



RECOMMENDED FIRST STEPS IN YOUR HOUSING CONDITIONS CASE

- Please carefully review the introduction e-mail sent by your CLC mentor. This will have individualized recommendations for next steps in your case.
- Review the case records provided by CLC.
- Contact the client by phone to set up an initial meeting (in lieu of or in addition to sending a letter or email). (Keep in mind that you may need to call more than once. Sometimes clients' phones are unable to accept messages or are temporarily disconnected.) If you are unable to reach the client within two weeks, please let CLC know. We may be able to assist you.
- During your first client meeting, we suggest that you ask the client about any recent developments in the case (e.g., recent court filings, correspondence from other parties (i.e. the landlord) or the Court).
- If the client has already filed a complaint:
 - Enter your praecipe of appearance promptly.
 - Assess whether it is necessary to file a motion to amend your client's pro se complaint.
- If the client has not filed any pleadings:
 - You may initiate the case by filing a housing conditions complaint.
 - Think strategically about the timing of your filing. For example, sometimes you may wish to secure documentary evidence and/or expert reports prior to filing. Your CLC mentor is happy to discuss case strategy with you at any time.
- In either case, before filing, determine whether your client has filed for and been approved for In Forma Pauperis (IFP) status from DC Superior Court's Judge in Chambers. IFP status waives court filing fees. If your client has not obtained IFP status, determine whether s/he is eligible. If so, you may wish to file a motion for IFP status along with the initial complaint or next filing. ([CLC's model pleadings page](#) has a sample motion for IFP status.)

- As the case proceeds, CLC's training resources for pro bono attorneys and mentors can provide you any assistance you need.
- When it comes time for case closure, please be sure provide your client with a copy of the final order issued.
- Please let a CLC mentor know if a notice of appeal is filed by any party (including you). CLC may be available to assist with appellate strategy.
- Please notify CLC when your case closes by completing our short case closure form, available on CLC's pro bono page.

REMINDER: eFiling is mandatory in the Civil Division of DC Superior Court. However, all initial filings must be filed in the Civil Division clerk's office. There is information on the eFiling requirements and procedures on the [Civil Division's website](#). If you have an active case, in order to receive orders and participate in eFiling you must **REGISTER** with the CaseFileXpress system. A few additional reminders: (1) if a party is not required to and not participating in eFiling (e.g. pro se litigants) you must serve that party traditionally by paper; (2) filing and eFiling fees are waived for parties with in forma pauperis (IFP) status by using the "dccourtapprovedifp" code; and (3) pro bono attorneys who are not DC-barred and are practicing under Rule 49 should use "999999" in place of the required bar number. If you are new to eFiling, we strongly suggest that you access the [CaseFileXpress training materials](#). The eFiling Support Team is available to assist you by phone at 877-433-4533, by email at info@casefilexpress.com, or by live [chat](#) online.