

## Frequently Asked Questions Arbitration

1. Where are you located and what are your hours?

The Arbitration office and hearing rooms are located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, City-County Building, 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. The Arbitration Office is open 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

2. Are the facilities accessible for individuals with a disability?

Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws, the Court provides reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation of any kind, please contact the Arbitration office prior to the hearing and arrangements will be made to provide a reasonable accommodation. You may also visit [www.alleghenycourts.us](http://www.alleghenycourts.us) and look under Administration, then under **INTERPRETER SERVICES and DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**.

3. What is the jurisdictional limit in Arbitration?

As per Allegheny County local rule 1301(1)(a), the current jurisdictional limit in Arbitration is \$50,000, exclusive of interest and costs.

4. Where do I file my complaint or pleadings?

Pleadings are filed with the Department of Court Records Civil/Family Division which is located on the first floor of the City-County Building, 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

5. Can I e-file my pleadings?

Yes. The website to e-file is <https://dcr.alleghenycounty.us>. Go to Civil/Family Division, then go to Register. Under logon choose "Click here to Register". Tutorials on how to electronically file can be found at [https://dcr.alleghenycounty.us/DCR\\_efiling\\_Video\\_Tutorials.html](https://dcr.alleghenycounty.us/DCR_efiling_Video_Tutorials.html).

6. How do I see my docket entries or case information?

Follow the steps for tracking case records:

- Visit [www.dcr.alleghenycounty.us/civil/](http://www.dcr.alleghenycounty.us/civil/)
- Input case number: AR\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

- Complete Security Check

7. How do I get a hearing date?

When you file your complaint with the Department of Court Records, you will receive your hearing date. Arbitration claims are initiated by the filing of a verified complaint for claims in excess of \$3,000 or a short-form complaint for claims less than \$3,000. At the time of filing, a hearing date will be assigned, which is entered on the Allegheny County cover sheet and notice of hearing date.

8. How do I obtain a continuance for my Arbitration case?

If you require a continuance of your Arbitration hearing, please follow the Procedure for Obtaining a Continuance, found at [www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/arbitration](http://www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/arbitration). If the continuance is **uncontested**, you must file an Adjournment of Hearing Form online in Microsoft Word format using the procedures outlined above. If the continuance is **contested** you must follow the instructions relating to filing contested Motions before the Calendar Control Judge, the Honorable Patrick Connelly by visiting [www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/judges](http://www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/judges).

9. How do I continue my Landlord Tenant case?

If all parties consent to the continuance, you must file an Adjournment of Hearing in person at the Housing Court Help Desk located on the first floor of the City-County Building, inside the Department of Court Records. If all parties do not consent to the continuance, you must present the request as a motion before the Honorable Patrick Connelly. Follow the procedures at [www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/judges](http://www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/judges) to schedule a contested motion before Judge Connelly. If you have further questions, you can direct them to the Housing Court Help Desk staff at [HCHelpdesk@alleghenyCourts.us](mailto:HCHelpdesk@alleghenyCourts.us) or by calling the Help Desk at 412-350-4462.

10. What if my case settles prior to the Arbitration hearing date?

When a case settles prior to the arbitration date, counsel must notify the Arbitration Center by calling 412-350-1926 and report that the matter has settled. You must follow up by filing a Praecipe to Settle and Discontinue the docket with the Department of Court Records.

11. How do I schedule an Arbitration motion?

Arbitration motions are heard by the General Motions judge. You must follow the procedures for the specific type of motion you wish to schedule and have heard by visiting [www.alleghenycourts.us](http://www.alleghenycourts.us) under Civil, Motions.

12. How do I schedule a Landlord Tenant motion?

Although you can obtain the paperwork to file a motion by going to the Court's website at [www.alleghenycourts.us](http://www.alleghenycourts.us), all motions must be scheduled in person at the Housing Court Help Desk located on the first floor of the City County Building, inside of the Department of Court Records offices. If you have any questions, you can direct them to the Housing Court Help Desk staff in person or via email at [HCHelpdesk@alleghenycourts.us](mailto:HCHelpdesk@alleghenycourts.us).

13. Can I have a remote/virtual hearing instead of coming in person?

To reduce /avoid in person contact, you can now opt to have your arbitration hearing conducted remotely using advanced communication technology (ACT). A remote arbitration hearing is a safe effective and efficient way to conduct the arbitration hearing. To request a virtual hearing, follow the Remote Arbitration Hearing Instructions found at [www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/arbitration](http://www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/arbitration).

14. What happens when I check in for my hearing?

All parties and counsel are required to indicate that they are ready for trial by advising the arbitration courtroom clerk. When all parties are ready, the case is given a number. The case is then sent to trial in numerical order to any arbitration board that is ready to hear the case. All parties and counsel should advise the clerk of their readiness for trial at 9:00 a.m. and be prepared for trial at any time.

15. How do I obtain a copy of my Arbitration award/verdict?

You may view your Arbitration Award or Verdict by logging into the DCR web site and tracking your case (see tracking instructions above). Awards are docketed the same day as the hearing, with the scanned image appearing a day later. Further, the Department of Court Records will send a copy of the Award/Verdict to you in the envelope you filled out at your hearing. This may take several days.

16. What happens if a party fails to appear at an Arbitration hearing?

A second call of the list will take place at 10:00 a.m., and if neither party answers “ready,” a non-suit will be entered. If only one-party answers “ready,” the case may be sent to the first available arbitration board for an ex parte hearing, at which time the party that is present will present his or her case-in-chief, and the board makes its award. Alternatively, if a Duty to Appear at Arbitration Hearing notice was given and all present parties agree, the case may be heard by a judge immediately. A nonjury verdict will be rendered, from which there is no right to appeal de novo. Within 10 days of the verdict being sent, post-trial motions must be filed in the Office of the Department of Court Records and a copy must be delivered to the trial judge. Argument will be scheduled by the trial judge without praecipe. Post-trial motions should explain why the party was not present and will be decided by the judge who rendered the verdict

17. How can I become an arbitrator and what are the requirements?

The arbitration supervisor maintains a master list of members of the bar of Pennsylvania, practicing in Allegheny County, from which the arbitrators are chosen. The list is subject to approval by the Administrative Judge of the Civil Division. The arbitrators serve until completion of the hearings scheduled that day and therefore are required to set aside the day for service. The supervisor of arbitration empanels an appropriate number of boards to efficiently adjudicate the day’s caseload. Cases are assigned for hearing to each board by the Arbitration Assembly Room clerk when advised that the case is ready for hearing. Each arbitration board is made up of three attorneys, who are actively engaged in the practice of law in Allegheny County. Each board has one chairperson, who has been admitted to the bar for at least three years. The board hears all evidence relating to the trial and decides all factual disputes and legal issues involved in the case. An attorney who satisfies the above requirements and wishes to serve as an arbitrator must complete a Court supplied Application form and a W-9 form and submit them to the Arbitration Center.

18. How do I ask for an interpreter for my court proceeding?

The Fifth Judicial District (Allegheny County Courts) provides foreign language interpreters for persons with limited English proficiency in judicial proceedings, and to enable access to court services and programs. These services are free of charge. The Court also provides interpreters for Deaf/hard of hearing persons and other disability accommodations to provide access to Court services, programs, facilities, and in judicial proceedings pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These services are free of charge.

To request an interpreter or disability accommodation, please visit [www.alleghenycourts.us](http://www.alleghenycourts.us) and look under Administration, then **INTERPRETER SERVICES and DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS.**

19. May I have a court reporter for the Arbitration hearing?

Any party, at his or her own expense, may provide for a court reporter to record, or make a recording of, the testimony of the trial. If opposing counsel or parties wish to receive a copy of this transcript or recording, they must agree to pay their proportionate share of the cost.

20. Are litigants allowed to speak with the Arbitrators regarding their final decision after the hearing?

A litigant who wishes to speak with an Arbitrator regarding a final decision after a hearing may do so only if the Arbitrator indicates a willingness to discuss the claim. If the Arbitrator indicates an unwillingness to discuss a judicial decision, they should not be approached further. Should a party have a particularly difficult problem with an Arbitrator, they should address that concern with the Supervisor of the Arbitration Program.

21. Can I appeal my Arbitration award?

An appeal must be taken not later than 30 days after the day the Department of Court Records (DCR) makes the notation on the docket that notice of entry of the award has been provided to all parties. The appeal is taken by filing, with the DCR, a notice of appeal from the award of the board of arbitrators, a data collection record, and a copy of the notice of appeal for mailing, with properly addressed envelopes, to all counsel and unrepresented parties. Arbitration appeals are heard before a judge either with or without a jury.