ 4 (Incorporated/Principal Place of Business-This State) ☐ 5 (Incorporated/Principal Place of Business-Other State) ☐ 6 (Foreign Nation)

Jury demand n (None)

Arbitration code

Fee status pd (paid)

Demand (\$000)

Next Clear

There is no need to utilize the “**Arbitration Code**”, “**County**” (defaults to Mobile), or “**Date transfer**” fields.

Look over this screen and make sure you entered the correct case information. Once you are confident that your case information is correct you are ready to proceed and select “**Next**” to move to the next screen.

Open a Civil Case

Jurisdiction	4 (Diversity)		
Cause of action	28:1332pi (28:1332 Diversity-Personal Injury)	Filter: <input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Clear filter"/>
Nature of suit	350 (Motor Vehicle)	Filter: <input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Clear filter"/>
Origin	1 (Original Proceeding)		
Citizenship plaintiff	1 (Citizen of This State)		
Citizenship defendant	4 (Incorporated/Principal Place of Business-This State)		
Jury demand	n (None)	Class action	n (No Class Action Alleged)
Arbitration code		County	Mobile
Fee status	pd (paid)	Fee date	12/23/2019
Date transfer	<input type="text"/>		
<input type="button" value="Next"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/>			

EMERGENCY MATTERS

CM/ECF will prompt you to answer **Yes** or **No** if your initial filing includes a Temporary Restraining Order.

Open a Civil Case

Will your initial filing include a Temporary Restraining Order?

- ☐ YES
☐ NO

Open a Civil Case

If you answer YES, open the case, file your emergency documents, have your case number ready, and immediately call the Clerks Office (during regular business hours) at 251-690-2371.

- The Clerk's Office will assign a judge to your case and notify them of the emergency.
- To ensure that your case receives the immediate attention it needs, **please file prior to 4:30 P.M.**

ADDING PARTIES

Open a Civil Case

On the next screen you will search for and enter party names. Party names shall be entered in the order as listed on the Complaint caption. Initial Caps - Only capitalize the first letter of a name or business unless the name is actually in all capitals. View the Quick Tips for Adding Parties found on the next screen for additional information.

If you would like to review Quick Tips for Adding Parties, click on the link provided. Otherwise, select **"Next"**.

Open a Civil Case

[Quick Tips for Adding Parties](#)

Before you get started, have your Complaint available. You will need this to add all parties in this case opening process.

- This screen will allow you to enter your party names and do a search to see if these parties are already in the court's database.
- This screen and all subsequent screens begin displaying a partial case number. A full case number will be assigned at the completion of the case opening process.
- **Notice of Removal cases** are opened by using the **original caption from the state court case**. For example, if the defendant is the "filer" of the removal case in Federal Court and they remain the defendant in the case filed here.
- **DO NOT** select the browser back button **at any time** during the 'Add Parties' process. You will lose your entire work product. If you need to make a change to your party selection or simply change the spelling, utilize the icons provided in the participant tree.
- **DO NOT ENTER OR MODIFY TELEPHONE, ADDRESS, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS FIELDS.**

Open a Civil Case

Search for a party

[Collapse All](#)
[Expand All](#)

Last / Business Name

First Name

Middle Name

1:19-cv-?????

In the **"Last/Business Name"** field, enter the party name, surname or company name only and select **"Search"**. Do not enter any descriptive text (doctor, Mr., Sergeant, etc.). The **"Party Text"** field is for that purpose.

Example: The case we will be opening is a civil case entitled: **"Amelia Smith vs. Whole House Movers"**. Let's get started by entering the plaintiff's last name, **Smith**, and then select **"Search"**.

The screenshot shows a web interface with a sidebar on the left and a main content area on the right. The sidebar has buttons for 'Add New Party' and 'Create Case', and links for 'Collapse All' and 'Expand All'. Below these is a text input field containing '1:19-cv-????'. The main content area is titled 'Search for a party' and contains three input fields: 'Last / Business Name' (with 'Smith' entered), 'First Name', and 'Middle Name'. A 'Search' button is below these fields. The 'Search Results' section displays a list of names: 'SMITH, C., COI', 'SMITH, LEONARD HOWARD', 'SMITH, MAE B.', 'SMITH, MICHAEL HENRY', 'SMITH, NURSE C.', and 'SMITH, P. D.'. The 'SMITH, P. D.' entry is highlighted, and a red box is drawn around the 'Select Party' button at the bottom of the results list. A 'Create New Party' button is also visible.

If you find an exact match from the list, highlight the name from the list and click on the **“Select Party”** button.

Note: If no match is found, no name will appear in the **“Last/Business Name”** box, and search results will state **“Search returned no results. Please try again or create a new party”**. In this situation, click on the **“Create New Party”** button.

This screenshot is similar to the first one, but the search results list is different. The names listed are: 'Smith, Alvin', 'Smith, Alyeen', 'Smith, Amelia', 'Smith, Andrew Jackson', 'Smith, Andy Dewayne', and 'Smith, Amelia Lebra'. The 'Smith, Amelia' entry is highlighted with a grey background. A red box is drawn around the 'Select Party' button at the bottom of the results list. The 'Create New Party' button is also present.

Once you have highlighted a name match and selected **“Select Party”** or selected the **“Create New Party”** button, CM/ECF will display the party information screen. You will notice your party name on this screen with a role type of **“Non-Party”** (default). Let’s proceed with entering your party information.

Add New Party **Create Case**

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

1:19-cv-????

Party Information
Amelia Smith

Title

Role Non-Party (npty:pty)

Pro se No

Prisoner Id **Unit**

Office

Address1

Address 2 ☒ Show this address on the docket sheet

Address 3 **City**

State **Zip** **Country**

Prison

Phone **Fax**

E-mail

Party text

Start date 12/23/2019 **End date**

Corporation no **Notice** yes

[Start a New Search](#)

Please **DO NOT** use the Title field. You will enter any descriptors in the “**Party text**” field.

Now you will select the party’s role from the drop-down menu. The first party entered is the **Plaintiff** or **Petitioner** (for Habeas Corpus Petitions). The parties should be entered in the manner and in the order in which they are captioned on the initiating document being filed. (Keep in mind the party name examples.)

Add New Party **Create Case**

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

1:19-cv-????

Party Information
Amelia Smith

Title

Role Non-Party (npty:pty)

Pro se Debtor-in-Possess (db.pos:pty)
Defendant (dft:pty)
Garnishee (gar:pty)
Guardian Ad Litem (gadl:pty)
In Re (inre:pty)
In Re (in re:pty)
Interested Party (ip:pty)
Interpleader (intpl:pty)
Intervenor (intv:pty)
Intervenor Defendant (intvd:pty)
Intervenor Plaintiff (intvp:pty)
Mass Defendants (md:pty)
Material Witness (mw:pty)
Mediator (med:pty)
Movant (mov:pty)
Non-Party (npty:pty) ☒
Notice Only (ntc:pty)
Objector (obj:pty)
Petitioner (pet:pty)
Plaintiff (pla:pty)

Prisoner Id **Unit**

Office

Address1

Address 2 ☒ Show this address on the docket sheet

Address 3 **City**

State **Country**

Prison **Fax**

Phone

E-mail

Party text

Start date 12/23/2019 **End date**

Corporation no **Notice** yes

[Start a New Search](#)

DO NOT enter any party information in the “**Address**”, “**Phone number**”, or “**E-mail**” fields, **UNLESS** the party is Pro Se. Then enter the address and phone number **ONLY**.

The “**Party text**” field is for information describing the party in further detail. For example, if the party is a company, party text might be “**an Alabama corporation**”. The party might be “**doctor**”, “**warden**”, “**an individual**” or “**husband and wife, and the marital community**”. In our example, we will not add any party text for the Plaintiff.

The start date field will default to the current date. You should not modify this field.

The screenshot shows the 'Add New Party' form for Amelia Smith. The 'Start date' field is highlighted with a red box and contains the value 12/23/2019. Other fields include Title, Role (Plaintiff), Pro se (No), Prisoner Id, Office, Address1, Address 2, Address 3, State, Zip, City, Country, Prison, Phone, Fax, E-mail, Party text, End date, Corporation (no), and Notice (yes).

If you are not adding any additional information select the “**Add Party**” button.


This close-up shows the bottom of the 'Add New Party' form. The 'Add Party' button is highlighted with a red box. Other fields visible are Start date (12/23/2019), End date, Corporation (no), and Notice (yes).

To add the remainder of your parties, select “**Add New Party**” and follow the same steps listed above.

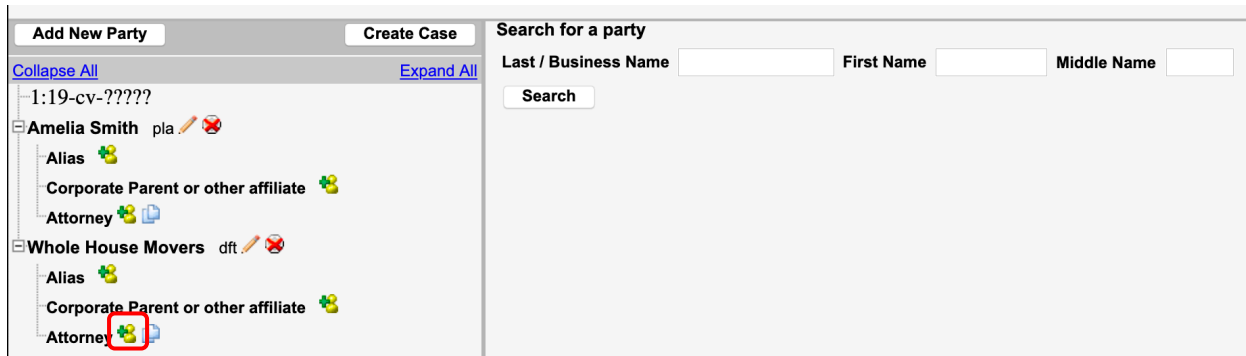
The screenshot shows the 'Add New Party' button highlighted with a red box. Below it, a list of parties is shown, including Amelia Smith with roles like Alias, Corporate Parent or other affiliate, and Attorney. To the right is a 'Search for a party' section with fields for Last / Business Name, First Name, and Middle Name.

ADDING ATTORNEYS

Since you logged into ECF as the attorney filing this case, you do not need to enter your name as attorney of record. The ECF system will ask you later in this process if you are associated with the party that you are representing.





You may enter additional attorneys associated with this case by selecting the  icon next to “Attorney”.


DO NOT add attorneys for the opposing parties **UNLESS** this is a Notice of Removal case.



Icons

These icons located next to the names on the left allow you to make modifications, edits and add new alias. These are the Icon Descriptions:

Icon	Description
	Delete this party from the case.
	Add new alias, corporate parent, or attorney.
	Copy attorney(s) from other parties in the case to this party.
	Edit the party, alias, corporate parent or attorney. Only displays beside actual names of participants, so if no participant has been added, this icon is suppressed.

When you click on the  icon, you will go to the “Attorney Search” screen, which resembles the “Party Search” screen.

For this example, Lee Joseph will be added as an additional attorney in this case.

Add New Party **Create Case** **Search for an attorney for Whole House Movers**

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

1:19-cv-????

Amelia Smith pla [edit] [delete]

- Alias [add]
- Corporate Parent or other affiliate [add]
- Attorney [add] [upload]

Whole House Movers dft [edit] [delete]

- Alias [add]
- Corporate Parent or other affiliate [add]
- Attorney [add] [upload]

Bar Id [text]

Last Name Joseph First Name Lee Middle Name [text]

Search [button]

Search Results

Joseph, Lee

Select Attorney [button] Create New Attorney [button]

As with the “**Party Search**” screen, you will see search results which allow you to select the attorney’s name from the dropdown list. Choose the attorney from the dropdown list. You can only add additional attorneys that are registered with CM/ECF. **DO NOT enter Pro Hac Vice Attorneys.**

Once you have highlighted the attorney’s name from the list, you will click on “**Select Attorney**”.

On the Attorney Information screen, **DO NOT** alter the information in the fields. **DO NOT** report a change of address to the Clerk’s Office.

Add New Party **Create Case** **Attorney Information**
Lee Joseph

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

1:19-cv-????

Amelia Smith pla [edit] [delete]

- Alias [add]
- Corporate Parent or other affiliate [add]
- Attorney [add] [upload]

Whole House Movers dft [edit] [delete]

- Alias [add]
- Corporate Parent or other affiliate [add]
- Attorney [add] [upload]

Title [text]

Office Matthews, Joseph & Shaddox, LLC [text]

Address 1 P.O. Box 572957 [text] Address 2 [text]

Address 3 [text] City Houston [text]

State TX [text] Zip 77257-2957 [text]

Country [text] Phone (713) 781-9595 [text]

Fax [text] Email [text]

Pro Hac Vice no [dropdown]

Designation Retained [text]

Seal Flag yes [dropdown]

Start date 12/23/2019 [text]

End date [text]

Lead attorney yes [dropdown]

Notice yes [dropdown]

Add Attorney [button]

[Start a New Search](#)

Accept the information by clicking “**Add Attorney**”.

Add New Party **Create Case**

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

1:19-cv-?????

- Amelia Smith pla ✎ ✖
 - Alias
 - Corporate Parent or other affiliate
 - Attorney
- Whole House Movers dft ✎ ✖
 - Alias
 - Corporate Parent or other affiliate
 - Attorney

Attorney Information
Lee Joseph

Title

Office Matthews, Joseph & Shaddox, LL Unit

Address 1 P. O. Box 572957 Address 2

Address 3 City Houston

State TX Zip 77257-2957

Country Phone (713) 781-9595

Fax E-mail

Pro Hac Vice no Lead attorney yes

Designation Retained

Seal Flag yes Notice yes

Start date 12/23/2019 End date


Add Attorney
[Start a New Search](#)

This returns you to the “**Attorney Information**” screen. Notice the attorney name you just added on the left screen for the party Whole House Movers. Repeat this process until all associated attorneys are added.

Whole House Movers dft ✎ ✖

- Alias
- Corporate Parent or other affiliate
- Attorney
 - Lee Joseph ✎ ✖

ADDING AN ALIAS

If you are adding an alias, select  next to “**Alias**” and search for the name of the alias.

Add New Party **Create Case**

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

1:19-cv-?????

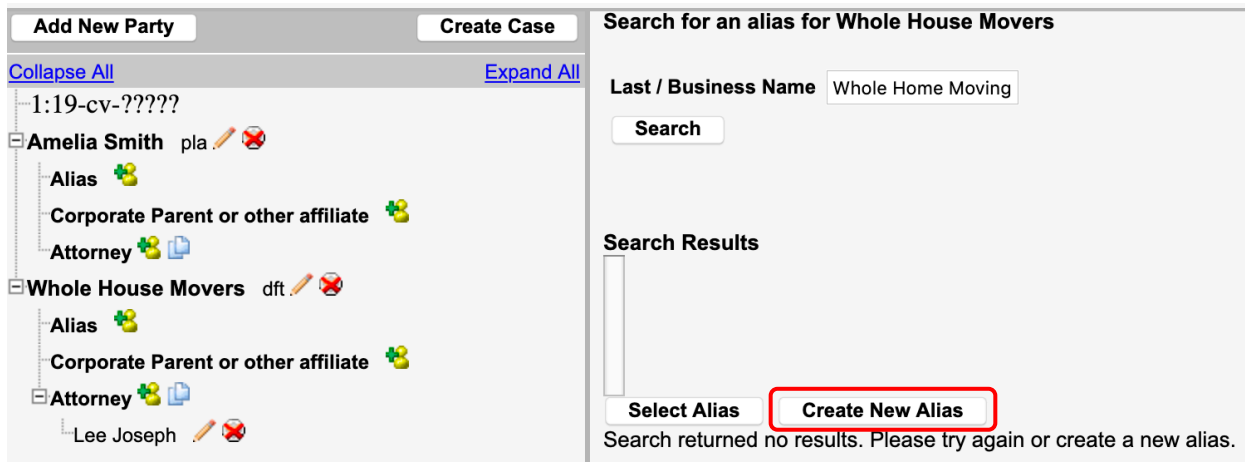
- Amelia Smith pla ✎ ✖
 - Alias
 - Corporate Parent or other affiliate
 - Attorney
- Whole House Movers dft ✎ ✖
 - Alias 
 - Corporate Parent or other affiliate
 - Attorney
 - Lee Joseph ✎ ✖

Search for an alias for Whole House Movers

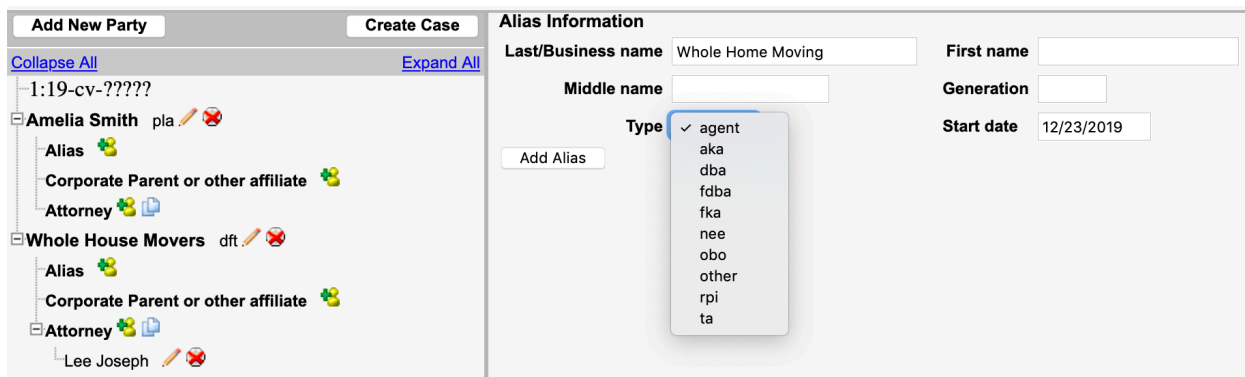
Last / Business Name

Search

Highlight the name from the list of search results and click “**Select Alias**”, or click “**Create New Alias**” if there are no search results.



Select the alias role “**Type**” from the drop down list.



The alias role options from the drop down list are identified below

agent:	Agent of
aka:	Also known as
dba:	Doing business as
fdba:	Formerly doing business as
fka:	Formerly known as
nee:	Born (usually refers to maiden name)
obo:	On behalf of
other:	Other
rpi:	Real party interest
ta:	Trading as

Now that you have your alias name entered and the role selected, select the “**Add Alias**” button. This will return you to the “**Party Information**” screen.

CORPORATE PARENT OR OTHER AFFILIATE

The next option is the “**Corporate Parent or Other Affiliate**” button.

- **DO NOT SELECT THIS OPTION.**
- If you are the attorney representing the corporation, you are required to file a **Corporate Disclosure Statement** which provides this information, and add all corporate parents and other affiliates to the case during the filing of the Corporate Disclosure Statement.

Finish adding all your parties and attorneys before proceeding to the next step.

CREATE CASE

ONLY when you are finished adding all parties, click on the “**Create Case**” button on the Participant Tree. Once you click “**Create Case**”, you will not be able to go back and add any further parties or attorneys to the case.

NOTE: Clerk’s Office staff checks all new cases filed electronically and will verify and add any missing parties or attorneys.

Once the “**Create Case**” button is selected, you will see the box below that states: “**Case will be created. Proceed?**” Select “**Yes**” if you are ready to proceed with filing of this case.

Note: this case will not be opened until the initiating document is filed.

On the next screen, you will be provided with your case number. Click on the “**Docket Lead Event**” hyperlink to continue to attach your initiating documents and pay the filing fee.

Open a Civil Case

Case Number 19-5 has been opened.

[Docket Lead Event?](#)

DOCKETING THE LEAD EVENT

Next you will need to file your initiating documents in the case.

- Click on “**Docket Lead Event?**” to proceed.
- ECF will automatically open the event Complaints and Initiating Documents screen.

Lead Event Types

There are three types of initiating documents or “lead events” to choose from.

- **Complaint**
- **Notice of Removal**
- **Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus**

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

Start typing to find an event.

Available Events (click to select events)

- Case Transferred In - Divisional Transfer
- Complaint**
- Complaint and Order for Receivership
- Complaint for Exoneration from or Limitation of Liability
- Counterclaim
- Crossclaim
- Intervenor Complaint
- Motion to Vacate/Set Aside/Correct Sentence (2255)
- Notice of Condemnation
- Notice of Removal**
- Notice of Removal, Joinder in**
- Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus**
- Petition of Mandamus
- Petition to Enforce IRS Summons
- Petition to Perpetuate Testimony

Selected Events (click to remove events)

Complaint

Select “**Complaint**” from the “**Available Events**” menu. Clicking on the word “**Complaint**” places it in the “**Selected Events**” box. Click “**Next**”.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

Start typing to find another event.

Available Events (click to select events)

- Case Transferred In - Divisional Transfer
- Complaint**
- Complaint and Order for Receivership
- Complaint for Exoneration from or Limitation of Liability
- Counterclaim
- Crossclaim
- Intervenor Complaint
- Motion to Vacate/Set Aside/Correct Sentence (2255)
- Notice of Condemnation
- Notice of Removal
- Notice of Removal, Joinder in
- Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus
- Petition of Mandamus
- Petition to Enforce IRS Summons
- Petition to Perpetuate Testimony

Selected Events (click to remove events)

Complaint

You will notice the case number appears. Click “**Next**”.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

Civil Case Number

Select the party filing the document being represented by you in this case and click “**Next**”.
NOTE: If there are multiple parties, hold down the Ctrl key and click on each of the desired parties.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers

Pick Filer

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

- Amelia Smith pla
- Whole House Movers dft
 - Alias
 - Attorney

Select the filer.

Select the Party:

- Smith, Amelia [pla]
- Whole House Movers [dft]

Next **Clear** **New Filer**

This screen appears when the attorney appears in the case for the first time. Leave all boxes checked and click **NEXT**. This will add the attorney's information to the docket and activate electronic notice.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers

The following attorney/party associations do not exist for above case(s).

Please check box on the left of the screen for associations to be created.

If the association should *not* be created, be sure the box is unchecked.

☒ Amelia Smith (pty:pla) represented by Don Henley (aty) ☐ Lead ☒ Notice

Next **Clear**

Select the party or parties you are filing against. NOTE: If there are multiple parties, hold down the Ctrl key and click on each of the desired parties, or click on the “**All Defendants**” radio button. Click “**Next**”.

Pick Party

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

- Amelia Smith pla
- Whole House Movers dft

Please select the party that this filing is against.

Select the Party: **OR** **Select a Group:**

- Smith, Amelia [pla]
- Whole House Movers [dft]

☒ No Group
☐ All Defendants
☐ All Plaintiffs
☐ All Parties

Next **Clear** **New Party**

On the next screen you'll be asked if the case is being filed after hours and if it requires immediate Court action. Select “**YES**” or “**NO**” and then “**Next**”.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

If this Civil Case is being filed after 5pm CDT, does the matter require immediate Court action prior to the next business day?

☐ YES

☒ NO

Next

Clear

Attach the Complaint

All documents must be in PDF format. Starting with the “**Main Document**”, click “**Browse**”.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Select the PDF document and any attachments.

Main Document

Browse...

No file selected.

Attachments

Category

Description

1.

Browse...

No file selected.

Next

Clear

Navigate to the appropriate directory and file on your computer to locate the Complaint. Always check your document before you upload it. Double click on the file name to upload it to CM/ECF.

The name of your document will appear in the “**Filename**” window.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Select the PDF document and any attachments.

Main Document

Browse...

Complaint.pdf

Attachments

Category

Description

1.

Browse...

No file selected.

Next

Clear

To attach the Civil Cover Sheet, click “**Browse**” under “**Attachment #1**”.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Select the PDF document and any attachments.

Main Document

Complaint.pdf

Attachments	Category	Description
1. <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> Civil Cover Sheet.pdf	<div><div>✓</div><div>Affidavit</div><div>Appendix</div><div>Transcript Redaction Notice</div><div>Transcript Order Information Form</div><div>Appellate Rules</div><div>Civil Cover Sheet</div><div>Errata</div><div>Exhibit</div><div>Supplement</div><div>Text of Proposed Order</div><div>Penalty Page</div><div>Standing Pretrial Order</div><div>Conflict Page</div></div>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Remove"/>
2. <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> No file selected.		<input type="text"/>

Navigate to the appropriate directory and file on your computer to locate the Civil Cover Sheet. After verifying it is the correct Civil Cover Sheet, double click on the file name. The name of your document will appear in the **"Filename"** window. Describe the Civil Cover Sheet using the **"Category"** drop down list.

Attach the Summons

Prepare one summons per defendant, convert to PDF and file as separate attachments.

Click **"Browse"** under **"Attachment #2"** to upload the summons. Describe the summons (es) under **"Description"** and click **"Next"**.

Attachments	Category	Description
1. <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> Civil Cover Sheet.pdf	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Remove"/>
2. <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> Summons.pdf	<input type="text"/>	Summons <input type="button" value="Remove"/>
3. <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> No file selected.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

On the next screen, you'll be receive the below prompt. Click **"Next"**.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

On the next screen please select defendant(s) to which this deadline applies

Select the defendant to which the 120 Day Rule 4(m) Deadline applies. The deadline will automatically calculate. **DO NOT** modify the deadline.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Complaint

Select party for deadline(s) below

Select the Party:

120 Day Rule 4(m) Deadline

Date

The next screen relates to the filing fee.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Would you like to pay the 350.00 filing fee by credit card online Y/N?, or indicate ifp if filing Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees and Costs

If paying filing fee, continue to [Paying the Filing Fee](#) .

MOTION TO PROCEED IN FORMA PAUPERIS

If the filing fee is not paid, you must immediately file a Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees after completion of your complaint filing by clicking on “**Civil**” and then “**Motions**”. Find and select “**Proceed In Forma Pauperis**” from the “**Available Events**” menu. Clicking on “**Proceed In Forma Pauperis**” places it in the “**Selected Events**” box. Click “**Next**”.

Motions

Start typing to find another event.

Available Events (click to select events)

- Order of Sale
- Order/Judgment
- Partial Summary Judgment
- Permanent Injunction
- Preliminary Injunction
- Pretrial
- Proceed In Forma Pauperis
- Produce
- Protective Order
- Quash
- Reassign Case
- Reconsideration
- Reconsideration of District Judge Order
- Reconsideration of Magistrate Judge Order
- Recusal
- Request of District Judge

Selected Events (click to remove events)

- Proceed In Forma Pauperis

You will notice the case number appears. Click **“Next”**. (**Note:** If your case number does not automatically appear, enter it and select **“Find this case”**. Then select **“Next”**.)

Motions

Civil Case Number

The next screen will confirm your case number. Select **“Next”**.

Motions

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Select the party that you represent and click **“Next”**.

Motions

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Pick Filer

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

- ☒ Amelia Smith pla
- ☒ Whole House Movers dft

Select the filer.

Select the Party:

-
- Whole House Movers [dft]

All documents must be in PDF format. Attach your document in the same way you attached your complaint.

Motions
[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)
Select the PDF document and any attachments.

Main Document

Browse...

No file selected.

Attachments	Category	Description
1. <div><div>Browse...</div><div>No file selected.</div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>

Next

Clear

The motion will appear in the “**Filename**” box.

Motions
[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)
Select the PDF document and any attachments.

Main Document

Browse...

IFP.pdf

Attachments	Category	Description
1. <div><div>Browse...</div><div>No file selected.</div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>

Next

Clear

You have one opportunity to describe your document by entering text in the box, if appropriate. You can add modifiers from the drop down menu and/or add information to the white box before finalizing your docket entry. You are not required to utilize either the drop down menu or the blank white box.

Motions
[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)
Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate.

✓

Second

Third

Fourth

Fifth

Sixth

Seventh

Eighth

Ninth

Tenth

Amended

Consent

Corrected

Counter

Cross

Emergency

Endorsed

Ex Parte

Final

Interim

OTION for Leave to Proceed in forma pauperis

filed by Amelia Smith. (Henley, Don)

Review this carefully; because once you click on the **“Next”** button, you will have no further opportunity to modify any part of this transaction.

If the information entered is correct, select **“Next”**. You will then receive a **Notice of Electronic Filing**. This screen tells you that your document has been filed, and who has been electronically notified of the filing.

PAYING THE FILING FEE

If you are filing a Complaint, Petition, or Notice of Removal, this screen appears after you set your 120 Day Rule 4(m) deadline. The filing fee is \$350.00, plus an administrative fee of \$50.00, for a total of \$400.00.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Would you like to pay the 350.00 filing fee by credit card online Y/N?, or indicate ifp if filing Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees and Costs

If you are paying the filing fee, place **“Y”** in the box and click **“Next”**. ECF verifies the filing fee amount and directs you to press **“Next”** to accept. You will then be routed to pacer.gov to pay your filing fee.

If you wish to pay the Clerk’s Office directly over the phone, place **“N”** in the box and click **“Next”**. You will then need to contact the Clerk’s Office at 251-690-2371 and pay your fee. You will be provided a receipt number to input on the next screen. Click **“Next”**.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Payment of the 350.00 filing fee must be made prior to filing your case initiating documents. Please enter the receipt number in the space provided below.

Receipt No.

If you are filing an IFP, place **“IFP”** in the box and click **“Next”**. You will be given a reminder to file your Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees and Costs on the next screen. Click **“Next”**.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

Please remember to file your Motion to Proceed Without Prepayment of Fees and Costs directly after this event

COMPLETING THE CASE OPENING PROCESS

After completing the payment screens, CM/ECF returns you to the case opening program to complete the process.

On the next screen, indicate whether this case is a Copyright action by selecting “**Yes**” or “**No**”. Select “**Next**”.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)
Is this a Copyright action?
☐ Yes
☒ No
Next Clear

You have one opportunity to describe your document by entering text in the box, if appropriate. You are not required to add anything to the white box. Select “**Next**”.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)
Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate.
COMPLAINT for damages against Whole House Movers (IFP.) , filed by Amelia Smith. (Attachments: # (1) Civil Cover Sheet, # (2) Summons) (Henley, Don)
Next Clear

This screen displays the final text as it will appear on the docket. Review this carefully; because once you click on the “**Next**” button, you will have no further opportunity to modify any part of this transaction.

If the information entered is correct, select “**Next**”. You will then receive a **Notice of Electronic Filing**. This screen tells you that your document has been filed, and who has been electronically notified of the new case.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:19-cv-00005 Smith v. Whole House Movers](#)

U.S. District Court
Southern District of Alabama

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered by Henley, Don on 12/23/2019 at 1:23 PM CST and filed on 12/23/2019

Case Name: Smith v. Whole House Movers

Case Number: [1:19-cv-00005](#)

Filer: Amelia Smith

Document Number: [1](#)

Docket Text:

COMPLAINT for damages against Whole House Movers (IFP.), filed by Amelia Smith. (Attachments: # (1) Civil Cover Sheet, # (2) Summons) (Henley, Don)

1:19-cv-00005 Notice has been electronically mailed to:

Don Henley don_henley+alsd@gmail.com

1:19-cv-00005 Notice has been delivered by other means to:

Lee Joseph
Matthews, Joseph & Shaddox, LLP
P. O. Box 572957
Houston, TX 77257-2957

The following document(s) are associated with this transaction:

Just a Reminder!

Follow these steps to file an emergency matter:

- **Open the case.**
- **File your emergency matter documents.**
- **Have your case number ready.**
- **Immediately call the Clerk's Office.**
 - **251-690-2371**
- **The Clerk's Office will assign a judge to your case and notify them of the emergency.**
- **To ensure that your case receives the immediate attention it needs, please file prior to 4:30 P.M.**