

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA

Joseph Mark v. James Masteller, et al.

No. 8:25CV745 · No. 8:25CV745 · Decided January 20, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Nebraska grants Joseph Mark’s motion to proceed in forma pauperis in his prisoner civil action. The order requires payment of a \$4.62 initial partial filing fee and monthly installments under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b), and directs the Clerk to establish a payment deadline and conduct subsequent screening of the claims.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Nebraska
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John M. Gerrard
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Nebraska
DECIDED	January 20, 2026
DOCKET	8:25CV745
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Prisoner civil rights action; initial review of IFP motion and assessment of filing fees under 28 U.S.C. § 1915.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- prisoners rights
- civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- prisoners' rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether plaintiff is entitled to proceed in forma pauperis
- What initial partial filing fee must be paid under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1)
- Whether the Court should grant IFP and set fee payment schedule

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed IFP is granted.
2. Plaintiff must pay an initial partial filing fee of \$4.62 within 30 days.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The Prison Litigation Reform Act 'makes prisoners responsible for their filing fees the moment the prisoner brings a civil action or files an appeal.'"

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff Joseph Mark, a prisoner, filed a civil rights action against multiple defendants including state judges, a county attorney, the Nebraska Attorney General, and prison officials. He filed a motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis. The Court reviewed his prison trust account information to assess filing fees.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff Joseph Mark, a prisoner, filed a complaint and a motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis (IFP). The Court granted IFP status, assessed an initial partial filing fee, and set a schedule for fee payments.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- In re Tyler, 110 F.3d 528 (8th Cir. 1997)
- Jackson v. N.P. Dodge Realty Co., 173 F. Supp. 2d 951 (D. Neb. 2001)

OPINION

Mark

PER CURIAM.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA

JOSEPH MARK,

Plaintiff, 8:25CV745 vs.

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

JAMES MASTELLER, District Court Judge of the Fourth Nebraska Judicial district, Douglas County, Nebraska; ANTHONY CLOWE, County Attorney, Douglas County Nebraska; THE UNNAMED APPEALS COURT

JUDGE, Nebraska Appellate Court, responsible for the summary dismissal of Nebraska Appellate Court Case A-

23-247; RICK " RICKY &Q

SCHREINER, District Court Judge of the First Nebraska Judicial district, Johnson/Gage Counties,

Nebraska;

THE UNNAMED APPEALS COURT

JUDGE, NEBRASKA APPELLATE

COURT, responsible for the summary judgment of Nebraska Appellate court case A-24-346; MIKE HILGERS, Attorney General of The State of Nebraska; ELIZABETH ARTERBERRY, Director of Mental Health Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (" NDCS "); LESLIE CAVANAUGH, Trial Counsel, of the Douglas County Nebraska Public Defender's Office; and MOLLY KEANE, Trial prosecutor; formerly of the Douglas County Prosecutor's Office, and who is now a District Court Judge in the 4th Nebraska Judicial District; Defendants. This matter is before the Court on Plaintiff's Motion for Leave to Proceed in Forma Pauperis ("IFP"). Filing No. 7. The Court has received a copy of Plaintiff's trust account information. Filing No. 3. Plaintiff is permitted to proceed IFP. Prisoner plaintiffs are required to pay the full amount of the Court's \$350.00 filing fee by making monthly payments to the Court, even if the prisoner is proceeding IFP. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b). The Prison Litigation Reform Act "makes prisoners responsible for their filing fees the moment the prisoner brings a civil action or files an appeal." In re Tyler, 110 F.3d 528, 529–30 (8th Cir. 1997); Jackson v. N.P. Dodge Realty Co., 173 F. Supp. 2d 951 (D. Neb. 2001). Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1), Plaintiff must pay an initial partial filing fee in the amount of 20 percent of the greater of Plaintiff's average monthly account balance or average monthly deposits for the six months preceding the filing of the Complaint. Here, the Court finds the initial partial filing fee is \$4.62, based on average monthly deposits in the amount of \$23.10. Plaintiff must pay this initial partial filing fee within 30 days or his case will be subject to dismissal. Plaintiff may request an extension of time if one is needed. In addition to the initial partial filing fee, Plaintiff must "make monthly payments of 20 percent of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's account." 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The statute places the burden on the prisoner's institution to collect the additional monthly payments and forward them to the Court as follows: After payment of the initial partial filing fee, the prisoner shall be required to make monthly payments of 20 percent of the preceding 2 month's income credited to the prisoner's account. The agency having custody of the prisoner shall forward payments from the prisoner's account to the clerk of the court each time the amount in the account exceeds \$10 until the filing fees are paid. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). Therefore, after payment in full of the initial partial filing fee, Plaintiff's institution must collect the remaining installments of the filing fee and forward the payments to the Court. Plaintiff is advised he will remain responsible for the entire filing fee, as long as he is a prisoner, even if the case is dismissed at some later time. See In re Tyler, 110 F.3d at 529–30; Jackson, 173 F. Supp. 2d at 951. IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

1. Plaintiff's Motion for Leave to Proceed IFP, Filing No. 7, is granted.

2. Plaintiff must pay an initial partial filing fee of \$4.62 within 30

days unless the Court extends the time in which he has to pay in response to a written motion.

3. After payment of the initial partial filing fee, Plaintiff's institution must collect the additional monthly payments in the manner set forth in 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2), quoted above, and forward those payments to the Court.

4. The Clerk's office is directed to send a copy of this order to the appropriate official at Plaintiff's institution.

5. The Clerk's office is directed to set a pro se case management deadline in this case using the following text: February 19, 2026: initial partial filing fee payment due. 3

6. Plaintiff is advised that, following payment of the initial partial filing fee, the next step in Plaintiffs case will be for the Court to conduct an initial review of Plaintiffs claims to determine whether summary dismissal is appropriate under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). The Court will conduct this initial review in its normal course of business. Dated this 20th day of January, 2026. BY THE COURT: J M. Gerrard Senior United States District Judge