



PACER: Access and Education Program

PROGRAM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

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 the PACER Case Locator via the Internet. PACER use is limited to registered users. Anyone, however, can register to use the service. Rather than appropriating funds for public access services, Congress directed the Judiciary to fund PACER through user fees. User fees are applied to all users of the service, unless they are waived by a court, at a rate of \$0.08 per page retrieved. Beginning on April 1, 2012 this will increase to \$0.10 per page. This applies to both the pages of search results and the pages of documents retrieved. If a total of less than \$10.00 worth of charges in any given quarter is accrued, fees are waived for that quarter.

With the exception of a pilot project from November 2007 to September 2008, PACER has not been available to Federal depository libraries through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

GOALS

- Increase general public access to PACER
- Establish a program that teaches individuals to be effective and efficient users of PACER
- Provide new content for FDLP and public libraries

OBJECTIVES

- Develop self-guided training on the use of PACER
- Develop train the trainer sessions on the use of PACER
- Create educational materials and online learning modules

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Working in collaboration the FDLP, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AOUSC), and the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) will establish an education program that will result in more proficient public users of PACER. It also will result in greater awareness of and access to the service. The Program will be open to Federal depository libraries, public libraries, and public law libraries. Registration for the program will be through the PACER Service Center.

Librarians from participating libraries will develop training materials for individual or group instruction; remote users or users within the library; and use with training trainers. Content of the sessions will include, but not necessarily limited to:

- How to establish a PACER account;
- Cost of using PACER
- How to monitor user accounts;
- How to access PACER;
- What PACER is and is not;
- How to search PACER;
- Searching to reduce costs; and
- Where to find help if needed.

Statistics will be reported and session evaluations will be analyzed to determine if the program is achieving its goals and meeting the success factors.

Libraries participating in PACER: Access and Education Program will be exempt from the first \$50 of quarterly usage charges.

TRAINING EXPECTATIONS

PACER: Access and Education Program participating libraries are expected to meet the following training expectations:

- Conduct at least one training class per quarter for the general public;
- Share PACER-related training materials for redistribution with other Program libraries;
- Provide PACER training or refresher opportunities at least once a year for library staff who may assist patrons in the use of PACER;
- Use the PACER Training Session Evaluation Form in each educational session; and
- Maintain statistics and report quarterly the number of education sessions conducted, the number of participants in the sessions, and the results from session evaluations.

DEFINITIONS

Federal Depository Library A library designated under the provisions of 44 USC §19 that maintains a Federal depository collection for use and local access by the general public and which offers professional assistance in locating

and using government information products and services. Federal Depository Library Directory:

<http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/FDLPdir.jsp>

Public Library

A library that serves all residents of a given community, district, or region, and (typically) receives its financial support, in whole or part, from public funds. Public libraries make their basic collections and services available to the population of their legal service area without charges to individual users. Products and services beyond the library's basic services may or may not be provided to the public, with or without individual charges. Individual charges may be assessed to library users outside the legal service area of the library. In addition to including the tax-supported municipal, county, and regional public libraries, this definition includes privately- and federally-controlled libraries governed by single board of trustees or other authority, and administered by a single director. Examples of public libraries include:

- A city library with its branches.
- A county, multicounty, or regional library with outlets functioning as branches.

Directory: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/librarysearch/>

(current as of FY 2005)

County/Public Law Library

A library that maintains a specialized focused collection of legal materials, and serves the public, courts, city/county officials, and lawyers of the county. County Law libraries may be funded, in whole or in part, with public funds.

Directory: <http://www.sblawlibrary.org/Content.aspx?G=68aac333-ee2b-4bd8-8d4e-e3e32cadadd4>

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Increase in the number of education sessions
- Increase in the number of persons participating in sessions
- Positive results from session evaluations

PROJECTED TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

Feb - March 2011

Develop a guide to library obligations
Create educational materials and online learning modules

April - May

Initial testing with 10 libraries

Oct - Nov	Expand participation to an additional volunteering 50 libraries, with preference given to those libraries that participated in the 2007 FDLP/PACER Pilot Project.
December	Initial Evaluation of Program
January 2012	Open participation to any Federal depository or public library, upon successful evaluation
July 2012	Evaluate Program

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Rev: 10/2011