

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, EASTERN DIVISION

Bobby L. Spears v. Saint Louis County, et al.

Spears · No. 4:25-cv-01305-CMS · Decided February 2, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri dismissed Bobby L. Spears's 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action without prejudice. The dismissal was based on his failure to comply with an order requiring an amended complaint and his failure to prosecute under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cristian M. Stevens
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
DECIDED	February 2, 2026
DOCKET	4:25-cv-01305-CMS
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court dismissed Plaintiff's § 1983 action without prejudice after he failed to file an amended complaint by the court-ordered deadline and failed to seek additional time.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

[civil procedure](#) [section 1983](#) [prisoners rights](#)

PRACTICE AREAS

[civil procedure](#) [civil rights](#) [prisoner civil rights](#)

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court could dismiss the action without prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for Plaintiff's failure to comply with a court order and failure to prosecute.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may dismiss an action without prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) when the plaintiff, after meaningful notice and an express warning of dismissal, fails to comply with a court order and fails to prosecute the case.

KEY QUOTATIONS

- “Plaintiff was given meaningful notice of what was expected, he was cautioned that his case would be dismissed if he failed to timely comply, and he was given ample time to comply.”*
- “the authority of a court to dismiss sua sponte for lack of prosecution is inherent power governed “by the control necessarily vested in courts to manage their own affairs so as to achieve the orderly and expeditious disposition of cases””*

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Bobby L. Spears filed a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action alleging civil rights violations at the Saint Louis County Justice Center. After granting leave to proceed in forma pauperis, the court ordered him to file an amended complaint and expressly warned that noncompliance would result in dismissal. Spears neither filed the amended complaint nor requested additional time.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff commenced the action in August 2025. The court granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis on December 16, 2025, ordered Plaintiff to file an amended complaint within thirty days, and warned that failure to comply would result in dismissal. Plaintiff did not respond by the January 15, 2026 deadline, and the court dismissed the action without prejudice for failure to comply with the order and failure to prosecute.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Link v. Wabash R.R. Co., 370 U.S. 626, 630-31 (1962)
- Brown v. Frey, 806 F.2d 801, 803 (8th Cir. 1986)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI EASTERN DIVISION BOBBY L. SPEARS,)) Plaintiff,)) v.) No. 4:25-cv-01305-CMS) SAINT LOUIS COUNTY, et al.,)) Defendants.) MEMORANDUM AND ORDER This matter is before the Court upon review of the file. Plaintiff Bobby L. Spears commenced this 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action in August 2025, alleging civil rights violations at the Saint Louis County Justice Center.

ECF No. 1. On December 16, 2025, the Court granted Plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis and directed him to file an amended complaint within thirty (30) days. ECF No. 6. The Court cautioned Plaintiff that his failure to timely comply with the Order would result in the dismissal of the case without further notice. Plaintiff's response was due by January 15, 2026.

To date, Plaintiff has neither responded to the Court's Order, nor sought additional time to do so. Plaintiff was given meaningful notice of what was expected, he was cautioned that his case would be dismissed if he failed to timely comply, and he was given ample time to comply.

The Court will therefore dismiss this action, without prejudice, due to Plaintiff's failure to comply with the Court's December 16, 2025, Order and his failure to prosecute his case. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b); see also *Link v. Wabash R.R. Co.*, 370 U.S. 626, 630-31 (1962) (the authority of a court to dismiss sua sponte for lack of prosecution is inherent power governed "by the control necessarily vested in courts to manage their own affairs so as to achieve the orderly and expeditious disposition of cases"); *Brown v. Frey*, 806 F.2d 801, 803 (8th Cir.

1986) (a district court has the power to dismiss an action for the plaintiff's failure to comply with any court order). Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that this case is DISMISSED without prejudice. A separate order of dismissal will be entered herewith. IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that an appeal from this dismissal would not be taken in good faith. Dated this 2nd day of February 2026. / | / f j L/S \ v' £ Vv CRISTIAN M. STEVENS UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE