

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Williams v. Prudhel

Williams · No. 2:22-cv-2250 CKD P · Decided March 6, 2023

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California grants Bobby James Williams leave to proceed in forma pauperis but requires payment of the statutory filing fee. The court dismisses the complaint for failure to state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, while granting thirty days to file an amended complaint. The order also provides guidance concerning pleading requirements, defendant involvement, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Carolyn K. Delaney
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	March 6, 2023
DOCKET	2:22-cv-2250 CKD P
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A state prisoner proceeding pro se filed a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint and requested leave to proceed in forma pauperis. The district court granted in forma pauperis status, screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, dismissed the complaint for failure to state a claim, and granted leave to amend.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Mandatory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; dismissal is required for claims that are frivolous or malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant. In assessing failure to state a claim, the court accepts well-pleaded allegations as true and construes the complaint in the plaintiff's favor, while requiring factual allegations sufficient to state a facially plausible claim.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential district court order

TOPICS

prisoners rights

section 1983

ada / disability

pleadings

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

federal civil procedure

pleading sufficiency

Americans with Disabilities Act

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a claim for relief under federal law sufficient to survive mandatory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
2. Whether the plaintiff's allegations adequately connected each defendant to an alleged constitutional deprivation under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
3. What pleading requirements applied to any amended complaint, including the requirements for asserting a Title II ADA claim and filing a complete amended pleading.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted and was subject to dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
2. Plaintiff was granted thirty days to file an amended complaint that complies with the Civil Rights Act, the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, and the Local Rules of Practice.
3. To establish a Title II ADA violation, a plaintiff must allege that he is a qualified individual with a disability, was excluded from or discriminated against regarding a public entity's services, programs, or activities, and suffered that exclusion or discrimination because of the disability.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The court is required to screen complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief against a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity.” (at 1)

“To establish a violation of Title II of the ADA, a plaintiff must show that (1) [he] is a qualified individual with a disability; (2) [he] was excluded from participation in or otherwise discriminated against with regard to a public entity’s services, programs, or activities; and (3) such exclusion or discrimination was by reason of [his] disability.” (at 2)

“Local Rule 220 requires that an amended complaint be complete in itself without reference to any prior pleading.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Bobby James Williams, a state prisoner proceeding without counsel, filed a complaint seeking relief under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and asserted, among other claims, a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The court found that the complaint was sometimes illegible, unclear, repetitive, and insufficiently specific regarding the involvement of each defendant and the alleged deprivation of constitutional rights. The court therefore concluded that the complaint failed to state a claim under federal law but permitted amendment.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a prisoner civil-rights complaint against Joshua Prudhel and other defendants and sought in forma pauperis status. The court granted the request, assessed the statutory filing fee, screened the complaint, and concluded that it failed to state a claim under federal law. The court dismissed the complaint without prejudice and allowed thirty days to file an amended complaint.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 325, 327 (1989)
- Franklin v. Murphy, 745 F.2d 1221, 1227-28 (9th Cir. 1984)
- Jackson v. Arizona, 885 F.2d 639, 640 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555-57, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 93-94 (2007)
- Scheuer v. Rhodes, 416 U.S. 232, 236 (1974)
- Ellis v. Cassidy, 625 F.2d 227 (9th Cir. 1980)
- Rizzo v. Goode, 423 U.S. 362 (1976)
- Ivey v. Board of Regents, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)
- Lovell v. Chandler, 303 F.3d 1039, 1052 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Pennsylvania Department of Corrections v. Yeskey, 524 U.S. 206, 208 (1998)
- Duvall v. County of Kitsap, 260 F.3d 1124, 1138 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Loux v. Rhay, 375 F.2d 55, 57 (9th Cir. 1967)

OPINION

(PC) Williams v. Prudhel

PER CURIAM.

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8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10

11 BOBBY JAMES WILLIAMS, No. 2:22-cv-2250 CKD P

12 Plaintiff, 13 v. ORDER 14 JOSHUA PRUDHEL, et al., 15 Defendants. 16 17 Plaintiff is a state
prisoner proceeding pro se and seeking relief pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 18 1983. This proceeding
was referred to this court by Local Rule 302 pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 19 636(b)(1). 20 Plaintiff
requests leave to proceed in forma pauperis. As plaintiff has submitted a 21 declaration that makes
the showing required by 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a), his request will be granted. 22 Plaintiff is required to
pay the statutory filing fee of \$350.00 for this action. 28 U.S.C. §§ 23 1914(a), 1915(b)(1). By

separate order, the court will direct the appropriate agency to collect the 24 initial partial filing fee from plaintiff's trust account and forward it to the Clerk of the Court. 25 Thereafter, plaintiff will be obligated for monthly payments of twenty percent of the preceding 26 month's income credited to plaintiff's prison trust account. These payments will be forwarded by 27 the appropriate agency to the Clerk of the Court each time the amount in plaintiff's account 28 exceeds \$10.00, until the filing fee is paid in full. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). 1 The court is required to screen complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief against a 2 governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The 3 court must dismiss a complaint or portion thereof if the prisoner has raised claims that are legally 4 "frivolous or malicious," that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or that seek 5 monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1),(2). 6 A claim is legally frivolous when it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact. 7 *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989); *Franklin v. Murphy*, 745 F.2d 1221, 1227-28 (9th

8 Cir. 1984). The court may, therefore, dismiss a claim as frivolous where it is based on an 9 indisputably meritless legal theory or where the factual contentions are clearly baseless. *Neitzke*, 10 490 U.S. at 327. The critical inquiry is whether a constitutional claim, however inartfully 11 pleaded, has an arguable legal and factual basis. See *Jackson v. Arizona*, 885 F.2d 639, 640 (9th 12 Cir. 1989); *Franklin*, 745 F.2d at 1227.

13 In order to avoid dismissal for failure to state a claim a complaint must contain more than 14 "naked assertions," "labels and conclusions" or "a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause 15 of action." *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555-557 (2007). In other words, 16 "[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory 17 statements do not suffice." *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009). Furthermore, a claim 18 upon which the court can grant relief has facial plausibility. *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570. "A 19 claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw 20 the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged." *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 21 at 678. When considering whether a complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted, 22 the court must accept the allegations as true, *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 93-94 (2007), and 23 construe the complaint in the light most favorable to the plaintiff, see *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 24 U.S. 232, 236 (1974). 25 The court has reviewed plaintiff's complaint and finds that it fails to state a claim upon 26 which relief can be granted under federal law. Plaintiff's complaint must be dismissed. The 27 court will, however, grant leave to file an amended complaint. 28 //// 1 If plaintiff chooses to amend the complaint, the amended complaint must be legible. 2 Plaintiff's handwriting in the original complaint is, at times, not legible. Also, plaintiff must be 3 more clear as to his allegations, and not be repetitive. 4 Plaintiff must demonstrate how the conditions complained of have resulted in a 5 deprivation of plaintiff's constitutional rights. See *Ellis v. Cassidy*, 625 F.2d 227 (9th Cir. 1980). 6 Also, in his amended complaint, plaintiff must allege in specific terms how each named defendant 7 is involved. There can be no liability under

42 U.S.C. § 1983 unless there is some affirmative link or connection between a defendant's actions and the claimed deprivation. *Rizzo v. Goode*, 9 423 U.S. 362 (1976). Furthermore, vague and conclusory allegations of official participation in 10 civil rights violations are not sufficient. *Ivey v. Board of Regents*, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 11 1982). 12 Plaintiff asserts, among other things, a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act 13 (ADA). Plaintiff is informed that Title II ADA "prohibit[s] discrimination on the basis of 14 disability," *Lovell v. Chandler*, 303 F.3d 1039, 1052 (9th Cir. 2002), and applies to inmates 15 within state prisons. *Pennsylvania Dept. of Corrections v. Yeskey*, 524 U.S. 206, 208 (1998). 16 "To establish a violation of Title II of the ADA, a plaintiff must show that (1) [he] is a qualified 17 individual with a disability; (2) [he] was excluded from participation in or otherwise 18 discriminated against with regard to a public entity's services, programs, or activities; and (3) 19 such exclusion or discrimination was by reason of [his] disability." *Lovell*, 303 F.3d at 1052. 20 "To recover monetary damages under Title II of the ADA, a plaintiff must prove intentional 21 discrimination on the part of the defendant," and the standard for intentional discrimination is 22 deliberate indifference. *Duvall v. County of Kitsap*, 260 F.3d 1124, 1138 (9th Cir. 2001). 23 Finally, plaintiff is informed that the court cannot refer to a prior pleading in order to 24 make plaintiff's amended complaint complete. Local Rule 220 requires that an amended 25 complaint be complete in itself without reference to any prior pleading. This is because, as a 26 general rule, an amended complaint supersedes the original complaint. See *Loux v. Rhay*, 375 27 F.2d 55, 57 (9th Cir. 1967). Once plaintiff files an amended complaint, the original pleading no 28 // 1 | longer serves any function in the case. Therefore, in an amended complaint, as in an original 2 | complaint, each claim and the involvement of each defendant must be sufficiently alleged. 3 In accordance with the above, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that: 4 1. Plaintiff's request for leave to proceed in forma pauperis (ECF No. 2) is granted. 5 2. Plaintiff is obligated to pay the statutory filing fee of \$350.00 for this action. All fees 6 | shall be collected and paid in accordance with this court's order to the Director of the California 7 | Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation filed concurrently herewith. 8 3. Plaintiff's complaint is dismissed. 9 4. Plaintiff is granted thirty days from the date of service of this order to file an amended 10 | complaint that complies with the requirements of the Civil Rights Act, the Federal Rules of Civil 11 | Procedure, and the Local Rules of Practice. The amended complaint must bear the docket 12 | number assigned this case and must be labeled "Amended Complaint." Failure to file an 13 | amended complaint in accordance with this order will result in a recommendation that this action 14 | be dismissed. 15 | Dated: March 3, 2023 / ae

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16 CAROLYN K DELANEY

17 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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