



Administrative Office of the Courts

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E-filing of civil cases to start in magistrate courts

SANTA FE – Attorneys may electronically file civil cases in magistrate courts in a dozen counties starting next week and e-filing will be phased in statewide in other magistrate courts over the next several months.

“E-filing provides a more convenient way for attorneys to initiate civil lawsuits in a magistrate court and submit subsequent case-related documents,” Chief Justice Michael E. Vigil said today. “The online technology will streamline court operations and is far more efficient than having attorneys and their staff filing paper documents in court.”

The first phase of the e-filing rollout begins Tuesday, Jan. 19, in the magistrate courts in the:

- Fifth Judicial District of Eddy, Chaves and Lea counties.
- Ninth Judicial District of Curry and Roosevelt counties.
- Tenth Judicial District of De Baca, Harding and Quay counties.
- Eleventh Judicial District of McKinley and San Juan counties.
- Twelfth Judicial District of Lincoln and Otero counties.

E-filing and service of documents will occur through the Judiciary’s online [File & Serve system](#), which is currently used for civil and criminal cases in district courts and civil cases in the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court.

Traditionally, litigants filed paper documents in magistrate courts and then judicial employees placed those documents in physical files for each case. More recently, employees accepted paper documents and scanned those to create electronic records. E-filing allows the parties to submit electronic documents instead of paper. Electronic filing of cases minimizes the risk of data entry errors in courts because e-filed documents automatically are entered into the Judiciary’s computer system used for docketing and processing cases. E-filing also creates an electronic record of when a party filed a document with the court and when the opposing party received the document if the e-service option is used.

Under the current schedule for the statewide rollout, e-filing should become available by May for magistrate courts in the First, Third, Sixth and Thirteenth Judicial Districts and by August in the Fourth, Seventh and Eighth Judicial Districts. [Click here for a map of court locations and judicial districts.](#)

“Magistrate courts will gain valuable experience with e-filing in the coming months and that will lay the groundwork for the Judiciary to expand the service to allow self-represented litigants in civil cases to electronic file documents, eliminating the need for them to travel to a courthouse,” said Chief Justice Vigil.

To reduce the number of people visiting courthouses during the pandemic, self-represented litigants have been temporarily allowed to email documents to magistrate courts. This process is not the same as e-filing and still requires court employees to enter the documents into the case file.

The state’s 46 magistrate courts have limited jurisdiction and handle civil actions up to \$10,000. They also adjudicate misdemeanors, DWI cases, traffic violations and hold preliminary hearings to determine probable cause on felony charges.

E-filing was piloted in civil cases in district courts in 2010, and rolled out district-by-district over three years. District courts have jurisdiction over all civil cases of any value as well as all family cases such as adoption, divorce and custody matters. District courts also have jurisdiction over all criminal cases including felonies. E-filing in criminal cases in district courts became available in 2019.

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