

# Judiciary Creates Public User Group for PACER

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The federal Judiciary has created and is seeking members for a public user group to provide advice and feedback on ways to improve its electronic public access services. The Electronic Public Access (EPA) Public User Group membership will be selected from interested applicants who represent the legal sector, media, academia, government agencies, the public, and other entities that use the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system to access federal court records. The group will allow for the exchange of information about issues experienced by users, and it will recommend ideas for expanding and improving services.

The EPA Public User Group will consist of up to 12 members representing a cross section of PACER users. They will be selected by a panel established by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Members will be selected based on user type, their experience accessing court electronic records via PACER, frequency of usage, an account status in good standing, and a commitment to collecting additional feedback from their peers.

Interested parties can find additional information and [apply for membership](https://www.uscourts.gov/court-records/electronic-public-access-public-user-group) (<https://www.uscourts.gov/court-records/electronic-public-access-public-user-group>). Applications are due by July 26, 2019.

[PACER is an online portal \(https://www.pacer.gov/\)](https://www.pacer.gov/) that allows instantaneous access to virtually all documents filed by a judge or the parties in all U.S. courts of appeals, district courts, and bankruptcy courts. It provides a single point of access to more than 1 billion documents housed at more than 200 federal courts. In operation for more than 30 years, PACER today has about 3 million user accounts.

As mandated by Congress, the system is financed by user fees – 10 cents per search or accessed page. However, PACER users who incur charges of \$15 or less in a three-month period do not pay anything that quarter. As a result, 66 percent of the active PACER users each quarter do not pay a bill. Federal courts also grant fee-exempt access to unrepresented defendants, pro bono attorneys, academic researchers, and not-for-profit organizations. In addition, parties in a case and the attorneys of record receive a free copy of documents filed, and judges' written opinions can be accessed free of charge by anyone.

Most PACER fees are paid by high-volume, for-profit users. Approximately 87 percent of all PACER revenue is attributable to just 2 percent of corporate "power-users," such as large financial institutions and major commercial enterprises that aggregate data for analysis and resale.

The EPA User Group will hold its first meeting later this year. Meeting agendas, minutes, and other relevant information will be available online [will be available online](https://www.uscourts.gov/court-records/electronic-public-access-public-user-group) (<https://www.uscourts.gov/court-records/electronic-public-access-public-user-group>).