



GUIDE & FILE PROCESS GUIDE

BUSINESS ANALYSIS & PROCESS MANAGEMENT



Guide & File Process Guide

Version: August 26, 2026

Disclaimer

This Process Guide is a high-level overview of Guide & File functionality and is not meant to define all workflows, procedures, and processes that can occur for each interview.



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About the North Carolina Judicial Branch

The mission of the North Carolina Judicial Branch is to protect and preserve the rights and liberties of all the people as guaranteed by the Constitutions and laws of the United States and North Carolina by providing a fair, independent, and accessible forum for the just, timely, and economical resolution of their legal affairs.

About the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts

The mission of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts is to provide services to help North Carolina's unified court system operate more efficiently and effectively, taking into account each courthouse's diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources.



GUIDE & FILE PROCESS GUIDE

Topics

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Overview

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) provides electronic filing capabilities, also referred to as e-filing. All initial and subsequent filings will either use Guide & File (OGF) or File & Serve (OFS) depending on the filing. This document details the process of using Guide & File.

High Level Processes

Filing attorneys and self-represented litigants can use Guide & File (OGF) or File & Serve (OFS) to e-file. For some filings, Guide & File presents the filer with a series of questions, and based on the responses provided, automatically generates forms that can be e-filed seamlessly since OGF is integrated with OFS. Filers have the option to use OGF as an anonymous user or a registered user.

eFiling vs. Guide & Print

Some interviews indicate **(eFiling Option Available)** – this means the filer can choose whether to file their forms electronically or print them out and file the paper version with the court (referred to as Guide & Print or OGP). Some interviews indicate **(eFiling Required)** – this means the forms generated by the interview **must** be filed electronically. If neither of these is indicated, the only option for that interview is Guide & Print.

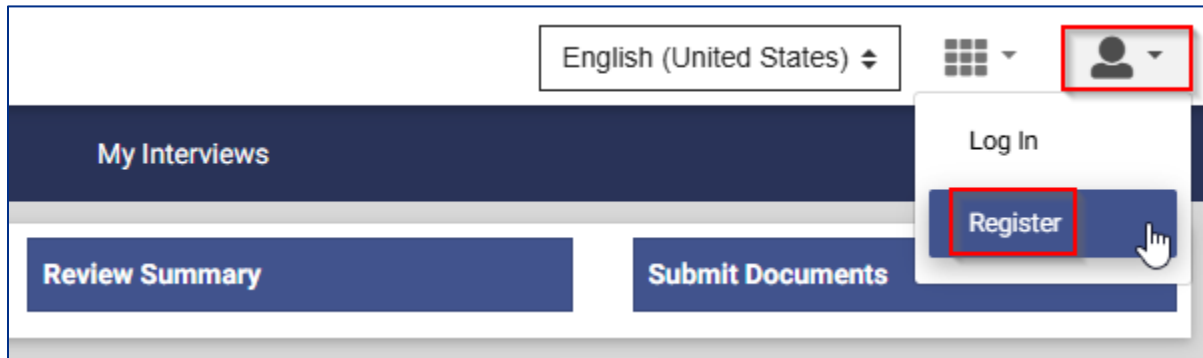
Please select the type of filing you would like to complete.
Absolute Divorce (eFiling Option Available)
Adult Name Change
Appeal To District Court From Small Claims Court Judgment In Summary Ejectment
Application for Certificate of Verification of Prior Expunction
Complaint In Summary Ejectment (eFiling Option Available)
Domestic Violence Protective Order (eFiling Option Available)
Motion to Claim Exempt Property (eFiling Option Available)
Online Request For Dismissal Or Speeding Reduction Of A Traffic Citation (eFiling Required)
Petition to Proceed As An Indigent (eFiling Option Available)
Probate: Petition for Summary Administration with or without a will
Request For Relief From Fines, Fees And Other Monetary Obligations, And Order On Request
Small Claims Complaint (eFiling Option Available)
Summary Ejectment Answer And Counterclaims (eFiling Option Available)



Account Registration

A registered account is **required** to file electronically. Registering an account allows the user to save their interview answers and return later to finish the interview, if needed.

To create an account, click the **person** icon at the top right corner of the screen. Then click **Register**.



Enter the filer's information, check the box indicating acceptance of the terms and conditions, and click **Register**.

This screenshot shows the 'Registration Form' page. The form is divided into several sections for data entry. The top section contains fields for 'First Name', 'Middle', and 'Last Name', with 'Example' and 'Filer' as placeholders. Below this are fields for 'Email address' (example@example.com) and 'Confirm email'. The next row has 'Password' (masked with dots) and 'Confirm password'. The 'Phone Number' field contains '555-555-5555'. The 'Country' dropdown menu is set to 'United States'. The 'Street Address' is split into 'Line 1' (123 Fake St) and 'Line 2'. The 'City' is 'Anytown', 'State' is 'North Carolina', and 'Zip Code' is '12345'. The 'Password Question' is 'What is your favorite pet?' and the 'Password Answer' is masked with dots. At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled 'I have reviewed and accept the terms and conditions.' which is checked. Below the checkbox are 'BACK' and 'LOGIN' buttons, and a red 'REGISTER' button. On the right side of the form, there is a 'LINKS' section with icons and text for 'Find My Court Date', 'Find My Courthouse', 'Find An Attorney', 'Explore Services', 'Going To Court', and 'Need an Interpreter?'. Below the links is a 'CONNECT WITH US' section with social media icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube.

Completing an Interview

Select the interview to be completed. If the interview has multiple sections, this will be indicated by an **Interview Menu**. Click **Start** to begin the interview. If the interview does not have multiple sections, it will go to the start page automatically.

The screenshot shows the 'Interview Menu' page for the North Carolina Judicial Branch. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Interview Menu', 'Home', 'Start a Filing', and 'My Interviews'. Below this is a sub-navigation bar with 'Select Interview', 'Complete Interview', 'Review Summary', and 'Submit Documents'. The main content area is titled 'Interview Menu' and states: 'You must complete ALL sections of this interview listed below.' It explains that the filing requires multiple interviews to be completed in order, and users can return to any interview by clicking 'Completed'. Two interviews are listed: 'Absolute Divorce - Part 1' with a red 'START' button, and 'Petition To Proceed As An Indigent - Part 2' with a 'PENDING' button. An 'EXIT' button is at the bottom left. On the right, a sidebar titled 'You can also...' offers 'SAVE YOUR WORK. SIGN UP' and 'ALREADY SIGNED UP? LOG IN'. The footer includes the North Carolina Judicial Branch logo and links for 'Guide & File FAQs', 'Guide & File Support', and 'Help Topics'.

The start page summarizes what the interview is for.

Absolute Divorce

You can use this interview if you want to file a simple divorce in North Carolina.

How the Interview Works

We will ask you questions. Please answer ALL questions.

We will use your answers to fill out the court forms you need to file a *Complaint for Absolute Divorce*.

Warning! When you finalize an absolute divorce, you are saying that you will not make any future claims for spousal support, alimony, or a different distribution of property, assets, and debts.

Completing a divorce can also affect your rights to:

- Social Security benefits, and
- Claims on your spouse's estate if your spouse dies.

Questions?

If you are not sure about using this interview for your case, talk to a lawyer before completing the interview.



Each interview includes a page of **Disclaimers**. Read this page carefully as it contains important information. Use the buttons and dropdown menu at the bottom to navigate through the interview. Each page, as it is accessed, becomes available in the dropdown menu for quick navigation. Any interview questions with a red asterisk are required.

Disclaimers

★ = required field

Use this interview at your own risk!
This Interview is designed to help you. Because you do not have a lawyer, it is *your* job to make sure the forms and information you file with the Court are correct and complete.

Follow these steps:

- Read the Interview and the questions carefully.
- Also read all information marked .
- Give complete and truthful answers.
- Review the final documents that the Interview prints for your case.
- Make sure everything on your documents is correct before you file them with the Court.

 If you have **questions** about your case or need **legal advice**, talk to a **lawyer**.

To find a lawyer:

- Call the North Carolina Lawyer Referral Service: 1-800-662-7660
-  Check the internet for lawyers in your area.
- If you cannot afford a lawyer, you may qualify for advice or help from a nonprofit legal aid organization. Find out more at: ncequaljusticealliance.org.

Only Lawyers Can Explain Your Legal Rights
This Interview is Legal Information – Not Legal Advice.
This Interview cannot tell you if or what you should file.
The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts, Clerk of Superior Court's office, or a Judge's office can *only* provide legal information.
For advice about your particular case, talk to a lawyer.

Acknowledgement *

☐ I have read and understand the important information above and want to continue with this Interview.

**This question is mandatory.*

Interview Menu

Go to Disclaimers ▼

Previous

Next

Each interview also includes a page of instructions to follow before starting the interview, including a link to a printable list of needed items.

Before You Start the Interview...

Follow these instructions:

- **Register for an account before you start!** You will not be able to electronically file this interview if you don't have an account.

To create an account, click the person icon  at the top right corner of the screen. Then click Register.

If you sign up for an account...

- You can now electronically file in certain counties. Click [here](#) to see the list.
- Your answers will be saved; and
- You can return later to finish or correct your answers.

- It works best to use **Google Chrome** for the Interview. If you are not using Chrome now, consider switching to Chrome before you start.
- Set aside **1 hour** or more to complete the Interview.
- The answers you give will go on your final court forms exactly as you enter them. There is no spell check or grammar correction done.
- Answer all questions in **English**.
- You will need certain information to answer the questions. See the list below or click [here](#) for a list you can print.



Proceed through the interview pages, answering all questions truthfully and accurately. Field types can include free text, dropdown menus, radio buttons, and checkboxes. Enter the data or select the appropriate option(s).

Your Name

First * Middle Last * Suffix

Fake Fakerson Jr

Street Address or P.O. Box

Line 1 *

123 Notreal Avenue

Line 2

City * State * Zip Code *

Anytown NC 12345

County *

Yancey

Click any “i” icon to get a pop-up with **Question Help** for that question.

When did you move to North Carolina? * 

08/01/2007

Phone Number

111-111-1111

Cell Phone Number

111-111-1111

Email

Question Help

When did you move to NC?

If you were born in North Carolina and have lived here ever since birth, then use your birth date. If you have lived in North Carolina many years immediately prior to your filing for a divorce, estimate the date as best as you can.

Go to



If the interview has multiple sections, the page will inform the user when one section is complete. Click **Proceed** to go back to the Interview Menu.

Interview Section Complete

This concludes the questions about your Small Claims Complaint Interview.

Click Proceed to begin the second part of this interview.

Interview Menu

 Go to

End Page

Previous

Proceed

The Interview Menu will now allow the user to click **Start** on the second interview section. Complete the second interview section in the same manner as the first section.

Interview Menu

You must complete **ALL** sections of this interview listed below.

This filing requires multiple interviews.

Complete the interviews in the order they are listed from top to bottom.

You may return to an interview at any time by clicking **COMPLETED**.

Select **START** below to begin the next interview.

Small Claims Complaint - Part 1

COMPLETED

Petition to Proceed as an Indigent - Part 2

START



Some interviews will give the option to file electronically. Other interviews will not provide a choice.

Electronic Filing ★ = required field

North Carolina allows you to electronically file with the court. If you do not have a lawyer, you may choose to file your papers in person at the courthouse.

To file electronically, you will need the following:

- **Guide & File User Account.** You can make a Guide & File Account on this website by clicking **SAVE YOUR WORK** to the right side of your screen.
- **Working email address** to receive filing notifications and for the court to communicate with you.

Would you like to submit your Small Claims filing electronically? ★

☐ Yes ☐ No

Interview Menu

 Go to

Electronic Filing ▼

Previous

Next

To file electronically, an **Electronic Signature and Unsworn Declaration** are needed. Check any required boxes and add the electronic signature.

Electronic Signature and Unsworn Declaration ★ = required field

You have finished all the questions in this interview.

Your answers from the first part of the interview will be used to fill in the Small Claims Complaint form.

AND

Your answers from the second part of the interview, if you requested a fee waiver, will be used to fill in the Petition to Proceed As An Indigent form. This form needs your Declaration under the Penalty of Perjury, so you can e-file.

Your form(s) will now be electronically signed.

Important! If you need to change your answers, you can click **Previous** below or **Go to the page**.

Small Claims Complaint

By signing below, you agree to the following: ★

- ☒ I agree that the information provided in this interview is true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.
- ☒ I understand that persons who make false filings can be subject to legal penalties or sanctions and, depending on the situation, may be charged with a crime.
- ☒ I understand my e-signature will be applied on my complaint and other documents in this filing.
- ☒ I agree to review my forms carefully to make sure that the information on them is true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Fake Fakerson, Jr.

 ★

The current date, 08/25/2026, will be used for the signing date.



Each interview will generate a **Next Steps** document explaining what should happen after the filing is submitted. The Next Steps can differ depending on whether the documents will be e-filed or not.

Next Steps

At the end of the interview, you will get the "Next Steps" form.

- The "Next Steps" explains what to do after you file and how to serve other parties.
- It will be in the list of forms you see after you click Proceed on the last page.

Save or print the **NEXT STEPS** form. There are important deadlines and may be other forms you need for service and to complete your Small Claims case.

Click **Next** to continue.

Each interview also includes a **Survey** at the end. Survey responses are appreciated, but completion of the survey is not required. Enter responses to the survey and then click **Save Survey** before clicking **Next**. Or, simply click **Next** to proceed without responding to the survey.

Survey

North Carolina Guide & File Survey

Your answers will help improve the interview process.

Your answers are completely anonymous and cannot be associated with your name or case.

1. Which interview did you use? *

2. Are you a first time user? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

To proceed, please click **Save Survey** on your survey before clicking **Next** below.

Interview Menu

Go to

Survey



Previous

Next



Once the interview is completed, click **Proceed** to review the forms.

Interview Complete

You finished the Interview!

Your answers from this interview were used to fill in the forms.

If you are eFiling, review your forms on the next page before you file them with the court. If anything is incorrect, click Return to Interview to make changes.

If you are filing in person or by mail, review and then print or save your forms on the next page. If anything is incorrect, click Return to Interview to make changes.

Click Proceed below to review your forms.

Interview Menu

Go to

End Page

Previous

Proceed

Review Summary Screen

The **Review Summary** screen gives important information on how to proceed. Carefully read everything on this page. The first part of the screen gives general instructions that are applicable to all interviews.

1. REVIEW YOUR DOCUMENTS

Select "View" in the dropdown menu next to each form. Make sure each form is correct and complete.

- If you see anything that you need to change, use the "Return to Interview" button to go back and change your answers.

2. IF FILING IN-PERSON or BY MAIL:

Once you review your documents in Step 1 above:

- Print or download all documents now.
- Read your "Next Steps" for more information about how to file.

3. IF FILING ELECTRONICALLY:

Once you review your documents in Step 1 above:

- Print or download your "Next Steps" document now.
- Print or download any document below with "DOWNLOAD/PRINT NOW" in its name.
- Complete the steps to file electronically.
- Read your "Next Steps" for more information about your next steps, including service.
 - You will need to "serve" your file-stamped court papers on the other party.

4. PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

When you are finished, remember to SIGN OUT of your account and close your browser window before leaving your computer. If you are on a shared computer and you downloaded any forms you don't want other people to see, make sure to hide or delete the files.

Please review the summary information below. If you wish to change any information, select return to interview.



The second part of the **Review Summary** screen lists the **Party Information** that was entered in the interview.

Party Information	
Name	Party Type
Fake Fakerson Jr	Plaintiff
False Namerson	Defendant

The third part of the **Review Summary** screen lists the **Documents** that the interview generated. Review each document by selecting either **View** or **Download** from the dropdown next to it. A check mark will appear next to each document after it has been reviewed. **View** will open the document in the user's default PDF viewer for their device or browser. **Download** will download a copy of the document to the device's local storage. All documents must be reviewed before they can be e-filed.

Documents		
Document Name	Actions	Reviewed
Complaint for Money Owed (AOC-CVM-200)	Select...	✓
Magistrate Summons (AOC-CVM-100)	Select...	
OGF - Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Declaration (AOC-G-250) Document-DEF 1	View	
Next Steps - Small Claims Money Owed - DOWNLOAD/PRINT NOW	Select...	

If any forms are incorrect, scroll to the bottom of the Review Summary screen and click **Return to Interview** to go back and correct the data. Click **Exit** to cancel the interview submission.

EXIT

RETURN TO INTERVIEW



If a filing fee is associated with the documents being e-filed, the **Fees** section of the **Review Summary** screen will detail what is owed. Click **Pay Now** to electronically submit the documents and proceed to enter the payment information.

Fees

The following fees will be due if you electronically submit your documents:

Description	Amount
Convenience Fee (Estimated)	\$2.77
Case Initiation Fee	\$96.00
Total Fees:	\$98.77

In order to continue with this electronic filing, a credit card payment must be collected to pay for the required fees for this filing. If you have questions about fees or credit card payments, contact the court.

Once you have reviewed all of the information, click the 'Pay Now' button below to electronically submit your documents:

EXIT

RETURN TO INTERVIEW

PAY NOW

Select from the **dropdown list** of saved payment accounts, create a **reusable account** that will be saved to the dropdown list, or create a **one-time account** that will not be saved to the list. Then click **Continue**.

Choose an option for payment.

Allowed payment types for this location are: MASTERCARD VISA AMEX DISCOVER CHECKING

☒ Use this account

Mastercard Test Account (CC)

☐ Create a new reusable account

☐ Create a new one-time account

RETURN TO INTERVIEW

CONTINUE



If no filing fee applies to the electronic filing, the **Fees** section will show no amount due. Click **Submit Now** to file the documents electronically.

Fees

The following fees will be due if you electronically submit your documents:

Description	Amount
Total Fees:	\$0.00

In order to continue with this electronic filing, a credit card payment must be collected to pay for the required fees for this filing. If you have questions about fees or credit card payments, contact the court.

Once you have reviewed all of the information, click the 'Submit Now' button below to electronically submit your documents:

EXIT

RETURN TO INTERVIEW

SUBMIT NOW

Upon successful electronic filing, the system will provide an **Envelope Number**. Save and reference this Envelope Number when contacting the court with questions about the filing. Click **Print Confirmation** to print a copy of this page.

Your envelope number is 18453.

- Your forms have been sent to the court electronically for review.
- You will get an email confirming that the court got your forms. The email has links to the forms you e-filed. If you don't see the email, check your Junk or Spam email folder.

Next Steps:

- If the court **ACCEPTS** your forms, you will get an email saying your forms were accepted.
- If the court **REJECTS** your forms, you will get an email telling you what is wrong. You can come back to Guide & File to fix your forms and re-send them to the court.
- To learn how to get to your forms again, [click here](#).

If you are using a shared computer or device, log out of this site and close the internet browser to protect your personal information.

EXIT

PRINT CONFIRMATION

