

How to eFile into an existing Family Law Case

Here are just a few examples of when to file into an existing case:

You want to:

- File an answer, waiver of service or counterpetition in an active existing case.
- File a motion, response, or pretrial forms in an active existing case.
- File a petition to modify an existing order.
- File a petition for divorce and there is already an existing order in Travis County regarding the children you have with your spouse.

Many family law forms are available at www.TravisCountyLawLibrary.org.

1

You can file your Travis County case *online*

Do you have?



Access to the Internet and a computer or cell phone?



An **email** address?

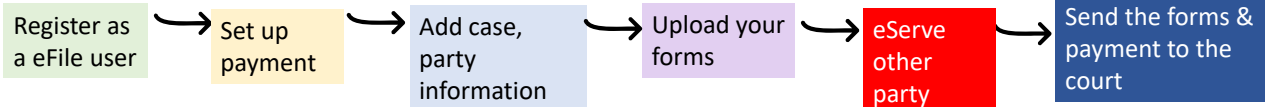


Your payment ready?
 • Fee **Waiver** form?
 • Credit Card (optional)?



Your court **forms**:
 • Filled out?
 • Signed?
 • Saved as PDFs?

Then you can . . .



2



Pause! Before you file your document --

Has there been domestic violence between you and the other party?

If so, you may want to consider:

Talking with SAFE to develop a safety plan. SAFE is an agency that helps survivors of abuse and their families.

www.safeaustin.org

512-267-7233

Applying for a protective order through the Travis County Attorney's Office.

512-854-9415

Applying for free legal assistance through Texas Rio Grande Legal Aide.

www.TRLA.org

1-888-988-9996

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1 Go to the Texas eFiling website: <https://efile.txcourts.gov/ofswb>

Register as an e-File user.

Court Information

Welcome to the eFile.TXCOURTS.gov filing portal!

re:SearchTX is now available!
[Start re:Searching Now!](#)

[eFileTexas.gov](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)
[Active Courts](#)

Several companies can help you eFile your court forms. We will use efile.txcourts.gov as an example.

Actions

[Sign In](#) [Register](#)

Self Help

[Need Help?](#)
[Chat for Assistance](#)
[FAQ's](#)
[Web Training Sessions](#)
[Training Videos](#)
[User Guides](#)
[Share your screen with Co-Defendant](#)

You will need to register with an eFile provider. If you are already registered, sign in.

4

Register as an e-File user.

2 Fill in your contact information, then click “Next.”

The screenshot shows the EFILE registration page for a firm account. At the top left is the EFILE logo with 'TXCOURTS.gov' and 're:SearchTX' at the top right. Below the header is a dark bar with the word 'Register'. Underneath is a breadcrumb trail: 'User Information > Firm Information > Terms and Conditions > Complete'. The form contains several input fields: 'First Name', 'Middle', and 'Last Name' (with a small square icon between Middle and Last Name); 'Email Address' and 'Password'; 'Security Question' (with a placeholder text: 'Enter a simple question that can only be answered by you. Example: High School Mascot'); and 'Security Answer'. A 'Next' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Write down your password. You will need it to log in again.

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3 Select “Register for Self-Represented Account.”

The screenshot shows the EFILE registration page for a self-represented account. At the top left is the EFILE logo with 'TXCOURTS.gov' and 're:SearchTX' at the top right. Below the header is a dark bar with the word 'Register'. Underneath is a breadcrumb trail: 'User Information > Firm Information > Terms and Conditions > Complete'. The page is titled 'Registration Options' and features two main options: 'Register for a Firm Account' and 'Register for a Self-Represented Account'. The 'Register for a Self-Represented Account' option is highlighted with a green circle and a green arrow pointing to its radio button. Below the options are 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons.

Click the circle.

You are a “Pro Se” filer. This means you do not have an attorney.

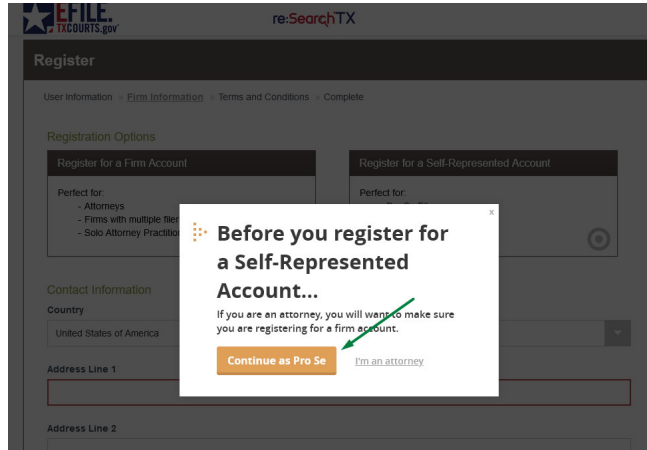
6

Register as an e-File user.

4 Select "Continue as Pro Se."

Click "Continue as Pro Se" button.

"Pro se" means you are representing yourself in this court case.

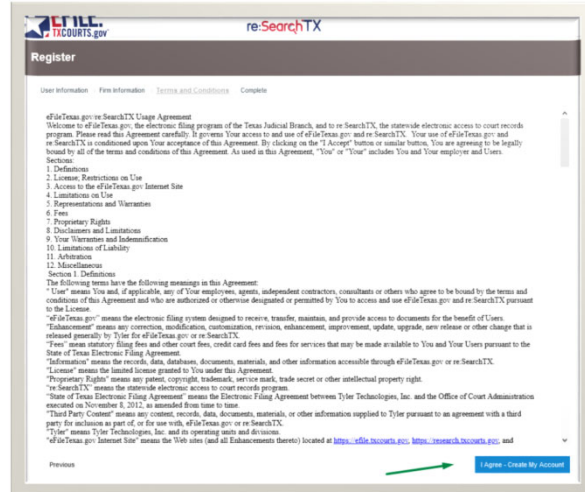
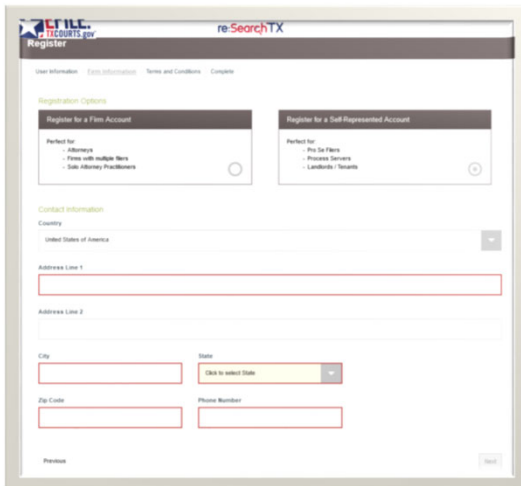


7

Register as an e-File user.

5 Add your address.

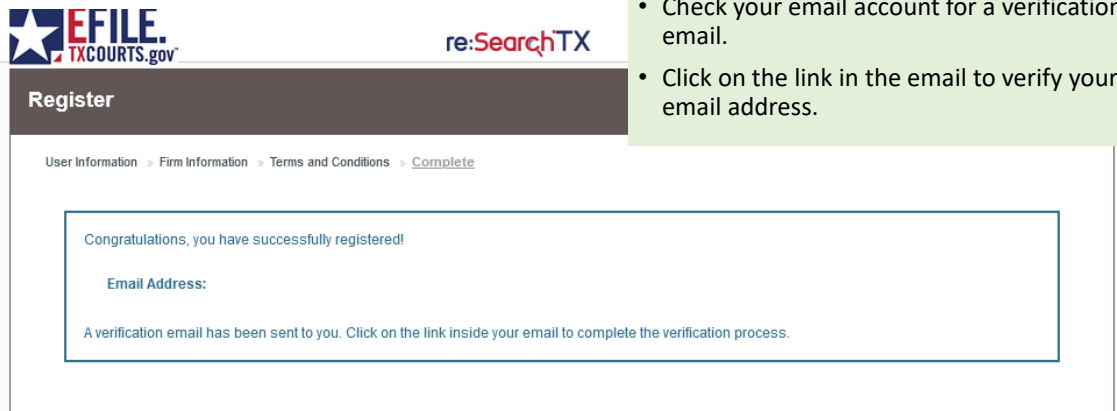
6 Terms & Conditions



8

7 Verify your email address.

Register as an e-File user.



The screenshot shows the EFILE registration page. At the top left is the EFILE logo with 'TXCOURTS.gov' and 're:SearchTX' at the top right. Below the logo is a dark header with the word 'Register'. Underneath is a breadcrumb trail: 'User Information > Firm Information > Terms and Conditions > Complete'. A central box contains the following text: 'Congratulations, you have successfully registered!', 'Email Address:', and 'A verification email has been sent to you. Click on the link inside your email to complete the verification process.'

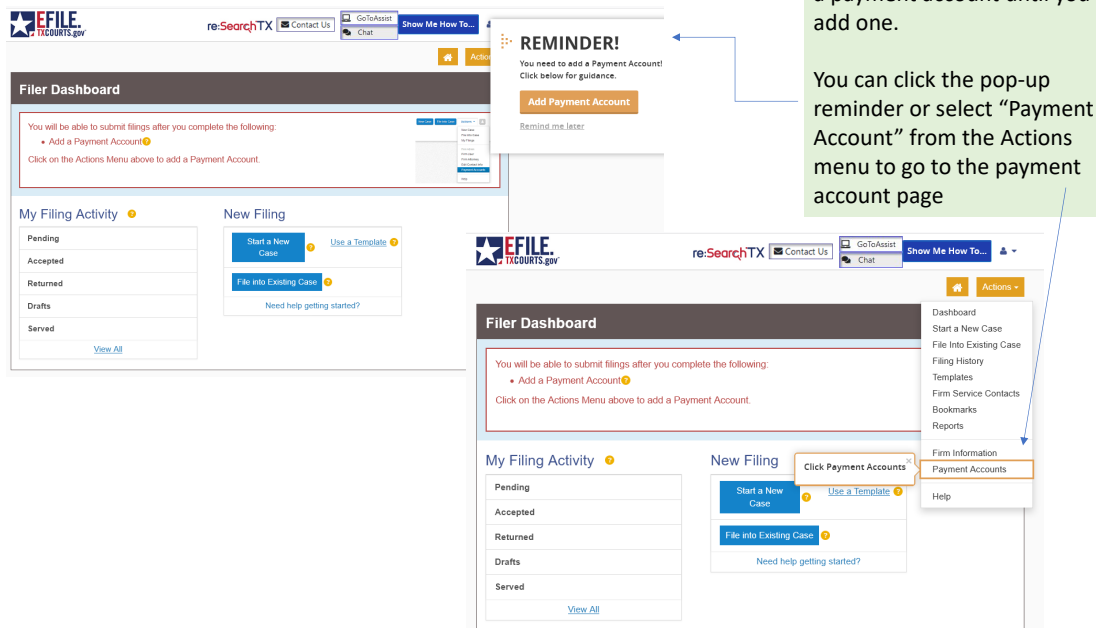
- Check your email account for a verification email.
- Click on the link in the email to verify your email address.

You are now registered!

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8 Go to payment account page.

Set up your payment method.



The screenshot shows the EFILE Filer Dashboard. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'EFILE TXCOURTS.gov', 're:SearchTX', and utility links like 'Contact Us', 'GoToAssist', and 'Chat'. A 'REMEMINDER!' pop-up is displayed, stating 'You need to add a Payment Account! Click below for guidance.' with an 'Add Payment Account' button and a 'Remind me later' link. The dashboard itself has a 'Filer Dashboard' section with a message: 'You will be able to submit filings after you complete the following: Add a Payment Account. Click on the Actions Menu above to add a Payment Account.' Below this are 'My Filing Activity' and 'New Filing' sections. The 'Actions' menu is open, showing options like 'Dashboard', 'Start a New Case', 'File Into Existing Case', 'File History', 'Templates', 'Firm Service Contacts', 'Bookmarks', 'Reports', 'Firm Information', 'Payment Accounts', and 'Help'. A blue box highlights the 'Payment Accounts' option in the menu.

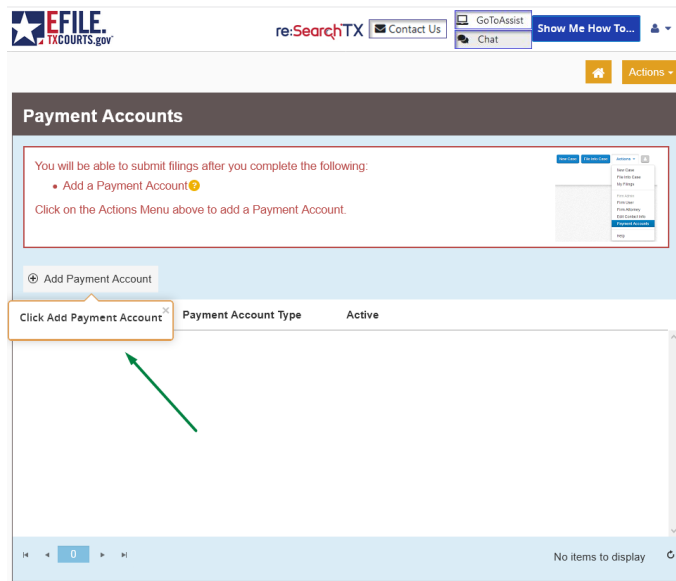
You will be prompted to add a payment account until you add one.

You can click the pop-up reminder or select "Payment Account" from the Actions menu to go to the payment account page

10

Set up your payment method.

9 Click “Add a payment account.”



11

Set up your payment method.

10a Choose your payment method..

Though often there is no fee for a respondent to file, you still have to add a payment method.

You can select **credit card** or a **fee waiver**.

A fee waiver “waives” the filing fee for parties with low incomes. If you select fee waiver, be aware:

- You will have to fill out the form and file it like your other forms.
- The court may not accept the fee waiver. If this happens you will have to pay before your filing is accepted.

If you are paying by fee waiver –

Do you have your fee waiver form ready?

The fee waiver form is also called the “Statement of Inability to Afford Payment of Court Cost.”

You can get a copy of the form here: www.TravisCountyLawLibrary.org

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Set up your payment method.

10b Name your payment account & select account type.

Click Add Payment Account

Name your Payment Account.

Select your Payment Account Type.

13

Set up your payment method.

11 Add a credit card account (optional if you chose Waiver)

Why add a credit card if you are using a fee waiver?

Sometimes courts do not accept a fee waiver. If this happens, you will have to re-file. It makes the re-file process easier for you if you have credit card already set up as a payment account.

Select Credit Card as your Payment Account Type.

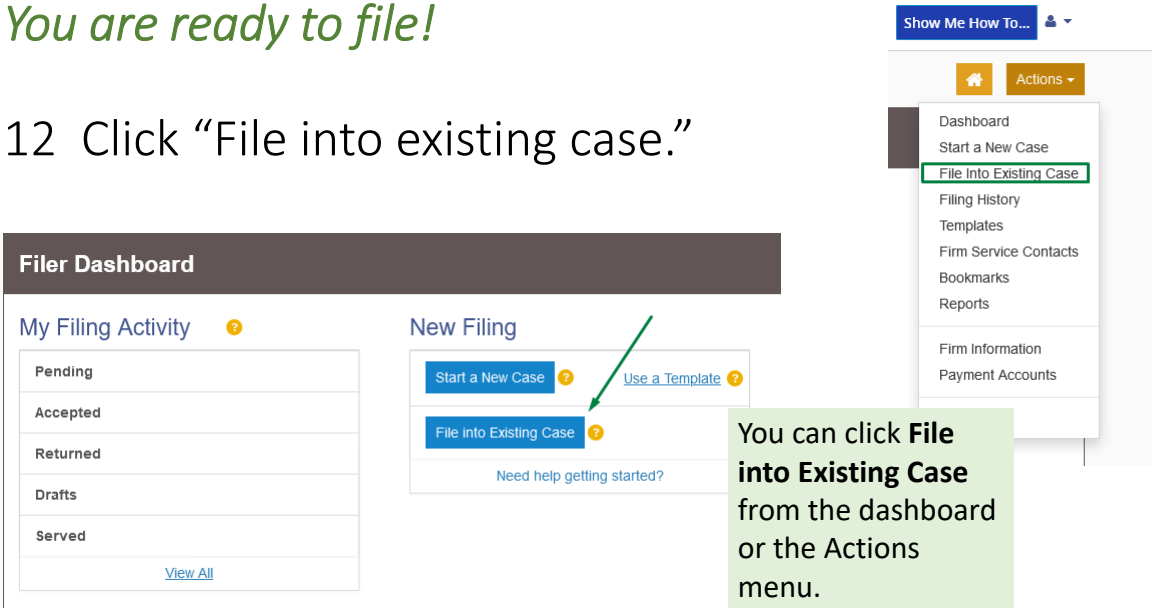
You will add your credit card info on the next screen.

14

Identify your case & parties.

You are ready to file!

12 Click “File into existing case.”

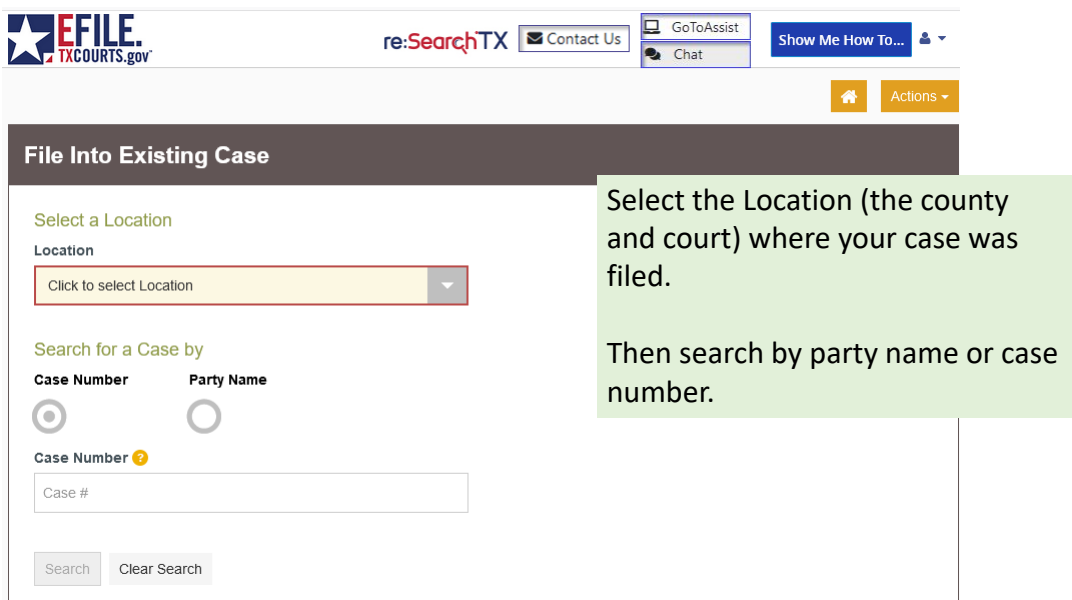


The screenshot shows the EFILE dashboard. On the left, there is a 'My Filing Activity' section with a table containing rows for Pending, Accepted, Returned, Drafts, and Served. In the center, the 'New Filing' section has two buttons: 'Start a New Case' and 'File Into Existing Case'. A green arrow points to the 'File Into Existing Case' button. On the right, an 'Actions' dropdown menu is open, with 'File Into Existing Case' highlighted in green. A green callout box on the right contains the text: 'You can click **File into Existing Case** from the dashboard or the Actions menu.'

15

Identify your case & parties.

13a Identify your case.



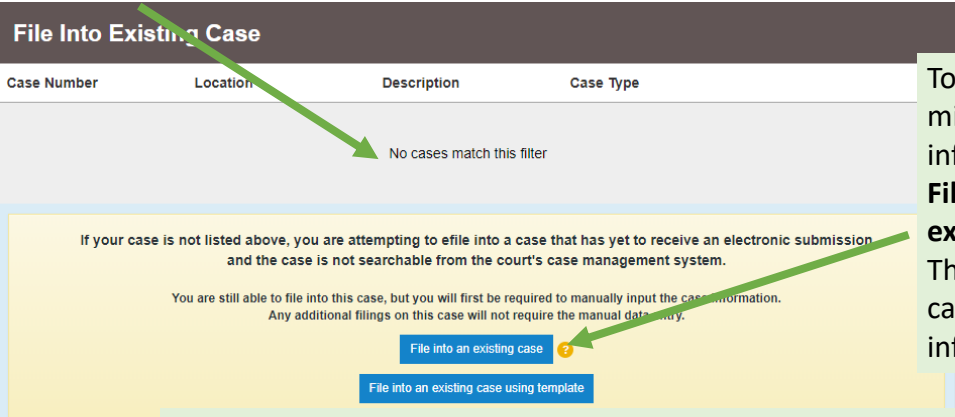
The screenshot shows the 'File Into Existing Case' page. At the top, there is a header with the EFILE logo, 're:SearchTX', and navigation links like 'Contact Us', 'GoToAssist', 'Chat', and 'Show Me How To...'. Below the header, there is a 'Select a Location' section with a dropdown menu labeled 'Click to select Location'. Underneath, there is a 'Search for a Case by' section with two radio buttons: 'Case Number' (selected) and 'Party Name'. Below the radio buttons, there is a text input field labeled 'Case #' and a 'Search' button. A green callout box on the right contains the text: 'Select the Location (the county and court) where your case was filed. Then search by party name or case number.'

16

Identify your case & parties.

13b Identify your case. (Possible issue.)

“No cases match this filter.” Did you get this message? If not, great! Go to step 14. If you did get this message, then you need to add some missing case information before you can move forward.



To add the missing case information, click **File into an existing case**. Then add the case type, party information, etc.

If your case is not listed above, you are attempting to efile into a case that has yet to receive an electronic submission and the case is not searchable from the court's case management system.

You are still able to file into this case, but you will first be required to manually input the case information. Any additional filings on this case will not require the manual data entry.

[File into an existing case](#) [File into an existing case using template](#)

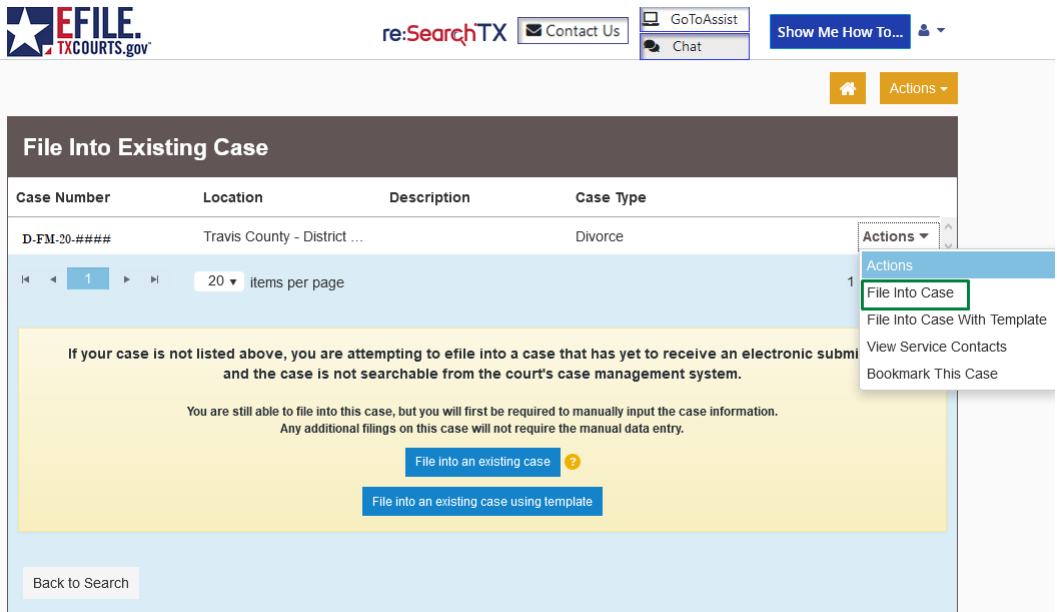
Why is some case information missing? Because the case was filed in person (manually), and not electronically. (Note: you can also get this message if you made a mistake typing in the case number or party name. Make sure those are correct.)

[Back to Search](#)

17

Identify your case & parties.

14 Select “File into Case.”



EFILE. TXCOURTS.gov

re:SearchTX [Contact Us](#) [GoToAssist](#) [Show Me How To...](#) [Chat](#)

File Into Existing Case

Case Number	Location	Description	Case Type
D-FM-20-####	Travis County - District ...		Divorce

20 Items per page

If your case is not listed above, you are attempting to efile into a case that has yet to receive an electronic submission and the case is not searchable from the court's case management system.

You are still able to file into this case, but you will first be required to manually input the case information. Any additional filings on this case will not require the manual data entry.

[File into an existing case](#) [File into an existing case using template](#)

[Back to Search](#)

Actions

- File Into Case
- File Into Case With Template
- View Service Contacts
- Bookmark This Case

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15a Enter a Filing Code.

Identify your case & parties.

Filings Need Help?

Enter the details for this filing

Filing Type ?
EFileAndServe

Filing Code
 [Dropdown menu open showing:
 Amended Filing
 Answer/Response/Waiver
 Bond
 Counter Claim/Cross Action/Interpleader/Intervention /Third Party - \$75.00
 Motion (No Fee)]

Filing Description

Client Reference Number ?
Firm client re-bill or case tracking #

Courtesy Copies

Undo Save Changes

There is a long list of Filing Codes in the drop down menu.

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15b Enter a Filing Code.

Identify your case & parties.

Here are some common options in the Filing Code dropdown menu.

If you want to:	Select:
Respond to a suit	Answer/Response/Waiver
Add a fee waiver	Statement of Inability to Afford Costs
File a modification	Motion to Modify
File an amended form	Amended Filing
File a notice	Notice
Add a proposed order	Proposed Order
Serve a party	Service Only
End child support withholding	Terminate Child Support Withholding

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16a Upload your form(s).

Upload your forms.

Leave these blanks empty:

- Filing Description
- Client Reference Number
- Comments to Court

If you want to send the other party a copy of the form you file, add their email address to the Courtesy Copies box. This is not required.

Click the up arrow icon or the cloud box icon. A window will open that shows some documents on your computer.

Select your filled-out form from where you saved it.

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16b Select security for your form.

Filing your court forms.

Click the drop down box under Security.

Select **“Contains Sensitive Data.”** This tells the court that your form contains personal information.

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17 Select services (if needed).

Filing your court forms.

Optional Services and Fees	Fee Amount	Quantity	Fee Total
		1	

Optional Services and Fees

Click to select Optional Service and Fee

- \$115.00 each
- Service - Constable - Certified Mail - \$80.00 each
- Service - Constable - Personal Service - \$80.00 each

Buttons: Undo, Save Changes, Add Optional Services and Fees

If you need to serve citation or have a constable serve the other party, click **Add Optional Services and Fees**.

Select the service you need from the drop down menu.

Click **Save Changes**.

23

18 Make corrections (if needed).

Filing your court forms.

Case # D-1-FM-

Case Information Need Help?

Location Travis County - District Clerk	Category Family - Other Family Law	Case Type Divorce
Case # D-1-FM		

Buttons: Undo, Save Changes

Party Information Need Help?

Party Type	Party Name	Lead Attorney
Petitioner	Petitioner's Name	
Respondent	Respondent's Name	

Buttons: Add Another Party

Filings Need Help?

Filing Code	Client Ref #	Filing Description
Answer/Response/Waiver		

Buttons: Add Another Filing

Is the case number, party names, and filing information correct?

If you need to add another document, such as a **fee waiver**, you can do it here.

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19a Serve the other party using eService.

“Service” means notifying the other party that you filed a document in the case.

Do you have an email address for the other party?

If so, you can eServe the other party a copy of your filed document.

What does “eServe” mean?

eServe is “electronic service.” This means the eFiling website will notify (serve notice to) the other party that you filed a document with the court. The eFiling website will email a copy of the document to the other party.

Why would I want to use eService?

Using eService is a way to comply with the requirement that all parties have to receive the document you are filing with the court electronically. You can learn more about this requirement by reading *Texas Rules of Civil Procedure 21a Methods of Service*.

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19b Serve the other party using eService

What if I don’t know the other party’s email address?

There are several options:

- Look at the documents you received from the other party. Often their email address is on the document.
- If the other party filed court documents electronically, then their email address should be in the eFiling system.
- If the other party is represented by an attorney, then that attorney’s email address should be on the documents you received or in the eFiling system. (If you know the other party has an attorney, you should eServe the attorney, too.)

If you don’t eServe, you will still be responsible for notifying the other party. See: *Texas Rules of Civil Procedure 21a*, “A document not filed electronically may be served in person, by mail, by commercial delivery service, by fax, by email, or by such other manner as the court in its discretion may direct.”

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19c Review service contacts.

Serve Notice on the other Party

Review the Service contacts. Select new service contact information from the drop-down Actions menu.

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20 Pay fee (if any).

Send your Forms & Payment to the Court

If you filed a answer or waiver, there is no cost *unless you selected services*.

- Under Payment Account your payment method.
- Under Party Responsible for Fees, select who will pay for this filing/service.
- Under Filer Type, select **Not Applicable**
- Click **Save Changes**.
- Click **Summary**.

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21a Review the “envelope” (filing information).

Summary - Case # D-1-FM-

Review and submit your envelope

Case Information

Location	Category	Case Type
Travis County - District Clerk	Family -	Divorce
Case #	D-1-FM-14- -	

Is the case information correct?

Party Information

Party Type	Party Name	Lead Attorney
Petitioner	Petitioner's Name	
Respondent	Respondent's Name	

Is your name correct?
Is your spouse's name correct?

Filings

Filing Code	Client Ref #	Filing Description
Answer/Response/Waiver		

Are the forms you uploaded included under Filings?

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21b Review the “envelope” (eService contacts).

Service Contacts

Serve	Name	Email
▼ Party:	Petitioner's Name - Petitioner	Petitioner's email address
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	name	email address for eService
▶ Party:	Respondent's Name - Respondent	
▶	Other Service Contacts	

If there isn't an email address in the eFile system for a party, then that party will be named under “Parties with no eService.”

Parties with No eService

Name	Address
Name of party with no email address for eService	mailing address of this party

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21c Review the “envelope” (fees).

Description	Amount
Filing Fee	\$0.00
Filing Total:	\$0.00
Total Filing Fee	\$0.00
Envelope Total:	\$0.00
	<i>Waiver selected</i>

Payment Account: Waiver
Filer Type: Not Applicable

Back Submit

If this is all correct, click **Submit.**

There may or may not be a fee for filing into an existing case.

The fee depends on:

- The type of filing,
- Any services you chose, and
- The payment method you selected (waiver or credit card).

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22. Check your email.

Once the envelope is submitted, the District Clerk’s Office will: *

- ✓ Process the filing.
- ✓ Send an acceptance email to you.

Check your email! Sometimes filings are returned. If this happens, you will get an email with more information.

*This process may take a week or longer due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration. We ask for patience.

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Questions?

Filing returned?

I got an email that that said my filing is returned. What does this mean?

The eFiling provider may send you an email that says your filing has been returned. This means there is something that needs to be corrected before your filing will can be accepted and filed with the court.

What do I do?

Read the email carefully. It should tell you why your filing has been returned. The District Clerk's Office usually writes comments to help you.

If the District Clerk's Office returns the filing *envelope* you can copy the envelope and make your changes to the copy. If you do, be sure to use the same envelope number. If you use a new envelope (file as a new case), you will have to pay twice.

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My filing was returned. Will I be charged?

You do not have to pay for a returned filing. Any holds placed on your credit card will be removed and the filing fees will not be charged. How long that takes depends on your financial institution.

My filing was accepted. Can I make changes to it?

No. Once the court clerk accepts the forms you filed, you cannot go back and change what is on file.

Who do I call for help?

If you have an eFiling technical question, contact the eFiling provider using the contact information on their website.

If you have a question about your filing, email the Travis County District Clerk at DistrictClerkHelp@traviscountytexas.gov

Filing returned?

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