



Western District of Washington Newsletter

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Inside This Issue

1—Court News

- 1 General Orders re Court Operations and COVID-19
- 1 New Clerk of Court/District Court Executive
- 1 New Magistrate Judge
- 2 2021 Ninth Circuit Civics Essay and Video Contest

2—CM/ECF Filing Tips

- 2 Did you know – Notice of Removal
- 3 Jury Demand Flags in CM/ECF

3—E-Filing News

- 3 NextGen 1.6 upgrade
- 4 Updated Stipulation event
- 4 Updated Motion for Default event
- 5 Highly Sensitive Document (HSD) Filings

5—Pro Se Corner

- 5 Federal Bar Association's Legal Clinic

6—ECF Training Sessions

7—Tools/Resources Spotlight

Next Issue

Civics Essay Contest Winners

Filing a Motion for In Forma Pauperis for attorneys

Pro se forms

Court News

General Orders re Court Operations and COVID-19

You can review the latest General Orders relating to Court Operations during COVID-19 [here](#). New General Orders were recently released on March 19th and March 23rd including the extension of the modified court operations and the phasing in of criminal trials starting in early May.

New Clerk of Court/District Court Executive

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington has appointed Ravi Subramanian as the new District Court Executive/Clerk of Court. Mr. Subramanian comes to our court with over 15 years' experience in executive management and administration, including extensive experience in the federal and state courts. He is currently the Chief Deputy Clerk for Administration in the Northern District of California, serves on the faculty at the Federal Judicial Center, and works closely with the Ninth Circuit and the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. He is a graduate of the Executive Leadership program at Cal Berkeley, holds a Master's degree in Public Administration, and Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Architecture.

Mr. Subramanian will join our district on May 10, 2021. He will assume the duties of District Court Executive/Clerk of Court on July 1, 2021.

New Magistrate Judge

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington has selected S. Kate Vaughan as the new magistrate judge in Seattle. Judge Vaughan will succeed Magistrate Judge Mary Alice Theiler, who is retiring on April 30, 2021.

Judge Vaughan has a Bachelor's degree from the University of Durham in the United Kingdom, and she received her law degree from the University of Washington School of Law.

Judge Vaughan has extensive experience in the practice of civil and criminal law. She is currently a Supervisory Attorney in the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington. Judge Vaughan has been an Assistant U.S. Attorney since 2010. Her current duties including training and supervising Assistant U.S. Attorneys, and she also is a member of the Hiring Committee. She has been instrumental in promoting diversity as an integral part of the hiring practices in the

U.S. Attorney's Office. Her previous duties with the U.S. Attorney's Office included service in the Criminal Enterprise Unit, and a leadership role as the Project Safe Childhood Coordinator.

Prior to joining the U.S. Attorney's Office, Judge Vaughan worked in civil practice at Perkins Coie in Seattle. She handled corporate and individual clients, focusing on fraud class action litigation, ERISA cases, and breach of contract matters.

The court expects she will start duty in Seattle on May 2, 2021.

2021 Ninth Circuit Civics Essay and Video Contest

Every year the Ninth Circuit sponsors the Civics Essay and Video Contest. This year's contest topic is:

What Does Our American Community Ask of Us?

All high school students in the Western District of Washington from public, private, parochial and charter schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status are encouraged to enter. Children of federal judges, chambers staff, and employees of federal court offices are not eligible to participate. For more information about the local contest, please contact Johanna Moody-Gatlin at (206) 370-8852 or Johanna_Moody@wawd.uscourts.gov.

Entries are being accepted until April 15th. Contest rules, resources, and entry instructions may be viewed [here](#).

CM/ECF Filing Tips

Did you know – Notice of Removal

When a case is removed from state court, each petitioner for removal shall file copies of all additional records and proceedings in the state court that were not already filed with the Notice of Removal, together with defendant's or defense counsel's verification that they are true and complete copies of all the records and proceedings in the state court proceeding. This should be filed within 14 days of filing the Notice of Removal. To file these records and verification in CM/ECF, please use the event **Verification of State Court Records (Civil > Other Filings > Other Documents)**:

Civil Events → Other Filings → Other Documents

[Verification of State Court Records](#)

Any state court records that were filed with or attached to the Notice of Removal docket entry should not be refiled. The state court complaint should always be filed with the Notice of Removal as a separate attachment (labeled "complaint" or "amended complaint") and, if it is filed with the Notice of Removal, should not be refiled when the Verification of State

Court Records is filed. For additional information on opening a removal case, please see the [Attorney's Guide to Opening a Notice of Removal Civil Case](#).

Jury Demand Flags in CM/ECF

Have you ever noticed the JURYDEMAND text in CM/ECF while you were filing?

Motions

[2:19-cv-00001-JGR Evergreen Gardens v. Grass Roots Inc](#)

JURYDEMAND

This text is what we call a **Case Flag**. It's a way for staff to flag whether a case includes a jury demand or not. This could include a jury demand from any party and does not necessarily mean it was you who filed the demand. These flags show up for everyone who files in that case.

Do you want to help our staff to determine the usefulness of these flags? Then answer this quick [two question poll](#) to share your thoughts.

E-Filing News

NextGen 1.6 upgrade

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington will be upgrading their CM/ECF system to the latest version (NextGen 1.6). E-filers will receive an email with additional information once an upgrade date is determined by the Court.

For the most part, e-filers will not see significant changes to the system except when uploading PDF documents with their filings. Documents will be rejected by the system that contain the following:

- JavaScript
- Encryptions or password-protections
- Scripts which can launch an external application (this does not include links to external websites)
- Internal attachments
- Audio and video content

The system will also reject PDF documents that:

- Were created with Mac OS X using a fillable form in the Safari browser
- Were created with Mac OS X using MS Word and selecting the option, "Best for printing" (instead select "Best for Electronic Distribution")

You can ensure the acceptance of your PDF by "flattening" all PDFs prior to filing in our system. You can find step-by-step instructions on how to do this [here](#) or on our [Forms page](#).

Updated Stipulation event

A common question that we receive on the ECF Helpdesk is whether to use the **Stipulation** or the **Stipulated Motion** event. It is the preference of Chambers that filers use the **Stipulated Motion** event so the Stipulation will show up on the Judge's calendar via the noting date. If filers use the **Stipulation** event, they run the risk of the Stipulation being overlooked by Chambers.

Due to this, we recently updated the **Stipulation** event to help clarify this question for e-filers and ensure **Stipulations** are seen by the Judge.

After selecting the **Stipulation** event e-filers now see a new informational screen:

Note: Pursuant to LCR 10(g), if the parties seek a Court order related to their stipulation, they should instead select the CM/ECF event Stipulated Motion or Stipulated Motion to Seal, as appropriate.

Next

Clear

This means that if you are requesting the Court to enter an order (i.e. you are including a Proposed Order with your filing or need the Judge to sign the Stipulation), you should use the **Stipulated Motion** event instead of the **Stipulation** event. This will allow you to enter a noting date and therefore ensure the Stipulation appears on the Judge's calendar for review.

Tip: If your Stipulation does not include a separate Proposed Order (i.e. the Stipulation itself is the Proposed Order for the Judge to sign), you can email the entire Stipulation to the Judge's Orders inbox.

Updated Motion for Default event

The civil **Motion for Default** event has been modified to collect the name of the proposed defaulted party. Filers will notice a new screen that prompts for this information:

Enter the name of the proposed defaulted party:

Next

Clear

Enter the name of the party or parties in the space provided, and the name(s) will populate in the final docket text:

Docket Text: Final Text

MOTION for Default against **Test Defendant**, filed by Plaintiff Test Plaintiff. (KB)

Please note that this field is not required and can be bypassed by simply selecting Next without entering anything in the field.

Highly Sensitive Document (HSD) Filings

In response to recent disclosures of wide-spread breaches of both private sector and government computer systems, all Federal Courts are immediately adding new security procedures to protect highly sensitive documents (HSDs) filed with the Court. [General Order 03-21](#) addresses these new procedures for our District.

Based on advice from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, the Western District of Washington finds that, pursuant to Civil Rule 5(d)(3)(A) and Criminal Rule 49(b)(3)(A), good cause exists to require all parties to file HSDs outside of the Court's electronic filing system. More information can be found on the [Court's website](#). These amendments are effective March 01, 2021.

Pro Se Corner

Federal Bar Association's Legal Clinic

Washington Western District Court hosts the Federal Bar Association's Legal Clinic. Volunteer attorneys can provide up to 30 minutes of legal advice on federal legal issues involving discrimination, prisoner rights, Fourth Amendment search and seizure, excessive force, free speech, voting rights, the Second Amendment and religious freedom.

Please note, volunteer attorneys will not provide legal representation, but they can refer you to other community resources.

The legal clinic remains open during these difficult times and telephone consultations may be scheduled by calling the numbers below.

Seattle

For an appointment call 206-267-7070

Press "1" to Leave a Message

[More information \(PDF\)](#)

Tacoma

For an appointment call 253-368-6690

Mon - Thu 10:00AM - 3:00PM

[More information \(PDF\)](#)

ECF Training Sessions

Due to concerns related to the Coronavirus, training classes will be offered online only for the foreseeable future. Classes will be recorded and may be posted to the Court's public website.

The Western District of Washington Clerk's Office trainers have regularly scheduled Introduction to Electronic Case Filing Training Sessions. These sessions will cover the following information:

- Changes to CM/ECF after the NextGen CM/ECF upgrade
- CM/ECF filing resources and instructions
- Navigating CM/ECF
- Filing a motion and other document
- Completing a civil case opening

Classes are held the **first** Thursday of each month from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM.

Classes will be offered online during the Coronavirus pandemic. During this time, participants must meet the following technical requirements to attend (trainers cannot provide in-depth technical support):

- Access to a laptop/desktop computer
- Access to a microphone and headphones/speakers that can connect to your computer/ laptop
- Access to the internet & email
- Access to an internet browser such as: Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, or Apple Safari

Please note that if you have a group of 5 or larger, special accommodations may be made for alternate training dates. Submit your request by email to cmecf@wawd.uscourts.gov.

There is no cost to attend these classes, but registration is required for attendance. To register, please send an email to: cmecf@wawd.uscourts.gov.

Please include the following information in your email:

- Name(s) of attendees
- Bar number if you are an attorney*
- Firm Name
- Phone number(s)
- Attendee(s)' email address(es) (if different from sender)
- Date of the training session you wish to attend
- Any specific topics of interest you would like to discuss

**The two hour ECF Training Session has been approved by the WSBA for 2 CLE credits.*

Have a CM/ECF training topic suggestion?

Send topic suggestions to cmecf@wawd.uscourts.gov.

Tools/Resources Spotlight

If you haven't already, check out these helpful e-filing tools/resources:

Written Guides:

- [Filing a Sealed Document:](#)

Use this guide to learn how to file a sealed document in this Court, including how to file a Motion to Seal, Sealed Document, and a Sealed Motion.

Training Videos:

- [How to Navigate CM/ECF](#) (or [PDF handout](#)):

Watch the How to Navigate CM/ECF video to walk through basic navigation of the filing menus, PACER menus, Search functionality, and Utilities menu.

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