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PRESS RELEASE

COURT LAUNCHES LIVE-CHAT FOR SMALL CLAIMS, LANDLORD-TENANT AND CIVIL CASES

Superior Court's Civil Division implements online service to answer public inquiries real-time

WASHINGTON, DC – D.C. Superior Court's Civil Division now offers a customized chat line aimed at providing "*answers at your fingertips.*" Representatives from all of the Civil Division Branches: Small Claims (cases involving disputes over less than \$5000), Landlord and Tenant, Civil Actions (cases involving disputes over more than \$5000), and the Quality Review Branch (which can answer questions relating to) will be available to respond to questions from the public on-line in real time.

The Live Chat feature is one more step the DC Superior Court has made in an effort to be more responsive to the public, especially those without an attorney who seek to utilize court services. The Civil Division has the two branches of the court that have the highest volume of cases, and the highest number of people who are not represented by attorneys – Small Claims and Landlord Tenant. In both of those branches, members of the public will now be able to get assistance (though not legal advice) instantly through the live chat feature. The new feature makes receiving answers to commonly asked questions concerning civil cases more convenient than ever. (The court has resource centers in the Small Claims and Landlord Tenant Branches for those who need help relating to legal representation.)

"The court strives to ensure access to justice for all in our community, to make our services as convenient and accessible as possible. The Live Chat feature that our high-volume Civil Division is adding is just the most recent step in many efforts we are making to help the public, especially those who come to the court without representation by an attorney," said Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield.

"We still answer questions by phone, of course, but some people prefer to email questions and get a quick answer that way, so we thought this approach would be a good addition."

The new live chat feature allows members of the public to submit questions to the specific branch of the Civil Division that they have a question for and receive an immediate response. The link to this new feature can be found in the upper left hand corner of each of the pages* for the four branches of the Civil Division. Representatives are available online to respond to questions through the live chat Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for all branches, other than Civil Actions, which will have morning hours only, 8:30 to 11:00.

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* http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/public/aud_civil/main.jsf
http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/public/aud_civil/lease.jsf
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