Arizona Small Claims Filing Checklist (November 2026)

From the limit to collecting a judgment

A.R.S. means the Arizona Revised Statutes. Rule means the Arizona Rules of Small Claims Procedure. Guide: clearlegaltips.com/arizona-small-claims-court/

1. CHECK YOUR CLAIM

[ ] My claim does not exceed $5,000, exclusive of interest and costs, and is not one of the nine excluded kinds (A.R.S. § 22-503).

Amount I am claiming ($): _____

2. PICK THE PRECINCT AND THE PARTIES

[ ] I will file in the justice court precinct where the defendant resides or as A.R.S. § 22-202 permits (Rule 4(a)).

Precinct or court I am filing in: _____

Defendant's name and address: _____

[ ] No attorney will take part unless the parties stipulate by written agreement at any time before the hearing (A.R.S. § 22-512(D)). Rule 1(c) says all the parties must agree in writing. A business files a notice naming who will appear for it (Rule 1(c)).

3. CHECK THE DEADLINE TO SUE

Date my claim arose: _____

Written contract executed in Arizona or credit card: six years (A.R.S. § 12-548(A)). Debt not in a written contract: three years (A.R.S. § 12-543). Sale of goods: four years (A.R.S. § 47-2725(A)).

4. FORMS AND FEE

Fee sources differ: Maricopa $58.00 and $46.00 (16 Nov. 2026); Judicial Branch $30.00 and $18.00; A.R.S. § 22-281(A) $25.00 and $15.00. I will check my court.

Fee my court quoted ($): _____

[ ] If I cannot pay, I will ask the court to defer or waive the fee under A.R.S. § 12-302 and Arizona Code of Judicial Administration § 5-206 (Rule 4(b)(3)).

5. SERVICE

[ ] I will serve the defendant by registered or certified mail with a return receipt requested, or by a constable, sheriff or private process server (Rule 5(b)).

Last day for proof of service (45 days after filing; Rule 5(a)): _____

6. ANSWER, TRANSFER AND HEARING

Last day for the defendant's answer (20 days from service; A.R.S. § 22-514): _____

Hearing date (set within 60 days of the answer; A.R.S. § 22-515(A)): _____

Last day to ask for transfer to the regular justice court (at least ten days before the hearing under A.R.S. § 22-504(A); no later than 10 business days before under Rule 11(a); use the earlier date): _____

7. AT AND AFTER THE HEARING

[ ] I will bring my witnesses and documents. Formal rules of evidence do not apply (Rule 12(e)). A phone request is due in writing at least 15 days before the hearing (Rule 12(d)).

[ ] All parties must appear (Rule 8). A party who does not appear risks an appropriate judgment (A.R.S. § 22-515(B)).

Judgment date (rendered no later than ten days from the close of the trial; A.R.S. § 22-520(A)): _____

[ ] There is no appeal (A.R.S. § 22-519). A motion to vacate is allowed (A.R.S. § 22-505(B)); for mistake or fraud it is due no more than 6 months after judgment (Rule 16(b)).

8. IF I WON AND THE DEFENDANT DOES NOT PAY

[ ] The judgment is due immediately (A.R.S. § 22-520(D)). I can ask for a debtor's examination (A.R.S. § 22-524).

[ ] I can ask for reimbursement of court costs, which include filing and service fees (Maricopa County Justice Courts). A general statute says the successful party recovers costs unless otherwise provided by law (A.R.S. § 12-341). I will ask the clerk what my judgment lists.

[ ] A writ of execution is returnable in sixty days (A.R.S. § 22-244). A writ of garnishment issues on an application and bond (A.R.S. § 12-1571(A)).

[ ] For wages I know the limit: ten percent of weekly disposable earnings or the excess over sixty times the minimum hourly wage, whichever is less (A.R.S. § 33-1131(B)).

[ ] A total of $5,000 in a single bank account is exempt, adjusted each 1 January; I will ask the clerk for the current amount (A.R.S. § 33-1126(A)(9)).

[ ] For a lien on real property I will record a certified copy with the county recorder (A.R.S. § 33-961(A)). The lien lasts ten years (A.R.S. § 33-964(A)).

Date I filed satisfaction after being paid in full (within thirty days; A.R.S. § 22-525(A)): _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

This checklist is general information, not legal advice. Fees vary by court. Check the statutes and the rules and ask the clerk before you rely on a deadline.