

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
TENNESSEE, EASTERN DIVISION

Christen Cox v. Madison County CJC

Cox · No. 1:26-cv-01135-JDB-jay · Decided June 23, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee directs incarcerated Plaintiff Christen Cox to either pay the \$405 civil filing fee or submit a completed in forma pauperis affidavit and a certified six-month inmate trust account statement. The order warns that failure to comply within thirty days may result in denial of in forma pauperis status, assessment of the full filing fee, and dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	J. Daniel Breen
DECIDED	June 23, 2026
DOCKET	1:26-cv-01135-JDB-jay
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A prisoner filed a pro se civil-rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and an incomplete application to proceed in forma pauperis. The district court ordered Plaintiff either to pay the \$405 civil filing fee or submit a completed affidavit and certified six-month inmate trust-account statement.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district-court order directing compliance with filing-fee requirements.
PARTIES	Christen Cox v. Madison County CJC

TOPICS

prisoners rights section 1983 civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure civil rights prisoner litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether a prisoner who seeks to proceed in forma pauperis must submit a completed affidavit and a certified copy of the inmate trust-account statement for the preceding six months.
2. What action the court may take if the prisoner fails to pay the filing fee or timely submit the required in forma pauperis materials.

HOLDINGS

1. A prisoner seeking to use the Prison Litigation Reform Act's installment-payment procedures must submit, with the complaint, a properly completed in forma pauperis affidavit and a certified copy of the inmate trust-account statement for the six months immediately preceding filing.
2. The court may direct a prisoner with deficient in forma pauperis materials to pay the full civil filing fee or submit the completed required documents within a specified period.
3. If Cox fails to comply timely, the court may deny leave to proceed in forma pauperis, assess the entire filing fee from his trust account without the installment procedures, and dismiss the action under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Accordingly, Plaintiff is ORDERED to submit, within thirty days of the date of this order: (1) the entire \$405.00 civil filing fee; or (2) a completed in forma pauperis affidavit and a certified copy of his trust account statement for the last six months immediately preceding the filing of the complaint.”

“However, if he fails to comply with this order in a timely manner, the Court will deny leave to proceed in forma pauperis, assess the entire \$405.00 filing fee from his trust account without regard to the installment payment procedures, and dismiss the action without further notice pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b).”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Christen Cox, an incarcerated plaintiff at the Madison County Criminal Justice Center, filed a pro se § 1983 complaint. He submitted an application to proceed in forma pauperis, but did not fully complete it and did not submit a certified copy of his inmate trust-account statement for the six months preceding filing. The court therefore required him to pay the filing fee or cure the deficiencies in his in forma pauperis submission.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On June 22, 2026, Cox filed a § 1983 complaint and an application to proceed without prepaying fees. The application was incomplete, and Cox did not provide the required certified trust-account statement. The court ordered compliance within thirty days and warned that failure to comply could result in denial of in forma pauperis status, assessment of the full filing fee, and dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b).

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- McGore v. Wrigglesworth, 114 F.3d 601, 605 (6th Cir. 1997)
- LaFountain v. Harry, 716 F.3d 944, 951 (6th Cir. 2013)
- Bruce v. Samuels, 577 U.S. 82, 84-85 (2016)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
TENNESSEE EASTERN DIVISION

CHRISTEN COX, Plaintiff, v. No. 1:26-cv-01135-JDB-jay MADISON COUNTY CJC,
Defendant.

ORDER DIRECTING PLAINTIFF TO COMPLY WITH 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1)-(2) OR PAY
THE \$405 CIVIL FILING FEE

On June 22, 2026, Plaintiff, Christen Cox, booking number 563982, who is incarcerated at the Madison County Criminal Justice Center in Jackson, Tennessee, filed a pro se civil complaint pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

(Docket Entry (“D.E.”) 1.) Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act (“PLRA”), 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)-(b), a prisoner bringing a civil action must pay the filing fee required by 28 U.S.C. § 1914(a).¹ Although the obligation to pay the fee accrues at the moment the case is filed, see McGore v. Wrigglesworth, 114 F.3d 601, 605 (6th Cir. 1997), partially overruled on other grounds by LaFountain v. Harry, 716 F.3d. 944, 951 (6th Cir.

2013), the PLRA provides the prisoner the opportunity to make an initial partial filing fee and pay the remainder in installments. See Bruce v. Samuels, 577 U.S. 82, 84-85 (2016) (addressing payment of fees under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1)); 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). ¹ The civil filing fee is \$350.00. 28 U.S.C. § 1914(a).

The Schedule of Fees requires an additional administrative fee of \$55.00 for filing any civil case. See Local Fees, United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee, www.tnwd.uscourts.gov/local-fees (last accessed June 23, 2026).

The additional fee will not apply if leave to proceed in forma pauperis is ultimately granted. However, to take advantage of the installment procedures, the prisoner must properly complete and submit to the Court, along with the complaint, an in forma pauperis affidavit and a certified copy of his inmate trust account statement for the last six months immediately preceding the filing of the complaint.

28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(2). Cox has submitted the two-page Application to Proceed in District Court Without Prepaying Fees or Costs. (D.E. 2.) He, however, has not fully completed that application. Furthermore, he has not submitted a certified copy of his trust account statement for the six months preceding the filing of the complaint.

Accordingly, Plaintiff is ORDERED to submit, within thirty days of the date of this order: (1) the entire \$405.00 civil filing fee; or (2) a completed in forma pauperis affidavit and a certified copy of his trust account statement for the last six months immediately preceding the filing of the complaint.

The Clerk is DIRECTED to mail Cox a copy of the prisoner in forma pauperis affidavit along with this order and note the date of mailing on the docket. If Plaintiff needs additional time to pay the filing fee or file the required document(s), he may request one thirty-day extension of time from this Court. *McGore*, 114 F.3d at 605.

However, if he fails to comply with this order in a timely manner, the Court will deny leave to proceed in forma pauperis, assess the entire \$405.00 filing fee from his trust account without regard to the installment payment procedures, and dismiss the action without further notice pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b). *Id.* Lastly, Plaintiff is ORDERED to notify the Court immediately, in writing, of any change of address.

If he fails to abide by this requirement or any other requirement of this order, the Court may impose appropriate sanctions, up to and including dismissal of this action, without any additional notice or hearing by the Court. IT IS SO ORDERED this 23rd day of June 2026. s/ J. DANIEL BREEN UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE