
PACER Case Locator (PCL) User Manual

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Introduction

The PACER Case Locator (PCL) allows PACER users to search for cases in appellate, bankruptcy, and district courts. In December 2017, the PCL was updated with a new look and new features. The following document will guide you through the updated PCL and show you how it works.

Index Page & Login

The index page (at pcl.uscourts.gov) highlights PCL features and updates, provides quick links to other useful sites, and allows you to log in using your PACER credentials.

In the Login box, you must enter a username and password. The Client Code field is optional unless your account requires one. To make this field a requirement, go to Manage My Account on pacer.gov and select Set PACER Billing Preferences.

NOTE: You may also go to Manage My Account after you log in to the PCL. Just click My Account in the navigation bar that appears at the top of the page, and select Manage My Account.

The Quick Links box is available here and on the Welcome page. It provides links to pages and websites you may find helpful in your search.

The screenshot shows the PACER Case Locator website. At the top, the PACER logo is displayed with the tagline "Public Access To Court Electronic Records". Below the logo, the title "PACER Case Locator" is prominently featured. The main content area is divided into several sections: a descriptive paragraph about the PCL, a "PACER Case Locator Features" section with a bulleted list of capabilities, a "PACER Fees and Case Currency" section detailing access costs and waiver policies, and a "Login" section with input fields for Username, Password, and Client Code, along with "Login" and "Clear" buttons. Below the login section, there are links for "Forgot password?", "Forgot username?", and "Need an account?". A disclaimer at the bottom of the login section states that the website is a restricted government site for official PACER use only. At the bottom of the page, a "Quick Links" section provides icons and text for PACER, U.S. Courts, Court Links, PCL Help, PACER FAQ, and Statistics.

Welcome

Upon successful login, unless you have set another page as your PCL home page, you will see the Welcome page.

Use the Quick Searches section to go directly to the type of search you want to perform. The My Recently Run Saved Searches section allows you to view up to 10 of your most recently run saved searches.

Click **more** on the bottom right of this screen to see all your saved searches. You may save up to 100 cases and searches.

NOTE: Older saved searches will appear on this page if they have been run more recently than newer saved searches.

As you navigate the site, you can return to this page by clicking PACER Case Locator at the top of the screen.



This is the default home page. To ensure you come directly to this screen when you log in, select the Make this my PCL home page checkbox on the bottom left.

Navigation Bar

After you log in, the navigation bar at the top of the screen provides several search and account options.



- **New Search:** Allows the user to begin a search by case or party. It includes the following:
 - Case Search
 - Advanced Case Search
 - Party Search
 - Advanced Party Search
 - Bankruptcy Search
- **Saved Items:** Lists searches and cases you have previously saved for later use. It includes the following:
 - Saved Searches
 - Saved Cases
 - Batch Searches
- **Court Information:** Provides a list of court abbreviations and website links.
- **Settings:** Provides the following selections for users:
 - Change Client Code
 - User Options
- **User dropdown:** Allows the user to access account information. It includes the following:
 - Manage My Account
 - Billing History
 - PACER Home
 - Logout

New Search

Case Search page

Perform a case search by using either the basic or advanced option. The basic search allows you to enter a case status, case type, number, title, and/or court type. The advanced option allows you to expand your search by including the court region and/or date range. It also allows you to choose how your search results will appear, using the Sort and Direction dropdowns.

If you do not select a court type, all courts will automatically be included in the search. If you select the appellate, civil, or bankruptcy court types, more fields will appear to help narrow your search.

See the Additional Search Fields by Court Type section below to learn more.

The screenshot shows the 'Case Search' page with the 'Basic Case Search' tab selected. The 'Case Information' section includes a red asterisk and the text '* At least one is required.' and a link to 'Advanced Case Search'. The search criteria are: Court Type (All), Case Number (empty), Case Title (empty), Case Type (empty), and Case Status (All). A 'NOTE' at the bottom states: 'Newly filed cases will typically appear on this system within 24 hours. Check the Court Information page for data that is currently available on the PCL. The most recent data is available directly from the court.' There are 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons and a checkbox for 'Make this my PCL home page.'.

This screenshot shows the 'Case Search' page with a dropdown menu open over the search criteria. The menu options are: Case Search, Advanced Case Search, Party Search, Advanced Party Search, and Bankruptcy Search. The search criteria visible are: Case Number (empty), Case Title (empty), Case Type (empty), Case Status (All), and a 'NOTE' at the bottom: 'Newly filed cases will typically appear on this system within 24 hours. Check the Court Information page for data that is currently available on the PCL. The most recent data is available directly from the court.' There are 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons and a checkbox for 'Make this my PCL home page.'.

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Case Search' page. The 'Case Information' section includes a red asterisk and the text '* At least one is required.' and a link to 'Basic Case Search'. The search criteria are: Court Type (All), Case Number (empty), Case Title (empty), Case Type (empty), Case Status (All), and Region (Region). The 'Date Range' section includes 'Date Filed' and 'Date Closed' with calendar icons and links for 'Prior Month', 'Prior Six Months', and 'Prior Year'. The 'Sort Results' section includes a red asterisk and the text '** Sort Field and Direction must be used together.' and dropdowns for 'Sort Field' and 'Direction'. A 'NOTE' at the bottom states: 'Newly filed cases will typically appear on this system within 24 hours. Check the Court Information page for data that is currently available on the PCL. The most recent data is available directly from the court.' There are 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons and a checkbox for 'Make this my PCL home page.'.

In the advanced search, you may use the Map link next to the Region field to select where you want to search.

After you enter the information, click Search to continue. To change the information you have entered, either highlight the text in the field you want to change or click Clear to start over.

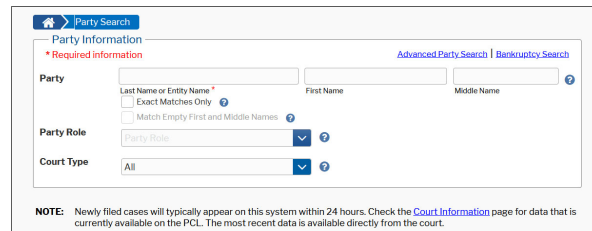
If you use either of these pages often and want to go directly to one of them when you log in, select the Make this my PCL home page checkbox.

Party Search

Perform a party search by using either the basic or advanced options. The basic search allows you to enter the party name, party role, and/or court type. It also includes the Exact Matches Only and the Match Empty First and Middle Names checkboxes.

When you select Exact Matches Only, the Match Empty First and Middle Names checkbox is enabled. Party role codes are created and assigned by individual courts. This dropdown list includes the 30 most common party role codes.

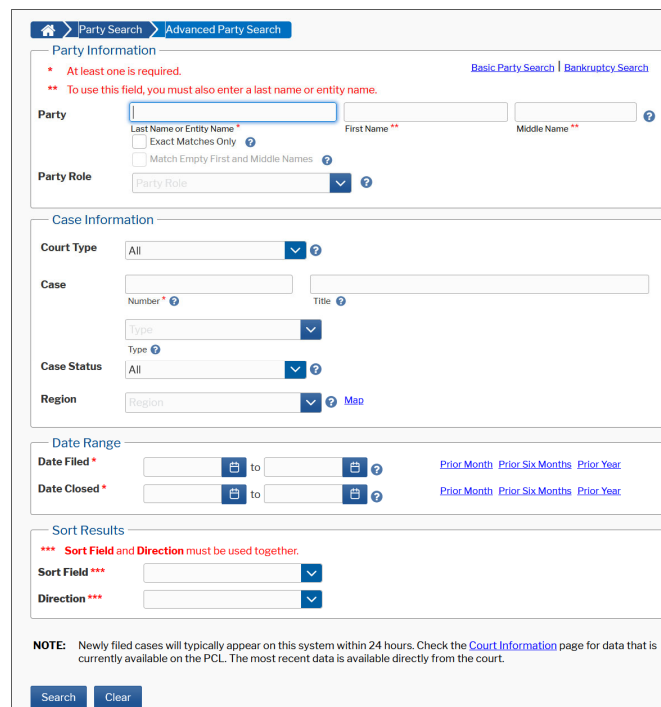
If you do not select a specific court type, the Court Type field will default to all courts.



The screenshot shows the 'Party Search' interface. It includes a 'Party Information' section with a 'Required Information' label. There are three input fields for 'Party': 'Last Name or Entity Name', 'First Name', and 'Middle Name'. Below these are two checkboxes: 'Exact Matches Only' and 'Match Empty First and Middle Names'. There is a 'Party Role' dropdown menu and a 'Court Type' dropdown menu set to 'All'. A note at the bottom states: 'NOTE: Newly filed cases will typically appear on this system within 24 hours. Check the Court Information page for data that is currently available on the PCL. The most recent data is available directly from the court.'

The advanced option allows you to expand your search to include case status, case number, region and/or date range. This page will allow you to search by party name and/or case number. It also allows you to choose how your search results will appear, using the Sort and Direction dropdowns.

If you do not select a court type, all courts will automatically be included in the search. If you select the appellate, civil, or bankruptcy court types, more fields will appear to help narrow your search.



The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Party Search' interface. It includes a 'Party Information' section with a 'Required Information' label. There are three input fields for 'Party': 'Last Name or Entity Name', 'First Name', and 'Middle Name'. Below these are two checkboxes: 'Exact Matches Only' and 'Match Empty First and Middle Names'. There is a 'Party Role' dropdown menu. The 'Case Information' section includes a 'Court Type' dropdown menu set to 'All', a 'Case Number' and 'Case Title' input fields, a 'Case Type' dropdown menu, a 'Case Status' dropdown menu set to 'All', and a 'Region' dropdown menu with a 'Map' link. The 'Date Range' section includes 'Date Filed' and 'Date Closed' input fields with calendar icons and dropdowns, and links for 'Prior Month', 'Prior Six Months', and 'Prior Year'. The 'Sort Results' section includes a note: '*** Sort Field and Direction must be used together.' and two dropdown menus for 'Sort Field' and 'Direction'. A note at the bottom states: 'NOTE: Newly filed cases will typically appear on this system within 24 hours. Check the Court Information page for data that is currently available on the PCL. The most recent data is available directly from the court.' There are 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons at the bottom.

In the advanced search, you may use the Map link next to the Region field to select where you want to search.

The screenshot displays the 'Advanced Party Search' interface. On the right, a map titled 'United States Courts' shows the United States with 11 numbered regions highlighted in yellow. A 'Close' button is located below the map. On the left, the search form includes the following sections:

- Party Information:** Includes fields for 'Last Name or Entity Name' (with a red asterisk and a note: 'At least one is required. To use this field, you must also enter a last name or entity name.'), 'First Name', and 'Party Role'. There are checkboxes for 'Exact Matches Only' and 'Match Empty First and Middle Names'.
- Case Information:** Includes a 'Court Type' dropdown menu, 'Case Number' and 'Title' fields, a 'Type' dropdown, 'Case Status' dropdown, and a 'Region' dropdown with a 'Map' link.
- Date Range:** Includes 'Date Filed' and 'Date Closed' fields with calendar icons and dropdowns for 'Prior Month', 'Prior Six Months', and 'Prior Year'.
- Sort Results:** Includes a red asterisk and note: 'Sort Field and Direction must be used together.' It has 'Sort Field' and 'Direction' dropdown menus.

See the Additional Search Fields by Court Type section below to learn more.

After you enter the information, click Search to continue. To change the information you have entered, either highlight the text in the field you want to change, or click Clear to clear all the information you entered and start over.

If you use either of these pages often and want to go directly to it when you log in, select the Make this my PCL home page checkbox.

NOTE: A last name is required if you enter something in the First Name or Middle Name field, OR when you enter something in the Four Digit SSN field.

Bankruptcy Search

This page allows you to search for a bankruptcy party by Social Security or Employer Identification Number/Tax Identification number.

If you use either of these pages often and want to go directly to it when you log in, select the Make this my PCL home page checkbox.

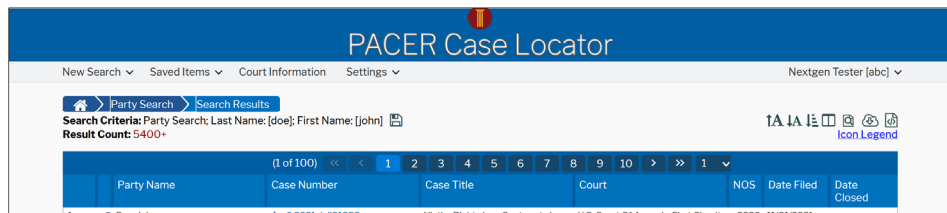
Additional Search Fields by Court Type










You may search the PCL for case information in many ways. When running an advanced case or party search, additional search fields will appear depending on the court type you select when running an advanced search.

- **Civil and appellate:** Nature of Suit field
- **Bankruptcy:** Chapter, Date Discharged, and Date Dismissed fields

Search Results

Both the case and party Search Results screens allow you to perform several different tasks. The icon legend below the search results outlines those tasks.

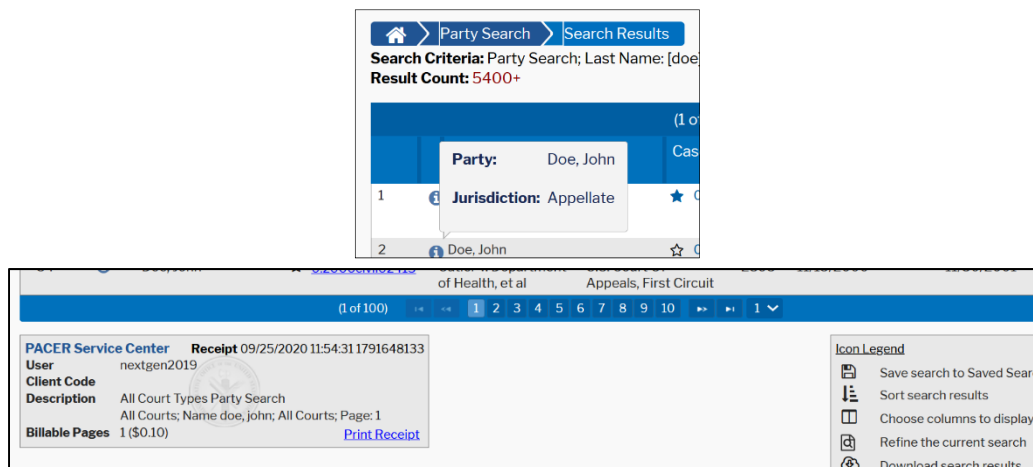


-  **Save icon:** Allows you to save results to the Saved Searches section in the navigation bar
-  **Enlarge/reduce font icon:** Allows you to control the font size of your results
-  **Sort icon:** Allows you to sort your search results by the column selected
-  **Column icon:** Allows you to select which columns you want to display
-  **Refine icon:** Allows you to refine your search
-  **Download icon:** Allows you to download your search results
-  **Save case icon:** Allows you to save a case to the Save Cases section in the navigation bar
-  **Remove case icon:** Allows you to remove a case from the Saved Cases section
-  **Show case parties icon:** Allows you to see the parties involved in a case

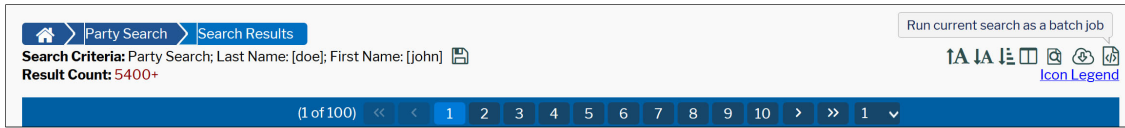
The search results display one page at a time by default. You may download all search results to a file in XML, JSON, or CSV formats.

When you roll over the “i” icon on the Case Search page, additional case information appears (e.g., jurisdiction, nature of suit, chapter, disposition, etc.).

A receipt at the bottom left of the screen shows the number of billable pages and the cost for the data on the current viewable page only. It does not include the cost for previously viewed pages.



If a search yields more than 5,400 results, you will have the option to run a batch search. For more information on batch jobs, see the Batch Searches section below. When a search yields fewer than 5,400 results, you can sort the information by case title, case number, court, date filed, and date closed. You may use the sort icon at the top right of the results to sort your results, or you may also select which columns to view using the table icon.



NOTE: Sorting your results prompts a new search that likely will be billable. A notice of the fee will appear, prompting you to either continue or cancel the search.

Saved Items

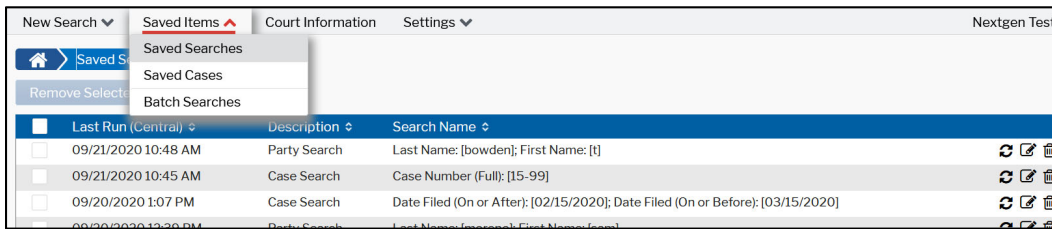
Saved Searches

The Search Results screen allows you to save your searches for later use. To save, select the disk icon on the Search Criteria line.

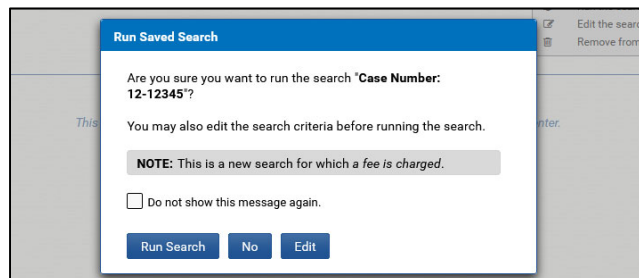


To go to your saved searches, click Saved Items on the navigation bar and select Saved Searches.

The Saved Searches page allows you to return to your previous searches, showing when you last ran the search, the type of search, and the criteria you used to run the search. Use the icons on the right side of the screen to either rerun, edit, or delete your search from the list.

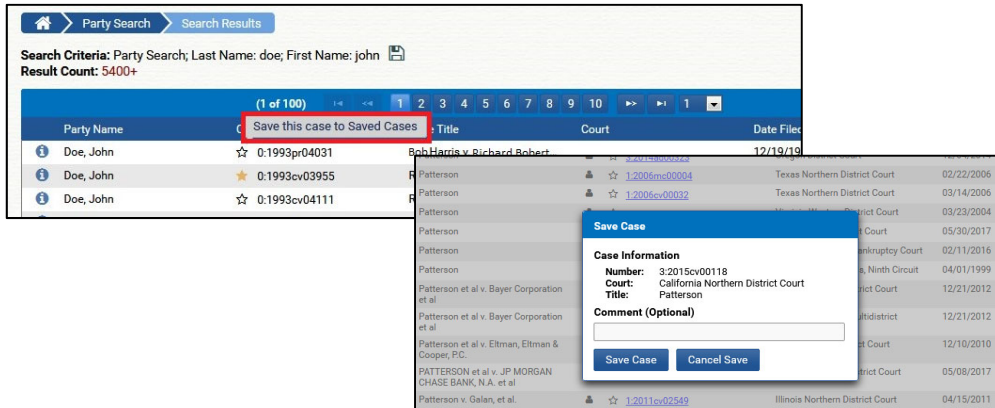


If you want to rerun the search, you will be charged a fee. There will be a notice to confirm you agree to the charges.

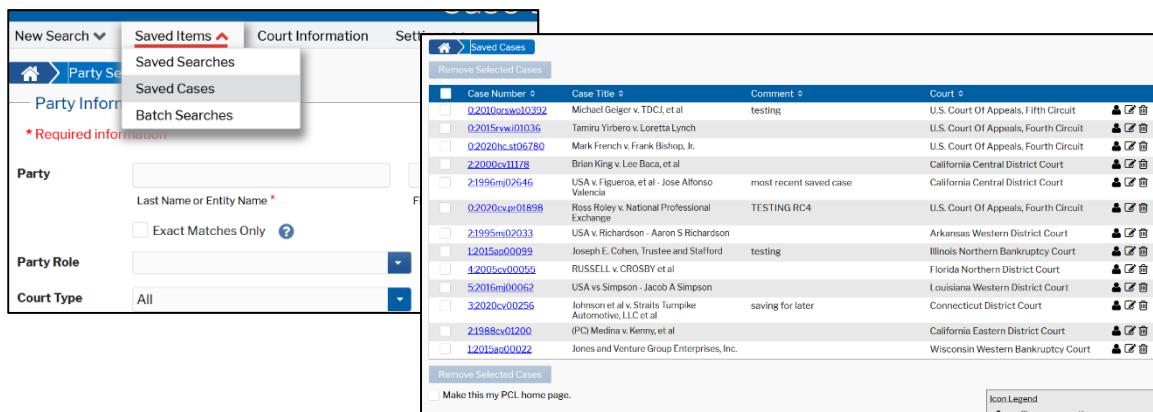


Saved Cases

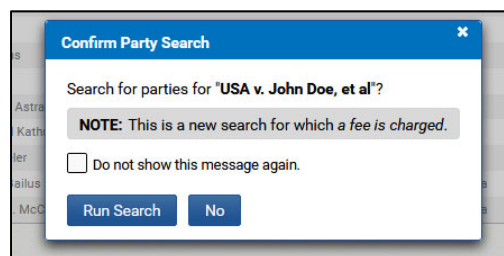
The Search Results screen gives you the option to save any case for later use. Select the star icon in the Case Number column to save. When you click the star, a pop-up box appears, allowing you to enter comments about the case. Click Save Case, and the star next to the case will turn yellow, indicating you have saved the item. If you click the yellow star, the item will be removed from your saved cases.



The Saved Cases page allows you to return to your saved cases, and shows case number, case title, and court for your saved cases. When you click the case link, the page will redirect you to the court's CM/ECF site.



Use the icons on the right side of the screen to view the parties for that case or to delete it from the list. If you want to view parties, you will be charged a fee. There will be a notice to confirm that you agree to the charges.



Batch Searches

Batch searches allow you to run a large search that returns results that can be downloaded as a file. The batch search icon appears at the top right when you receive more than 5,400 results. This search is limited to 100,000 results, and no fee is charged until the results are downloaded.

When the search results page first loads, a notice will inform you that maximum results have been exceeded, and provides further instruction on how to proceed.

The screenshot shows a search results page with a dialog box titled "Maximum Results Exceeded". The dialog box contains the following text:

Your search yielded more than **5400** results. The search results shown are limited to the first **5400** results. There are potentially many more results that are not shown.

On the search results page, you have the option to:

- Work with the first **5400** results. However, the option to sort result columns is not available.
- **Refine** your search to reduce the number of search results.
- Run your search as a **batch job** that will return all results, which must be downloaded as a file.

NOTE: Batch searches are limited to 108,000 results. No fee is charged until the search results are downloaded.

The dialog box has an "OK" button. Below the dialog box, the search results page is visible, showing search criteria: "Party Search; Last Name: doe; First Name: john" and "Result Count: 5400+". A button labeled "Run current search as a batch job" is highlighted with a red box. The search results table below shows columns for Party Name, Case Number, Case Title, Court, Date Filed, and Date Closed.

Party Name	Case Number	Case Title	Court	Date Filed	Date Closed
Doe, John	0:1993pr04031	Bob Harris v. Richard Bobert.		12/19/1993	01/18/1994

When you select the batch search icon, you may name the search for later use when you select Batch Searches from the Saved Items dropdown.

The screenshot shows the "Saved Items" dropdown menu with the following options:

- Saved Searches
- Saved Cases
- Batch Searches

Below the dropdown menu, a table of saved searches is displayed:

Job ID	Name	Started	Expires (Central)	Pages	Status
300001000	Party Search; Last Name: [patterson]	09/25/2020 3:03 PM		0	RUNNING
300001000	Party Search; Last Name: [patterson]	09/25/2020 3:03 PM	09/26/2020 11:59 PM	2000	COMPLETED

Court Information

This page provides a list of the court abbreviations used by the PCL. Click on the link to go directly to the court's website.

NOTE: The Coverage Date column shows the date from which a court has daily case access available. This may be different from the date that appears in the Earliest Cases column.

The screenshot shows the PACER Case Locator interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "New Search", "Saved Items", "Court Information", and "Settings". Below this is a "Court Information" tab. The main content area displays a table with the following columns: Court, Court Code, Court Type, Earliest Cases, Most Recent Cases, and Coverage Date. The table lists various courts across different states, including Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, and Arkansas, with their respective codes and types. A pagination control at the top of the table shows "(1 of 6)" and page numbers 1 through 6, with page 1 selected. A filter input field is also visible.

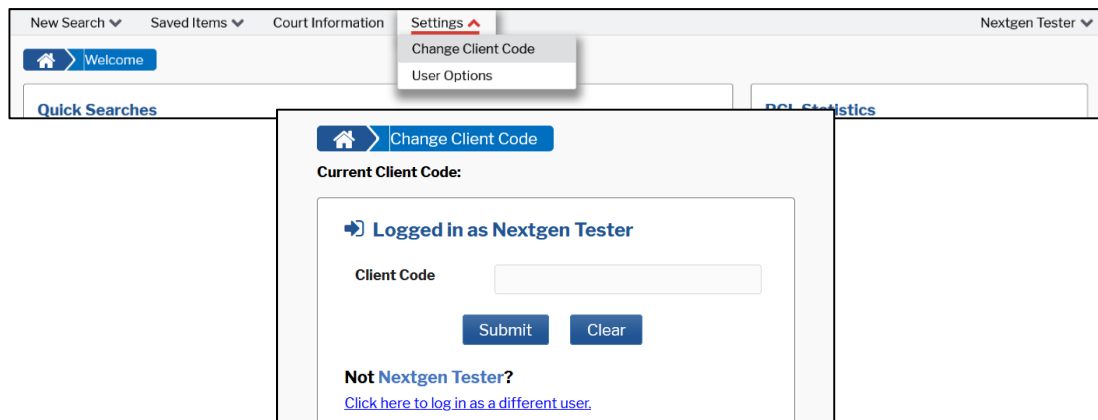
Court	Court Code	Court Type	Earliest Cases	Most Recent Cases	Coverage Date
Alabama Middle Bankruptcy Court	almbk	Bankruptcy	09/02/1985	02/08/2022	09/02/1985
Alabama Middle District Court	almdc	Criminal	09/08/1966	02/07/2022	07/11/1994
Alabama Middle District Court	almdc	Civil	09/08/1966	02/07/2022	04/02/1991
Alabama Northern Bankruptcy Court	alnbk	Bankruptcy	04/24/1909	02/08/2022	12/02/1962
Alabama Northern District Court	alndc	Criminal	03/10/1963	02/07/2022	11/01/1987
Alabama Northern District Court	alndc	Civil	03/10/1963	02/07/2022	01/05/1986
Alabama Southern Bankruptcy Court	alsbk	Bankruptcy	04/27/1978	02/08/2022	03/31/1988
Alabama Southern District Court	alsdc	Criminal	03/26/1963	02/08/2022	05/21/1992
Alabama Southern District Court	alsdc	Civil	03/26/1963	02/08/2022	02/03/1983
Alaska Bankruptcy Court	akbk	Bankruptcy	02/15/1980	02/03/2022	12/06/1990
Alaska District Court	akdc	Criminal	02/26/1960	02/08/2022	01/01/1996
Alaska District Court	akdc	Civil	02/26/1960	02/08/2022	01/31/1968
Arizona Bankruptcy Court	azbk	Bankruptcy	12/31/1954	02/08/2022	03/01/1980
Arizona District Court	azdc	Criminal	07/31/1958	02/08/2022	09/15/1987
Arizona District Court	azdc	Civil	07/31/1958	02/08/2022	11/02/1986
Arkansas Eastern Bankruptcy Court	arebk	Bankruptcy	09/11/1978	02/08/2022	10/10/1983
Arkansas Eastern District Court	aredc	Criminal	07/07/1966	02/08/2022	04/09/1989
Arkansas Eastern District Court	aredc	Civil	07/07/1966	02/08/2022	04/02/1986
Arkansas Western Bankruptcy Court	arwbk	Bankruptcy	12/17/1979	02/08/2022	02/03/1985
Arkansas Western District Court	arwdc	Criminal	11/04/1969	02/08/2022	10/14/1996

Settings

Change Client Code

The Change Client Code option allows you to update the client code already entered, or enter a client code to track charges for future billings. The client code will appear in your billing history details when entered prior to a search.

When you click Change Client Code, enter the code in the Client Code field and click Submit.



The image shows a web application interface with a 'Settings' dropdown menu open, highlighting the 'Change Client Code' option. Below the menu, a modal window titled 'Change Client Code' is displayed. The modal contains the following elements:

- A header bar with a home icon and the text 'Change Client Code'.
- A label 'Current Client Code:' followed by a text input field.
- A section titled 'Logged in as Nextgen Tester' with a right-pointing arrow icon.
- A label 'Client Code' followed by a text input field.
- Two buttons: 'Submit' and 'Clear'.
- A section titled 'Not Nextgen Tester?' with a blue link: [Click here to log in as a different user.](#)

User Options

This section allows users to further customize their landing page, hide system messages, and select which columns they want to appear on the search results page. Click the button(s) and/or checkbox(es) in each section to make your selection; then click Update Settings.

The screenshot shows the 'User Options' page in the PACER Case Locator interface. The page is titled 'PACER Case Locator' and has a navigation bar with 'New Search', 'Saved Items', 'Court Information', and 'Settings'. The 'User Options' section is active and contains several configuration panels:

- Landing Page:** Choose one of the items below as your landing page to which you are directed upon login. Options include Default Landing Page, Advanced Case Search, Advanced Party Search, Bankruptcy Search, Batch Searches, Case Search, Court Information, Party Search (selected), Saved Cases, Saved Searches, and Welcome Page.
- Hide System Messages:** Choose the system messages you would like to hide. Options include Delete Batch Jobs, Delete Saved Case, Delete Saved Search, Maximum Search Results (checked), Refine Search Criteria, Run Saved Search, Show Case Parties, and Show Saved Case Parties.
- Saved Cases:** Choose the saved cases columns you would like displayed. Options include Case Comment (checked) and Court Name (checked).
- Search Results:** Choose how you would like search results to be displayed. Options include Display Full Case Title (checked), Display Full Court Name (checked), and Display Full Party Name (checked).
- Search Results Columns:** Choose the search results columns you would like displayed by default. Options include Bankruptcy Chapter, Bankruptcy Disposition, Court Type, Date Closed (checked), Date Discharged, Date Dismissed, Date Filed (checked), Date Reopened, Nature of Suit (NOS) (checked), and Row Number (checked).
- Search Results Font Size:** Choose the initial font size for search results. Options include Small, Medium (selected), and Large. A preview shows the text 'Smith v. Jones' in the selected font size.

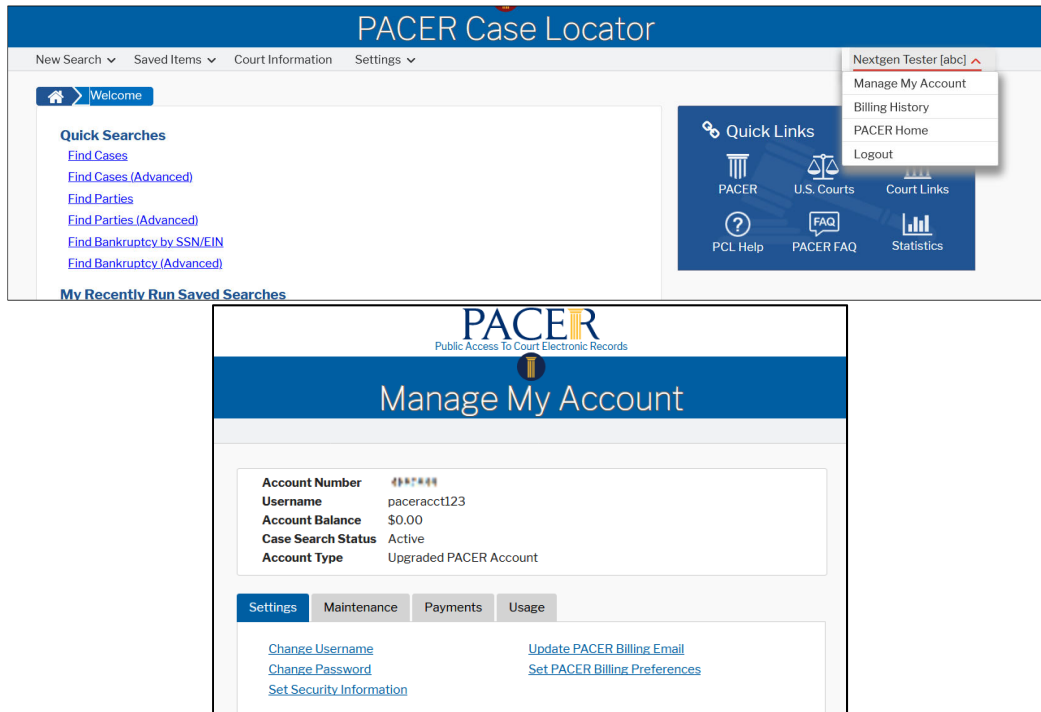
An 'Update Settings' button is located at the bottom left of the form.

NOTE: The default options in the Search Results Columns section are only for the variably available columns. Columns such as Case Title, Case Number, and Court will always be shown.

User Dropdown

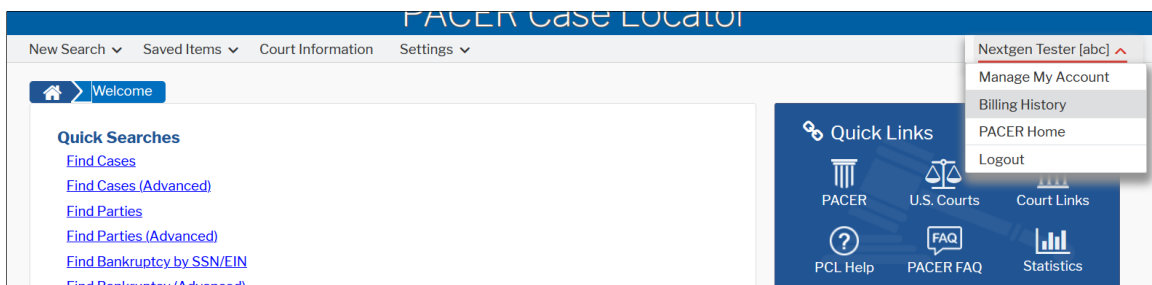
Manage My Account

Use the My Account section of the navigation bar to access details of your PACER account. When you select Manage My Account from the dropdown and log in, the screen below should appear.



Billing History

The Billing History option takes you to the Billing History screen in Manage My Account. Here you can view transactions for one or all courts during a selected time period sorted by date, client code, or court.



BILLING HISTORY
Close

IMPORTANT: While you may currently access real-time transactions, we recommend that you wait until after the 10th of the month to obtain complete billing details for the previous month (e.g., wait until Nov. 10 to access billing details for October). This will ensure that you receive an accurate total.

Billing

User: paceracct123
Date: Tue, Jun 30 10:04:50 2020
Court: All Courts
Client Code:
Date Range: 06/30/2020 to 06/30/2020
Sort Order: Transaction Date
Transaction Type: Billable, Exempt
Report Type: Full History, Summary, Summary with Details
Options: Download Results

[This Month](#)
[Last Month](#)
[This Quarter](#)
[Last Quarter](#)

Most Recent Statements

None found.

NOTE: The totals provided in the billing history also include charges from accessing a docket report from a court.

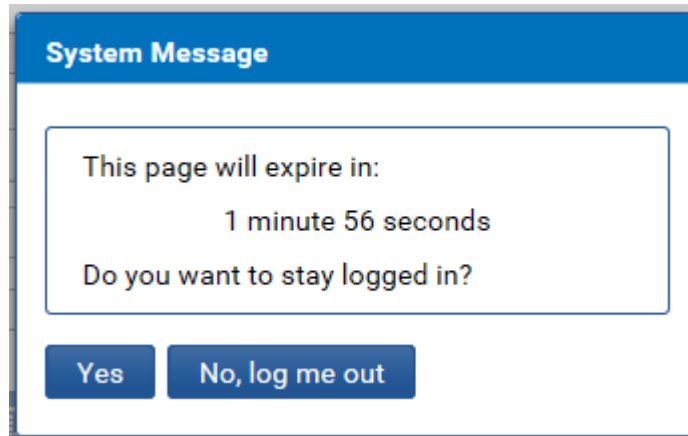
PACER Home

The PACER Home option takes you to pacer.uscourts.gov where you can select what you want to do next.

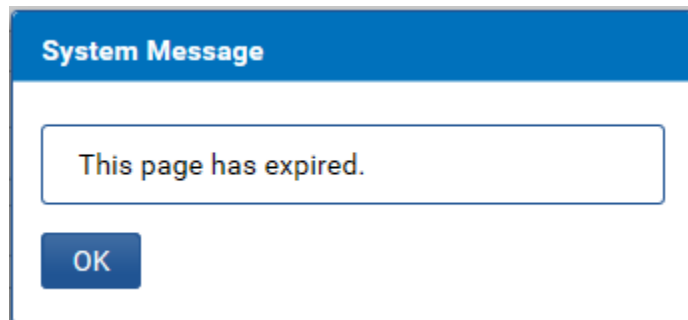
The screenshot shows the PACER website home page with a navigation bar and several service tiles. The navigation bar includes links for Register for an Account, Find a Case, File a Case, My Account & Billing, Pricing, Help, and Search. The main content area features a heading 'What can we help you accomplish?' followed by four tiles: Search for a Case, Filing Electronically, Manage Your Account, and Move to NextGen CM/ECF. Below these are sections for Frequently Asked Questions, Announcements, Learn, and Email Updates.

Page Expiration

When idle for 30 minutes on a page other than results (case or party search, saved items, etc.), the user will receive an expired page message. Click OK on the message to remain on the same page.



When idle for 30 minutes on a **results page**, the user will receive an expired page message. Clicking OK on this message redirects the user to their home page.



PCL Application Programming Interface (API)

The public PCL API allows users to programmatically search the PCL for federal cases or associated parties. This API uses the same search functionality as the PCL application and searches the same data set.

The API and documentation is available on the [Developer Resources](#) page. You can test in the QA environment at <https://qa-pacer.uscourts.gov/>.^{*} You may also test your scripts in QA as part of your development lifecycle process or as needed.

NOTE: QA is a testing site that may occasionally be unavailable due maintenance. Also, some features for testing may not currently be available in the production environment.

You must have a PACER account to use the QA environment. To register for a PACER test account, visit <https://qa-pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/pscof/registration.jsf>. There is no charge for QA searches, so you may skip the credit card portion of the registration. Your QA account will be activated overnight.