

Adding or Creating New Parties

You may need to add parties to CM/ECF system (see Note) when opening a new civil case or filing a pleading such as an amended complaint.

NOTE: Only individuals or organizations **that are a party to the action** should be added as a party to the case. Do not add a party simply because you were required to serve them by law unless they are specifically named on the complaint (e.g., the U.S. Attorney for this District or the U.S. Attorney General).

You must first perform a search to see if your party has already been entered in the ECF system before a new party name can be added. Type the first few letters of the party's last name for an individual or the first few letters of the company name into the "Last/Business name" field. Although system searches are not case sensitive, this district requires that all new parties be added in UPPER CASE format. Click [\[Search\]](#).

The screenshot shows the ECF system interface with a search form. The 'Last / Business Name' field contains the text 'PURPLE' and is highlighted with a red box. The 'Search' button is also highlighted with a red box. The interface includes a navigation bar with 'Civil', 'Criminal', 'Query', 'Reports', 'Utilities', 'Search', and 'Logout' options. Below the navigation bar is a yellow banner that says 'Open a Civil Case'. The search form has buttons for 'Add New Party' and 'Create Case', and links for 'Collapse All' and 'Expand All'.

Review the list of party names already available in CM/ECF to ensure your new name does not

The screenshot shows the ECF system interface with search results. The search results list shows 'PURPLE LAVENDER', 'PURPLE PORPOISE', and 'PURPLE RECORD DISTRIB. CORP.'. The 'Select Party' button is highlighted with a red box. The interface includes a navigation bar with 'Civil', 'Criminal', 'Query', 'Reports', 'Utilities', 'Search', and 'Logout' options. Below the navigation bar is a yellow banner that says 'Open a Civil Case'. The search form has buttons for 'Add New Party' and 'Create Case', and links for 'Collapse All' and 'Expand All'.

already exist. If the name does exist, then highlight it and click [\[Select Party\]](#).

If several possible choices exist, double click on each name to reveal additional information about that party in a separate window. In some cases, this information will help you decide which party to choose.

Review the party information and **select the party's role** (i.e., plaintiff, defendant, etc.) for this filing (see **Selecting/Modifying Party Roles** in the next section below). Click **[Submit]**.

NOTE: Before adding a party to an existing case, check your case number to ensure that you are working in the correct case. Then, thoroughly search for the party's last name or the company's name before adding a new record to the database.

Example of an incorrect search parameter: **The** Florida Bar

Example of a **correct** search parameter: Florida Bar

NOTE: **Incorrectly added parties will be periodically updated by the systems administrator but may appear on your pick-list from time to time. Always choose an existing party that is properly formatted over one that was added incorrectly when presented with a list of possible matches.**

Correct Example: JOHN W SMITH JR

Incorrect Example: John W. Smith, Jr.

Selecting/Modifying Party Roles

It is important that the user select the correct party role when adding a new party. The system defaults to "defendant (dft:pty)", and it is up to the user to change this designation when applicable. To change the "Role" field, click the down arrow and either use the mouse and the scroll bar or the keyboard to move through the options until the correct party role is found. Selections are in alphabetical order.

The screenshot shows the 'Party Information' form with the following fields: Last name (SMITH), First name, Middle name, Generation, Role (dropdown menu), Prisoner Id, Unit, Address 2, City, County, Phone, E-mail, Party text, and Start date. The Role dropdown menu is open, showing a list of roles in alphabetical order: Defendant (dft:pty), Consol Third Party Defendant (con3pd:pty), Consol Third Party Plaintiff (con3pl:pty), Counter Claimant (cc:pty), Counter Defendant (cd:pty), Creditor (cr:pty), Cross Claimant (crc:pty), Cross Defendant (crd:pty), Custodian (cust:pty), Debtor-in-Possess (dbpos:pty), Defendant (dft:pty), Garnishee (gar:pty), In Re (inre:pty), Interested Party (ip:pty), Interpleader (intpl:pty), Intervenor (intv:pty), Intervenor Defendant (intvd:pty), and Intervenor Plaintiff (intvp:pty). The 'Defendant (dft:pty)' option is highlighted in blue. A red circle highlights the dropdown arrow.

Once selected, the party type will appear in the "Role" field as shown below:

The screenshot shows the 'Party Information' form with the following fields: Last name (SMITH), First name, Middle name, Generation, Role (Defendant (dft:pty)), Prisoner Id, Unit, Address 2, City, County, Phone, E-mail, Party text, and Start date. The Role field is highlighted with a red oval.

If a Party is Not Found

If the desired party name is not present in the database as the name appears on your document, then click [\[Create New Party\]](#).

The screenshot shows the ECF interface for opening a civil case. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'ECF' and menu items: 'Civil', 'Criminal', 'Query', 'Reports', 'Utilities', 'Search', and 'Logout'. Below this is a yellow header with the text 'Open a Civil Case'. The main area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a tree view with 'LAVENDER PURPLE' expanded, showing sub-items: 'Alias', 'Corporate Parent or other affiliate', and 'Attorney'. The right column is titled 'Search for a party' and contains input fields for 'Last / Business Name' (with 'GARNET' entered), 'First Name', and 'Middle Name'. A 'Search' button is below these fields. Underneath, a 'Search Results' box displays 'GARNET AND GOLD INC'. At the bottom of the search results, there are two buttons: 'Select Party' and 'Create New Party', with the latter highlighted by a red rectangular box.

ECF displays a screen with the “Last name” field completed using the search criteria that was entered on the “search for party” screen.

The screenshot shows the 'Party Information' form in the ECF system. The form is set against a yellow background. On the left, the same tree view from the previous screenshot is visible. The main form area contains the following fields: 'Last name' (filled with 'GARNET'), 'First name' (empty), 'Middle name' (empty), 'Generation' (empty), 'Title' (empty), 'Role' (dropdown menu with 'Defendant (dft.pty)' selected), 'Defendant no.' (empty), 'Pro se' (dropdown menu with 'No' selected), 'Prisoner Id' (empty), 'Unit' (empty), 'Office' (empty), 'Address1' (empty), 'Address 2' (empty), 'Address 3' (empty), 'City' (empty), 'State' (empty), 'Zip' (empty), 'Country' (empty), 'Prison' (dropdown menu), 'Phone' (empty), 'Fax' (empty), 'E-mail' (empty), 'Party text' (empty), 'Start date' (filled with '9/28/2009'), 'End date' (empty), 'Corporation' (dropdown menu with 'no' selected), and 'Notice' (dropdown menu with 'yes' selected). At the bottom left of the form is an 'Add Party' button.

If you searched for a name using upper and lower case letters, you will now need to retype the last name or the company name in the "Last Name" field using ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

- For a company, enter the entire company name in the **Last Name** field using all capital letters, i.e. FLORIDA BAR. Choose the appropriate "Role" (i.e., plaintiff, defendant, etc.) from the drop down list. Click [\[Add Party\]](#). Leave all other fields blank if the party is represented by counsel. Add address information for pro se parties using all capital letters, no punctuation, and standard USPS abbreviations.
- For an individual, fill out the **Last Name, First Name, Middle Name, and Generation** fields as appropriate using all capital letters, i.e. ROBERT WINSTON CHURCHILL. Choose the appropriate "Role" from the drop down list. Click [\[Add Party\]](#). Leave all other fields blank, especially the title field.

NOTE: Do not add text to the "Title" field. See ["The Party Text Field"](#) below for more information.

- The "Start Date" will be completed automatically and should not be changed.

The Party Text Field

Use the "Party text" field to add additional information to describe your party. Information added to this field is case specific and will not be transferred to all cases in the system using that particular party record. Use all capital letters when completing this optional field.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Party Information" for "STONE GARNET". The form contains several input fields and dropdown menus. The "Party text" field is highlighted with a red rectangular box. Other fields include Title, Role (set to "Defendant (dt:pty)"), Defendant no., Pro se (set to "No"), Prisoner Id, Unit, Office, Address1, Address2, Address3, City, State, Zip, Country, Prison, Phone, Fax, E-mail, Start date (9/28/2009), End date, Corporation (set to "no"), and Notice (set to "yes"). A "Save Changes" button is at the bottom, along with a link to "Start a New Search".

Example:

Last Name Field	=	ABC CORPORATION
Party Text Field	=	A FLORIDA CORPORATION
First Name Field	=	JOHN
Middle Name Field	=	H
Last Name Field	=	SMITH
Party Text Field	=	WARDEN

Editing Parties, Attorney Representation, Corporate Parents or Other Affiliations

Use the participant tree to add attorneys to parties. The participant tree is a new feature of CM/ECF introduced in version 4.0 and is present in all docketing events. The left side of the participant tree screen is where the editing controls are located. This side also gives you an overview of all the parties in the case. The right side of the participant tree screen is the “working” side where changes to a party can be made.



Click the pencil to edit.

Click the pencil icon for the desired party on the left side of the participant tree screen to update party details:

Party Information
 STONE GARNET

Title

Role Defendant no.

Pro se

Prisoner Id Unit

Office

Address1

Address 2 Show this address on the docket sheet

Address 3 City

State Zip Country

Prison

Phone Fax

E-mail

Party text

Start date End date

Corporation Notice

[Start a New Search](#)

The editing screen will appear on the right side:



Click the plus sign icon to edit a party's 'Alias' or their "Corporate Parent or Other affiliate" records.

Both actions take the user to a search screen as one must search for an existing alias, corporate parent, or affiliate just like you did when the party was added.

The attorney for the filer will be added automatically through the filing of the event or case opening. Co-counsel may be added through the e-filing of a Notice of Appearance. Filing

attorneys may not add other attorneys to a case which is why the plus sign icon is absent:

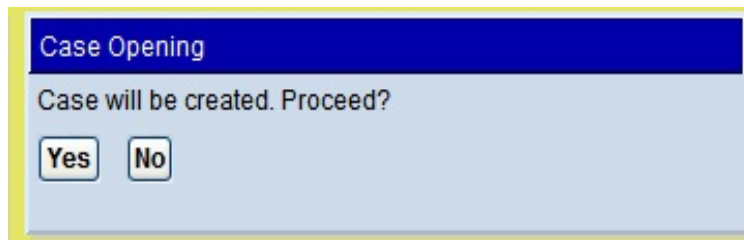
STONE GARNET dft. ✎ ✖

- Alias +
- Corporate Parent or other affiliate +
- Attorney ←

Attorneys cannot edit attorney associations to a party in a case but can add themselves to a case via a Notice of Attorney Appearance filing.

New Civil or Miscellaneous Case Opening

If you are opening a new civil or miscellaneous case and have completed all party updates, you will see the following prompt:



Click YES to open the new case. Click NO to go back and make changes to your parties.

If you need to make changes, you will be advised that the changes will be temporarily stored via the following message:

The changes you made have been temporarily stored for processing.
If you need to make more changes, use the case participant tree to navigate.
You must click **Update Case** or **Create Case** to save the changes to the case.

Conversely, if you click YES, then you will be provided with the new case number and a link to docket the lead event. You **MUST** docket the lead event in the case, e.g., Notice of Removal, Complaint, in order for a Magistrate and/or a District judge to be assigned. A case opened with only a number and no case initiating document is not considered a valid filing.

