County of Adams

Courts' Self-Help Center – Packets

APPLICATION TO WAIVE FEES AND COSTS

This packet contains information, forms, and instructions on how to file a Petition to ask the Court to excuse the paying of court costs or to declare an economic hardship related to obtaining transcripts.

DISCLAIMER

Court staff cannot give you legal advice or help you complete these forms. The information in this packet is not a substitute for professional legal advice. The Court and the Adams County Bar Association assume no responsibility and accept no liability for actions taken by users of these documents, including reliance on their contents. If you want to obtain the services of an attorney but do not know whom to contact, please call the Pennsylvania Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-692-7375. A list of Attorneys Practicing in Adams County available for consultation on filling out self-help custody and divorce forms can be found on the Courts' Self-Help webpage at https://www.adamscountypa.gov/courts/courtadministration/selfhelpcenter

Packet Last Updated: November 1, 2026

In this Packet:

- **Information and Instructions (consists of three pages)**
- **Confidential Document Form ("CDF") (consists of two pages)**
- **Waiver of Fees and Costs Order of Court (consists of one page)**
- **Application to Waive Fees and Costs (consists of two pages)**

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Normally, when you initiate a legal matter in Court, you must pay various costs and fees. In Pennsylvania, a person may seek a waiver of the initial filing fee and such other fees and costs associated with a legal action on any of the following three bases under Pa.R.J.A. 1990(c):

1. **You are without financial resources**. A party shall be deemed without financial resources if:

    a. You receive needs-based public assistance (including, but not limited to, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); or

    b. You meet the following income and gross asset requirement:
        i. gross income (i.e., before taxes and other deductions) that is 200% or less than the federal poverty guidelines for the party's household size; and
        ii. assets less than $10,000.00, excluding the party's home and one vehicle.

2. **You suffer from substantial financial hardship**. Substantial financial hardship means that a party is or will be unable to fully meet their basic human needs or obligations including, but not limited to, nutrition, housing, utilities, health, transportation, care of dependents, or other areas of essential need, by paying the fees and costs associated with the legal action based upon:
    1. the party's gross income, assets, and expenses;
    2. the number of minor children or adult children, who are incapable of self-support due to a physical or mental disability that the party is supporting, including a child support obligation;
    3. employment history;
    4. other available financial resources, including resources from individuals who have a duty of support to the party; and
    5. other factors affecting the party's income, assets, or expenses.

3. **You are represented by counsel practicing in a legal aid organization or providing you with free legal services** (public defender or court-appointed counsel), and your counsel reasonably believes that you are unable to pay the fees and costs associated with the legal action.

See Pennsylvania Rule of Judicial Administration 1990(c).

After review of the above criteria, if you believe that you may be eligible to seek a waiver of fees and costs associated with a legal action, you must complete and file an **"Application to Waive Fees and Costs"** with the Court. A copy of the Application is included in this packet, and it is available online as a fillable PDF on the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts website, located at https://www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-public.

This packet may also be used by a party who is declaring an economic hardship and seeking to obtain a transcript of a Court proceeding, as permitted by Pennsylvania Rule of Judicial Administration 4008(b).

You should complete, sign, and date the Application to Waive Fees and Costs and Verification. Complete the caption **exactly** as it appears on all the pleadings in your case. **Make sure that you complete all the requested information. If some of the questions don't apply to you, then write 'None' or 'N/A.' If you do not answer all the questions, your Application may be denied.**

Complete the caption on the Order of Court but leave the rest of the Order of Court blank. The Judge will fill in the rest of the Order of Court. File the **blank** Order of Court, the **completed** Application, and one **copy** of each. You must also submit a self-addressed stamped envelope along with your documents. You should keep an additional copy of each of these documents for your records. The filing office will then forward the documents to the Judge for consideration. Once the Judge acts on the Application, the filing office will send a copy of the signed Order of Court to you in the stamped envelope you provided.

A requestor will need to file these forms with the appropriate filing office:

- For a request related to criminal, delinquency, dependency or summary appeal matters at the Common Pleas level, the request will be filed at the Adams County Clerk of Courts Office
- For a request related to Orphans' Court matters, the request will be filed at the Adams Couty Clerk of the Orphans' Court Office
- For a request related to civil matters at the Common Pleas level, the request will be filed at the Adams County Office of the Prothonotary
- For a request related to domestic relations matters, the request will be filed at the Adams County Domestic Relations Section

If you have been granted a protective order pursuant to the Protection from Abuse Act or the Protection for Victims of Sexual Violence or Intimidation Act, you are not required to list your address, your current employer's name, or your current work schedule. Instead, you should list that information on a separate form, called the "confidential Information Form" and submit it to the correct filing office with your Petition. The Confidential Information Form is a separate form that can be found outside of the Law Library on the third floor of the Adams County Courthouse.

You must fill out the Confidential Document Form ("CDF") that is attached to this packet. Normally, all documents which are filed at a filing office are public records. This means that anyone can view these documents. The CDF protects you and all your financial information by sealing this document from public view. You must fill out the caption on the CDF. If you need any assistance in filling out this document, please consult the "Instructions for Completing the Confidential Document Form," which is page two of the CDF. Once this form is completed, you will then file it with the Prothonotary's Office.

After the Judge reviews your Appetition, the Judge will enter the Order of Court, either granting or denying you permission to waive fees and costs. If your Application is granted, you will not have to pay the filing fee, service fee, or other "costs of litigation." If the Judge denies your Application, you will be responsible for paying the costs and fees within thirty (30) days or your action may be terminated by the filing office. You have the right to appeal the Judge's decision. An appeal can be complicated and may involve hiring an attorney.

A party or Attorney receiving a waiver of fees and costs has a continuing obligation to inform the Court of an improvement in the party's financial circumstances that would enable the party to pay any waived fees and costs.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS FOR ADAMS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

_____	:	
Name	**PLAINTIFF** :	
	:	
vs.	:	**CASE NO. _____**
	:	
_____	:	
Name	**DEFENDANT 1** :	
	:	
and (if applicable)	:	
	:	
_____	:	
Name	**DEFENDANT 2** :	

ORDER OF COURT

AND NOW, this _____ day of _____, 20____, upon presentation and consideration of the attached, verified, Application to Waive Fees and Costs, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

_____ Petitioner's request for a waiver of fees and costs is granted.

_____ Petitioner's request for a waiver of fees and costs is denied.

_____ Petitioner is ordered to remit the required filing fees to the Prothonotary within thirty days of the date of this Order.

Parties permitted to proceed with a waiver of fees and costs must inform the Court of improvement in their financial circumstances which will enable them to pay any waived fees and costs.

BY THE COURT:

_____
Judge