



# FEDERAL CRIMINAL RECORD VENDOR

Only persons convicted of violating Federal laws (that is, laws of the United States) are sent to Federal prisons. Some individuals awaiting trial for violating Federal laws are also held in Federal prisons. While the Federal Bureau of Prisons (Bureau) does house a few state inmates, most inmates convicted of violating state or local laws are sent to state prisons or city or county jails.

- **What are federal criminal records?**
  - Records of federal crimes that an individual committed.
  - Federal records are the most serious of crimes.
  - Examples of federal crimes: Kidnapping, hijacking a plane, drug trafficking and money laundering.
  - Very limited identifiers may be found on federal criminal records.
  
- **Federal level records are maintained in two locations:**
  - U.S. District Court System (available to public)
  - FBI (available to government law enforcement agencies and other groups who have been granted access)
  - There are 94 U.S. Federal Judicial Districts.
  - There are 296 District and Divisional Courts.
  
- **After a federal case is closed the case information is stored at the Federal court where the case was tried.**
  
- **Then it moves to Federal Records Center (FRC). The length of time between a case being closed and moving to FRC varies by district.**
  
- **After 20-30 years the records are transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)**
  
- **Requests may be made by:**
  - Mail
  - Free online access (only a few states/districts offer this; AR Western District, ID District, IN Southern District and PA Eastern District)
  - Computerized index (such as PACER)
  
- **Public Access to Electronic Court Records**
  
- **Operated by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.**

Website located: <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/>

# P.A.C.E.R.

## WHAT IS IT?

Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information from Federal Appellate, District and Bankruptcy courts, and from the U.S. Party/Case Index via the Internet. Links to all courts are provided from this web site. Electronic access is available by registering with the PACER Service Center, the judiciary's centralized registration, billing, and technical support center. PACER is a service of the United States Judiciary. The PACER Service Center is operated by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

- **The PACER System offers electronic access to case dockets to retrieve information such as:**
  - Listing of all parties and participants including judges, attorneys, and trustees
  - A compilation of case related information.
  - Chronology of dates of case events.
  
- **Federal records have limited identifiers.**
  - Typically just the name appears on the PACER docket sheets. Some federal offenders are assigned a federal ID number which will act as an identifier on other federal criminal dockets.
  
- **Ways to qualify federal records:**
  - A few courts will release limited information over the phone with the case number or party name.
  - Email / phone the District Attorney listed on the case.

Send a researcher into the U.S. District Court to pull files or obtain copies of entire case file (this can get quite expensive).

## HOW DO I REGISTER?

There is an on-line registration form via the PACER web page: <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/>

## WHAT IS THE COST AND HOW DO I PAY?

The PACER Service Center mails quarterly statements unless you have signed up for automatic credit card billing. Each quarter a statement will be generated and mailed for your account, if you have accrued charges during the quarter and have a balance due greater than \$10. If your balance due is less than \$10, no statement will be mailed and payment will be deferred until the balance due is greater than \$10. The statement will only include the total amount due. Transaction detail is available through the PACER web site or through a statement email service. **Note:** Balances for accounts that have signed up for automatic credit card billing will be charged on a quarterly basis automatically to the credit card on file at the PACER Service Center for account balances more than \$10. Balances less than \$10 are deferred. Electronic statements will be generated and sent via email. Paper statements will not be mailed for these accounts.

All registered agencies or individuals will be charged a user fee. Access to web based PACER systems will generate and \$.08 per page charge. The per page charge applies to the number of pages that results from any

search, including a search that yields no matches (one page for no matches.) The charge applies whether or not pages are printed, viewed, or downloaded. You will be billed on a quarterly basis for your transactions. You will be allowed to enter a client code of your choosing each time you login to PACER to help facilitate managing the costs.

**How do I register to have quarterly statements emailed to me?**

Using your firm's assigned login and password, you may register to receive emailed quarterly statements under Account Information. Click on Quarterly Statement Email Service.

**What are the acceptable uses of the data obtained from the PACER system?**

The information gathered from the PACER system is a matter of public record and may be reproduced without permission. However, the PACER customer assumes all responsibility for consequences that arise from use of the data.