

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Andre Murphy, et al. v. Aqua Finance, et al.

Murphy v. Aqua Finance · No. 2:25-cv-02995-DAD-CSK · Decided January 8, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California denied Andre Murphy’s application to proceed in forma pauperis without prejudice because it lacked sufficient information about his income, assets, liabilities, and expenses. The court allowed Murphy to submit a complete application or pay the filing fee and required Murphybey Trust to obtain counsel because a legal entity may not appear pro se.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Chi Soo Kim
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	January 8, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-02995-DAD-CSK
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff Andre Murphy moved to proceed in forma pauperis in this civil action. The court also addressed the inability of Murphybey Trust, a legal entity, to proceed without counsel.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court evaluated whether the IFP application satisfied the disclosure requirements of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1) and whether the legal-entity plaintiff could proceed without counsel.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Andre Murphy, Murphybey Trust v. Aqua Finance, et al.

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- pleadings
- trusts

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Murphy's application to proceed in forma pauperis contained sufficient financial information to establish inability to pay the filing fee.
2. Whether Murphybey Trust, as a legal entity, could appear and litigate without representation by an attorney.

HOLDINGS

1. An IFP application must provide sufficient detail concerning the applicant's income, assets, liabilities, and expenses to establish eligibility; Murphy's application was insufficient because it omitted material financial information.
2. A legal entity may not appear in the action without representation by an attorney.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“While individuals may appear in propria persona, corporations and other entities may appear only through an attorney; an unrepresented entity cannot file any pleadings, make or oppose any motions, or present any evidence to contest liability.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Andre Murphy and Murphybey Trust brought the action pro se. Murphy's IFP application reported gross monthly pay of \$1,200 and take-home pay of \$250 per week, but did not disclose other income received during the preceding twelve months, assets, liabilities, or other monthly expenses. Murphybey Trust appeared without an attorney.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed this action and Murphy submitted an application to proceed in forma pauperis. The court found the application insufficiently detailed, denied it without prejudice, and allowed Murphy to submit an amended application or pay the filing fee. The court separately granted Murphybey Trust time to retain counsel and required counsel to file a notice of appearance.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Andrews v. Cervantes*, 493 F.3d 1047, 1051 (9th Cir. 2007)
- *Rodriguez v. Cook*, 169 F.3d 1176, 1177 (9th Cir. 1999)
- *Williams v. County of Ventura*, 443 F. App'x 232, 233 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *United States v. McQuade*, 647 F.2d 938, 940 (9th Cir. 1981)

- Caveman Foods, LLC v. jAnn Payne's Caveman Foods, LLC, 2015 WL 6736801, at *2 (E.D. Cal. Nov. 4, 2015)

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