New York Small Claims Filing Checklist (2026)

From picking the court to the hearing notice

Work through these steps in order. CCA means the New York City Civil Court Act. Guide: clearlegaltips.com/new-york-small-claims-court/

1. PICK THE COURT AND CHECK THE LIMIT

[ ] My claim is for money only, not interest or costs (limit: $10,000 New York City, $5,000 city and district courts, $3,000 town and village courts).

Amount I am claiming ($): _____

Court I am filing in: _____

[ ] The defendant lives, has a business office or has a regular job in that court's area (in New York City and city courts, a tenant claim can use the property's location).

2. CHECK WHO CAN SUE

[ ] I am an individual aged 18 or older (or a parent or guardian is suing for me). Corporations, partnerships and associations use commercial claims; if you are an assignee, ask the clerk.

[ ] If the claim is about a car, I am the registered owner.

3. ASK FOR PAYMENT IN WRITING

Date I sent my written demand: _____

How I sent it, and my proof of delivery: _____

4. GET THE DEFENDANT'S DETAILS RIGHT

Defendant's exact legal name: _____

Defendant's street address (no P.O. box): _____

[ ] For a business, I looked up its certificate of doing business at the County Clerk's office in the county where it is located.

5. FILE THE STATEMENT OF CLAIM

[ ] I use one form for one defendant (a form lists one claimant and one defendant).

[ ] I know whether I am filing in person or by mail (the court system does not provide electronic filing for small claims).

Fee I will pay ($): _____

Statutory fee: $15 for a claim of $1,000 or less and $20 for a larger one in New York City, city and district courts; $10 and $15 in town and village courts. Ask the clerk to confirm the current amount and the mailing cost.

[ ] If I file by mail, I am sending a bank check, teller's check, certified check, attorney's check or money order payable to "CLERK, CIVIL COURT" (no personal or company checks).

6. THE NOTICE AND THE CLOCK

[ ] The clerk sends the notice by first-class and certified mail. I may not serve the notice myself.

Date I filed: _____

Four months after filing (New York City: claim is dismissed if notice is not served by then): _____

Hearing date and time the clerk gave me: _____

New York City hearings are usually held at 6:30 p.m. Seniors, people with a disability and people who work evenings can ask for a daytime hearing and must show proof.

7. BUSINESSES: COMMERCIAL CLAIM CHECK

[ ] My business is a corporation, partnership or association with its principal office in New York State.

[ ] I have started no more than five commercial claims this calendar month, counting this one.

[ ] For a consumer transaction, I mailed a demand letter no less than 10 and no more than 180 days before filing.

Commercial claim fee ($25 plus mailing costs): _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

This worksheet is general information, not legal advice. Check amounts and deadlines with your court clerk before you act. Full guide: clearlegaltips.com/new-york-small-claims-court/