



Administrative Office of the Courts

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Electronic filing in civil cases to start in more magistrate courts

SANTA FE – A more convenient way of filing civil lawsuits in magistrate courts will begin later this week in 10 counties across the state.

Starting April 23, attorneys can electronically initiate civil lawsuits and file subsequent documents in cases in magistrate courts in the:

- First Judicial District of Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Los Alamos counties.
- Third Judicial District of Doña Ana County.
- Sixth Judicial District of Grant, Hidalgo and Luna counties.
- Thirteenth Judicial District of Cibola, Sandoval and Valencia counties.

The courts represent the second phase of a planned statewide rollout of e-filing in magistrate courts. E-filing was launched in 18 magistrate courts in January and there have been about 950 electronic filings in civil cases in those courts through the end of March.

E-filing allows litigants to submit electronic documents instead of paper and, if they choose, to electronically deliver copies to other parties in the case.

"Electronic filing saves time for attorneys in a civil lawsuit and streamlines court operations," Chief Justice Michael Vigil said. "Attorneys and their staff can eliminate a trip to a courthouse to file paper documents. With e-filings, magistrate court clerks no longer must scan paper documents to create electronic records and place those in a case file."

E-filing and service of documents occurs 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.

E-filing is voluntary for attorneys during the phased-in statewide rollout, which should be completed by August when the service is expected to begin in magistrate courts in the 10 counties that make up the Fourth, Seventh and Eighth Judicial Districts. [Click here for a map of court locations and judicial districts.](#)

Paper documents will continue to be accepted by magistrate courts in cases filed by people who represent themselves in court without the assistance of an attorney. During the COVID-19 pandemic, self-represented litigants have been allowed to email documents to magistrate courts to help reduce the number of people needing to enter courthouses. The Supreme Court's order allowing non-attorneys to file by email remains in effect for now, but the process is not the same as e-filing because it still requires court employees to enter the documents into the case file.

New Mexico'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.

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