

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERSONS FILING A PRO SE  
PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS UNDER 28 U.S.C. §2254**

This packet includes two copies of a form petition and two copies of an in forma pauperis motion. There are instructions to help you understand the forms and a little bit about Court procedures, but **THE COURT CANNOT GIVE YOU LEGAL ADVICE**. The Court may not accept your petition for filing unless you follow these instructions and provide the information requested in these forms.

**Is this form for you?**

Generally, §2254 may be used by a person in custody pursuant to a judgment by a state court or who in the future will be in custody pursuant to a judgment by a state court, to seek a determination that the custody is in violation of the Constitution, laws, or treaties of the United States. 28 U.S.C. §2244(b) limits the jurisdiction of this Court to one petition per judgment, unless permission to consider a second or successive petition is given by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. If you previously filed a habeas corpus petition under 28 U.S.C. §2254 challenging the same judgment, which was dismissed or denied with prejudice, **do not use these forms**. Use the forms for filing a motion with the United States Court of Appeals to authorize consideration of a second or successive habeas corpus petition.

**How to file a petition**

To begin a lawsuit you must file an original and one copy of your petition with the court. You should keep a copy of the petition for your own records. The Court is not responsible for providing copies to you. **ALL COPIES MUST BE IDENTICAL TO THE ORIGINAL**.

Your petition must be legibly handwritten or typed. If you need more space to answer a question you may write on the back of the form or attach additional pages. All pages should be 8 ½" by 11".

Generally, the Respondents are the warden or administrator of the facility where you are detained and the Attorney General for the State of Maryland. In some cases, there may be other respondents.

If you wish to challenge judgments from different courts or judgments entered at different times in different cases, you must file a separate petition for each judgment. If you are challenging multiple convictions in a single indictment or in cases which were tried at the same time, you may file a single petition.

Answer the questions about state court proceedings carefully. **FAILING TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED MAY RESULT IN YOUR PETITION NOT BEING FILED OR CAUSE DELAYS IN PROCESSING YOUR PETITION.**

In your petition list each ground on which you are seeking relief and state the facts of your case that support each ground. Because federal law limits the circumstances under which a second or successive petition may be considered, you should include **all** grounds upon which you wish to seek relief. It is not necessary to provide legal

citations. If you wish to submit arguments in support of your petition, they should be in the form of a separate memorandum.

The petition **must** be signed under oath by the person seeking relief.

When the forms are completed mail the original and one copy to: Clerk, United States District Court for the District of Maryland, 101 West Lombard Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

### **How to ask for the filing fee to be waived**

There is a fee of \$5.00 for filing this type of lawsuit. This must be paid at the time your petition is filed. If you are unable to pay the filing fee you may ask the Court to let you proceed in forma pauperis. The practice of this Court is that a motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis will not be granted if, after paying the filing fee, you would have \$25.00 or more left in your institutional account. Attached are two copies of a motion and affidavit for leave to proceed in forma pauperis. One should be filed with your petition. The other is for your records.

### **Things to know about representing yourself**

There are specific procedural rules which apply to actions under 28 U.S.C. §2254. They are called the Rules Governing Habeas Corpus Cases Under Section 2254 In The United States District Courts. The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure will apply in some circumstances, as well as the Local Rules of this Court.

Once your petition is received by the Court it will be reviewed and, if you have properly completed the forms and provided all necessary information, a case number and judge will be assigned. Everything that you receive from the Court about your case will have the case number on it. Everything that you send to the Court other than the petition and motion and affidavit to proceed in forma pauperis should have the case number on it.

Unless directed otherwise, all communications to the Court about your case should be addressed to:

Clerk of the Court  
United States District Court  
101 West Lombard Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

**You must notify the Court in writing of any change in your address. Failure to do this may result in dismissal of your case.**

After you file the petition no communication about your case should be sent directly to any judge. If you want to ask the Court to do something, you should file a motion. Pleadings and motions should be filed with the Clerk and a copy should be mailed to the attorney representing the respondent(s) or directly to the respondent(s) if he/she does not have an attorney. It is important to include a certificate of service on anything you file after your petition showing when you mailed copies and to whom they were sent. The certificate of service appears at the end of the pleading

or motion and looks like the sample below.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, a copy of this  
(title of the document), was mailed, postage prepaid, to  
(name and address of the attorney or person to whom you sent it).

(your signature \_\_\_\_\_)

It is not necessary to state in the certificate of service that copies were sent to the Court or to the Clerk.

Do not file any motions or memoranda that are longer than fifty pages unless you have received permission from the Court. Most motions and memoranda should be much shorter than fifty pages.

You do not have to file copies of exhibits that are already on file in the same case. For example, if the respondents in your case file an answer and attach as an exhibit a copy of your post conviction petition, you do not have to attach a copy of that document to any motions or memoranda you file. You may simply refer to the copy that is already in the file.

You must sign every pleading, motion, and memorandum that you file. You **MAY NOT** sign someone else's name, nor may you file anything on behalf of someone else.

FORM TO BE USED BY A PERSON FILING A PETITION FOR  
WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS UNDER 28 U.S.C. §2254

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

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(Full name, date of birth, identification  
number and address of the petitioner)

v.

Civil Action No. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Leave blank. To be filled in by Court.)

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(Name of the Warden or other person having  
custody of the petitioner)  
and

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE  
OF MARYLAND

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**PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS**

1. Name and location of the court which entered the judgment/conviction being challenged.

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2. Date of judgment or sentencing.

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3. Length of sentence.

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4. Nature of offense (all counts).

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5. What was your plea? (check one)

- (a) Not Guilty [ ]
- (b) Not Guilty on Agreed Statement of Facts [ ]
- (b) Guilty [ ]
- (c) Nolo Contendere [ ]
- (d) Alford Plea [ ]

If you entered different pleas to different counts or charges, explain.

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6. Kind of trial. (check one)

- (a) Jury [ ]
- (b) Judge Only [ ]

7. Did you testify at the trial?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

8. Did you appeal or seek leave to appeal to the Maryland Court of Special Appeals?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If you answered yes, provide the following information:

A. What grounds did you raise?

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B. What was the result?

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C. What was the date of the decision by the Court of Special Appeals?

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9. Did you file a petition for writ of certiorari to the Maryland Court of Appeals?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If you answered yes, what was the result?

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If you answered yes, what was the date of the decision by the Court of Appeals?

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10. Did you file a petition for writ of certiorari to the United States Supreme Court?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If you answered yes, what was the result?

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If you answered yes, what was the date of the decision by the Supreme Court?

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11. Have you filed any post conviction petitions challenging this judgment/sentence?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If you answered yes, provide the following information for **each** post conviction petition:

A. Name and location of the court where you filed.

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B. Date the post conviction petition was filed.

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C. What grounds did you raise?

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D. What was the result?

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E. What was the date of the decision?

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F. Did you file an application for leave to appeal to the Court of Special Appeals?

Yes [  ]                      No [  ]

G. What was the result?

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H. What was the date of the decision by the Court of Special Appeals?

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I. If the Court of Special Appeals granted your application for leave to appeal but affirmed a decision denying post conviction relief, did you file a petition for writ of certiorari to the Court of Appeals?

Yes [  ]                      No [  ]

J. What was the result?

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K. What was the date of the decision by the Court of Appeals?

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12. Have you filed any other actions in any state or federal court challenging the judgment which is the subject of this petition?

Yes [  ]                      No [  ]

If you answered yes, provide an explanation of what you filed, where, when, and what the result was.

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13. Do you CURRENTLY HAVE PENDING in any state or federal court any motion, petition, or appeal concerning the judgment being challenged in this petition?

Yes [  ]                      No [  ]

If you answered yes, describe what you filed, when, where, and its current status.

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14. In most cases federal law requires that a habeas corpus petition be filed within one (1) year of the date your conviction became final. The time when a post conviction petition is pending or on appeal does NOT count towards the one year. 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d). If this petition is being filed more than one year after your conviction became final, explain why it is late and/or why you believe the one year limitations period does not apply.

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15. State BRIEFLY every ground on which you claim you are being held unlawfully. BRIEFLY summarize the facts supporting each ground. If necessary, you may attach additional pages.

A. Ground One: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Facts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Ground Two: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Facts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. Ground Three: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Facts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

D. Ground Four: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Facts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. If any of the issues that you are raising in this petition have not been presented to a state court, explain which issues are being raised for the first time and why.

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17. Do you have any other sentence(s) to be served after you complete the sentence(s)/commitment that is being challenged in this petition?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If you answered yes, provide the following information about each of your future sentences:

A. Name and location of the court that imposed the sentence.

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B. Length of the sentence. \_\_\_\_\_

C. Have you filed, or do you intend to file, a petition attacking this sentence?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that the Court grant him all relief to which he may be entitled in this action.

**IDECLARE UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT THE INFORMATION ABOVE IS TRUE AND CORRECT.**

SIGNED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(original signature of petitioner)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
(address of petitioner)

FORM TO BE USED BY A PERSON SEEKING LEAVE TO PROCEED  
IN FORMA PAUPERIS IN A HABEAS CORPUS ACTION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of petitioner)

v.

Civil Action No. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Leave blank. To be filled in by Court.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of respondent)

MOTION AND AFFIDAVIT TO PROCEED IN FORMA PAUPERIS

I, \_\_\_\_\_, declare that I am the petitioner in this case. I understand that the fee for filing this type of case is \$5.00. Because of my poverty, I am unable to pay the filing fee and costs of this action at this time, nor am I able to give security therefor.

I believe that I have a meritorious complaint and am entitled to relief in these proceedings.

In support of this motion, I answer the following questions:

1. Are you presently employed in an institutional job or other assignment that results in compensation of any sort, including work release?

YES [  ]      NO [  ]

- a. If you answered YES, list your employer or assignment and the amount of your wages.

Employer/assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly gross wages: \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly net wages: \_\_\_\_\_

- b. If you answered NO, state the date of your last employment or assignment, the name of your employer or assignment, and the amount of wages you received.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly gross wages: \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly net wages: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Within the past twelve months have you received any income from: 1) settlements, judgments, or monetary awards from a court; 2) Social Security, public assistance, workers' compensation or disability payments; 3) a business, profession or other form of self-employment; 4) rent, interest or dividends; 5) retirement, annuity, pension or insurance payment; 6) gifts or inheritances; 7) or any other sources?

YES [  ]      NO [  ]

If you answered YES, list the amount received, date it was received, and the source.

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date received</u>	<u>Source</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

3. How much money do you have in your institutional account? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How much money do you have in checking, savings or other accounts outside of the institution? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you own or have any interest in any real estate, stocks, bonds, notes, automobiles, or other valuable property (not including ordinary household furnishings and clothes)?

YES [  ]      NO [  ]

If you answered YES, list the value and describe each item.

<u>Value</u>	<u>Description</u>
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. List everyone (including businesses and the government) that you owe money and the amount that you owe.

<u>Creditor</u>	<u>Total debt</u>	<u>Monthly payment</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

7. List any other major monthly expenses that you are actually paying.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Monthly payment</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

**IDECLARE UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT THE INFORMATION ABOVE IS TRUE AND CORRECT.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(original signature of petitioner)