Georgia Magistrate Court Filing Checklist (2026)

From the claim limit to collecting a judgment

O.C.G.A. means the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. UMCR means the Uniform Magistrate Court Rules. Guide: clearlegaltips.com/georgia-small-claims-court/ Check each box as you finish the step and fill in the blanks as you go.

1. CHECK YOUR CLAIM

[ ] My claim is a civil claim in which exclusive jurisdiction is not vested in the superior court, and the amount demanded or value of the property claimed is $15,000 or less. For actions filed on or after January 1, 2027 the limit is $25,000 (O.C.G.A. 15-10-2(a)(5), HB 999).

Amount I am claiming ($): _____

[ ] My case is a money claim, not an eviction (dispossessory) case (O.C.G.A. 15-10-2(a)(6)).

2. PICK THE COUNTY AND THE PARTIES

[ ] I will file in the county where the defendant lives. For a corporation I checked its registered office and the other venue rules in O.C.G.A. 14-2-510(b).

County I am filing in: _____

Defendant's full name: _____

Defendant's last known address: _____

3. CHECK THE DEADLINE

Date my claim arose: _____

Written contracts: six years (O.C.G.A. 9-3-24). Open accounts and implied promises: four years (9-3-25). Sale of goods: four years (11-2-725). Injury to personal property: four years (9-3-31). Injury to the person: two years (9-3-33).

4. STATEMENT OF CLAIM

[ ] My statement of claim has the defendant's last known address, a brief statement of each claim, and my address for the notice of hearing. I will sign and verify it by oath or affirmation (O.C.G.A. 15-10-43(a)).

Address for my notice of hearing: _____

5. FEES AND SERVICE

Filing total from my county clerk ($): _____

Service cost per defendant ($): _____

[ ] I asked the clerk about an electronic filing transaction fee and about an affidavit of indigence if I cannot pay costs (O.C.G.A. 15-10-53(k), 9-15-2).

6. SERVICE AND THE ANSWER

Date the defendant was served: _____

Answer due date (30 days after service, counted from the next day): _____

[ ] Proof of service is filed. A private server files an affidavit showing the time and place (O.C.G.A. 15-10-43(b)). If the last day is a weekend or legal holiday, the next regular business day counts (UMCR 33).

7. HEARING OR DEFAULT

Hearing date on my notice (15 to 30 days after the notice date): _____

[ ] I will bring witnesses, books, receipts or other writings, and I asked the court at once to summon any witness I need (O.C.G.A. 15-10-48).

[ ] If there is no answer, the defendant has 15 days from default to open it. After that I can ask for a default judgment with the UMCR 43.1 certificate and a military affidavit if required.

8. AFTER JUDGMENT

Judgment date: _____

Last day for a petition for review (30 days after the judgment is filed or recorded): _____

[ ] I asked the magistrate court clerk for a writ of fieri facias (fi. fa.) and paid the fee. The clerk sends it to the superior court clerk for the general execution docket (O.C.G.A. 15-10-80(c), 15-10-47(b)).

9. COLLECTING

[ ] I considered post-judgment interrogatories (the debtor has 30 days to answer under oath), garnishment within O.C.G.A. 18-4-5 limits, and the judgment interest rate (O.C.G.A. 15-10-50, 18-4-5, 7-4-12).

Date to renew before the judgment goes dormant (seven years, O.C.G.A. 9-12-60): _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

This checklist is general information, not legal advice. The magistrate court limit changes on January 1, 2027 and county fees change, so check your clerk. Read the guide at clearlegaltips.com/georgia-small-claims-court/ for the details.