

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA**

IN RE:)	No. 26-mc-00001
)	
PRISONER ELECTRONIC FILING PROGRAM)	GENERAL ORDER/ ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 2026-07

GENERAL ORDER

This General Order replaces and supersedes the General Order In re: Prisoner Electronic Filing Program issued on October 2, 2025. The effective date of this General Order is May 20, 2026.

The purpose of this General Order is to set forth the updated procedures of the Southern District of Indiana’s Prisoner Electronic Filing Program (“E-Filing Program”), which was first implemented on June 5, 2013. The E-Filing Program uses technology to allow safe, efficient, and cost-effective filing of documents with the Southern District of Indiana Clerk’s Office by Indiana state prisoners incarcerated by the Indiana Department of Correction (“DOC”) at participating facilities, including facilities run by corporations that have contracted with the State of Indiana to house prisoners. All prisoners at participating facilities are required to use the E-Filing Program to file documents with the Court and to send any correspondence to the Court. The E-Filing Program is mandatory for all prisoners incarcerated within participating facilities.

This Order updates the E-Filing Program in two key respects. First, it directs that a prisoner's original filings shall be returned to the prisoner instead of retained and mailed to the Court. Second, it directs that all prisoners at participating facilities shall receive electronic service for documents issued by the Court. Prisoners may opt out of electronic service by notifying the Court.

It is ORDERED that the E-Filing Program shall operate as follows until further directed by the Court:

1. Participants in the E-Filing Program include a) the Clerk's Office for the Southern District of Indiana; b) the prison facilities identified in Exhibit A to this Order; and c) any prisoner who is or who seeks to be a party to civil litigation filed in this Court and who is also confined at a facility identified in Exhibit A to this Order. All prisoners at participating facilities are required to use the E-Filing Program to file documents with the Court and to send any correspondence to the Court related to their civil litigation. The E-Filing Program is not available in criminal cases.
2. The Court anticipates that the E-Filing Program will expand to include additional DOC facilities in the future. Accordingly, Exhibit A may be amended informally from time to time to reflect that expansion without formal amendment of this General Order.
3. Each participating facility will establish an email address at which prison library staff ("Library Staff") may receive Notices of Electronic Filing ("NEF"s).
4. To implement the E-Filing Program, Library Staff will scan and submit documents provided by a prisoner for filing to the Court electronically, consistent with procedures prescribed by the Clerk of Court.
5. The Court has provided each facility with a stamp that will be used to mark the first page of the document submitted by a prisoner for filing. This stamp contains the document's page count, the initials of the Library Staff processing the document, and the date the document is submitted for E-Filing.
6. When an E-Filing participant's filing is docketed, or when the Court issues a document, an NEF is automatically generated by the Court's Case Management / Electronic Case Filing system ("CM/ECF"). The NEF constitutes the official service upon and notice to the other parties who have appeared in the case if they are represented by counsel. Prisoners are

responsible for serving their non-case initiating filings on any unrepresented parties in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Prisoners are also responsible for serving sealed filings on represented and unrepresented parties in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. *See* General Order on Procedures for Sealed Filings.

7. The E-Filing Program does not affect the obligation of other parties to serve copies of documents and all attachments in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. It is the responsibility of defendants and non-prisoner parties, not Library Staff, to mail to the prisoner, via U.S. Mail, copies of any documents filed with the Court.
8. When an E-Filing participant's filing is docketed, or when the Court issues a document, prisoners receive a paper copy of the NEF. In addition to the NEF, prisoners also receive back the original document they filed, or a complete copy of any Entry, Order, or Notice issued by the Court, including any attachments. The NEF, any associated documents, and the original document that was filed are delivered to the prisoner through the prison law library and/or institutional mail. The prisoner shall review the NEF and verify that the correct number of pages were filed. If there is a problem with the scanned document, the prisoner shall re-submit the original to library staff, who will contact the Court to report the discrepancy.
9. The prisoner shall keep the original document and produce it later, if ordered to do so by the Court. If it is later determined by the Court that a portion of a pleading is missing or illegible, the Court will enter an Order directing the prisoner to mail the original document to the Court or to re-submit the document to library staff for electronic submission. Local Rule 5-9 requires that "[a] person who electronically files a document that requires an original signature must maintain the original signed document for two years after all deadlines for appeals in the case expire."

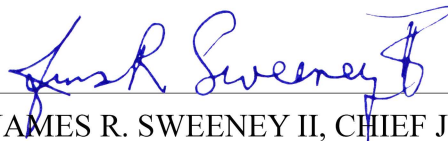
10. Prisoners who do not wish to receive electronic service of Court-issued documents ("E-Service") may opt out of this portion of the program only by submitting the form appended to this Order as Exhibit B. After opting out of E-Service, prisoners' service copies will be sent to them at the facility via U.S. Mail. These prisoners will not receive NEFs. But they will still receive their original filing back from the law librarian after it has been filed.
11. If a prisoner who has opted out of E-Service is transferred to a facility that participates in the E-Filing Program, the prisoner does not need to opt-out again. The prisoner's previous opt-out will carry over to the new facility.
12. Prisoners who wish to resume E-Service after opting out may submit the form appended to this Order as Exhibit C. A new opt-in form must be executed for each case in which the prisoner seeks to opt in to E-Service, and must be in the form appended to this Order as Exhibit C. This paragraph only applies to prisoners who have first opted out of E-Service and wish to opt back in.
13. Any prisoner who is a party to a civil case pending in the Southern District of Indiana must notify the Court immediately of any change of address (i.e., upon transfer or release) by filing a written Notice of Change of Address with the Clerk of Court, whether or not the prisoner is required to use the E-Filing program, and whether or not the prisoner has opted out of E-Service.
14. If at any time a prisoner is released from prison or transferred to a facility that is not participating in the E-Filing Program, the prisoner's participation in the E-Filing Program will terminate, and all participants, including the Court, will return to the traditional method of filing and serving case documents through the U.S. Mail.
15. If Court-recruited counsel enters an appearance on behalf of a prisoner at a facility with E-

Filing, the prisoner will continue to receive E-Service. If a prisoner at an E-Filing facility retains counsel, the prisoner's participation in E-Service is terminated.

16. Case initiating documents (such as petitions and complaints) that are E-Filed will not be served upon defendants until service is directed by the Court. Only one copy of the complaint or petition should be filed, and copies of United States Marshal Service Form 285 or Summons are unnecessary.
17. It is the Court's expectation that each participating prison facility will provide prisoners with regular access to E-Filing. This means that each participating prison should have a policy or practice in place to allow a prisoner to **submit** documents for E-Filing each day the Clerk's office is open.
18. Only if the prisoner housed in a participating prison faces an institutional barrier to E-Filing may he or she submit a document for filing through the U.S. mail. That filing should set forth why the E-Filing program could not be used. The prisoner should not mail paper copies of documents that have been E-Filed to the Court.
19. Cases filed prior to May 20, 2026, with a prisoner residing in a participating facility who is not currently participating in E-Service will automatically be enrolled in E-Service. The prisoner will be notified by NEF at the time their case is transitioned to the E-Service Program.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

For the Court,



JAMES R. SWEENEY II, CHIEF JUDGE
United States District Court
Southern District of Indiana

Date: 4/17/2026

Exhibit A

Facilities Participating in the Prisoner E-Filing Program

Wabash Valley Correctional Facility – Effective June 5, 2013

Westville Correctional Facility - Effective May 1, 2014

Pendleton Correctional Facility – Effective July 2, 2014

Plainfield Correctional Facility – Effective July 1, 2016

Reception Diagnostic Center – Effective July 1, 2016

Branchville Correctional Facility – Effective July 13, 2016

Correctional Industrial Facility – Effective August 24, 2016

Putnamville Correctional Facility – Effective January 24, 2017

Miami Correctional Facility – Effective October 25, 2017

Indiana State Prison – Effective January 12, 2018

Exhibit B

Opt Out of Receiving Documents Through Prisoner Electronic Service Program

I am participating in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana Prisoner Electronic Filing Program ("E-Filing Program"). I now wish to opt out of receiving service of Court documents electronically as provided below.

Under the E-Service Program, when the Court issues an Order, Entry, or other document, a Notice of Electronic Filing is automatically generated and sent to prison library staff. Rather than receiving service in this way, I choose to receive service by U.S. Mail and institutional mail process.

This opting out of E-service is valid for this case only and for as long as I reside at my current correctional facility. A new opt-out form must be signed and filed if I am transferred and the new facility participates in the E-Filing Program, or if I wish to opt out of E-Service in any other case. I acknowledge that it is my obligation to notify the Court of any change in my address.

Name: _____

Date: _____

DOC Number: _____

Address: _____

Exhibit C

Opt In to Receiving Documents Through Prisoner Electronic Service Program

I am participating in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana Prisoner Electronic Filing Program ("E-Filing Program"). I previously opted out of E-Service, but now wish to return to receiving service via Notices of Electronic Filings sent to prison library staff.

This opting in to E-service is valid for this case only. I acknowledge that it is my obligation to notify the Court of any change in my address.

Name: _____

Date: _____

DOC Number: _____

Address: _____