

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!



The Equal Justice Committee wants to hear from you to know where there may be bias in the Maryland Rules and when Rules are applied with discriminatory or unfair consequence. Members of the bar and the public are invited to participate in listening sessions to identify Rules or practices that appear consciously or implicitly biased.

What: Civil Procedure Listening Session

When: Wednesday, June 16 | 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Where: Zoom



CLICK HERE TO REGISTER



If you cannot participate in the listening session, please scan this QR code and fill out the *Survey on Implicit Bias in the Maryland Rules*.

Please feel free to forward this invitation to others who may be interested.



Committee on Equal Justice

Rules Review Subcommittee

Public Meeting Workgroup

Notice of Committee on Equal Justice, Rules Review Subcommittee Open Public Input Meeting

Civil Procedure

Wednesday June 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Instructions for Members of the Public

Formal Maryland Rules apply to all civil matters in the circuit and District courts (Titles 1, 2, and 3). Written primarily for lawyers, the comprehensive Rules of **Civil Procedure** are to be read and applied to accomplish “fairness in administration” (Rule 1-201(a)). Both the scope and specificity of the formal rules affect access to judicial processes. Questions may exist about whether court practices in applying these rules may affect fairness in court proceedings. The Judiciary’s Equal Justice Committee wants to know if civil rules or practices may provoke discriminatory prejudice in court procedures.

In her *Statement on Equal Justice* (June 9, 2020), Chief Judge Barbera reiterated that “Judges swear to be fair and impartial, to do justice in every individual case.” She charged the Equal Justice Committee to lead the Maryland Judiciary to “re-examine how we administer justice. We must determine ... how to ensure that the protections and rights under law are afforded equally to all of us ... that our courts do not suffer bias, conscious or unconscious.”

Are there court rules or practices that can adversely—and therefore discriminatorily—affect participants in civil cases when communicating with the court, when preparing cases for hearings or trial, when appearing in court proceedings, or when securing court decisions? Do the rules, in language or application, raise equal justice concerns or negatively affect people of color or members of disadvantaged communities? The Equal Justice Committee is interested in learning of civil rules or practices that provoke concerns for discriminatory behaviors or implicit bias (attitudes or stereotypes that affect court decisions in an unconscious manner) based upon race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socio-economic status, or political affiliation. (See Rule 18-102.3)

This meeting will be devoted to rules of **Civil Procedure**. Please note that this is a *listening session*, members of the subcommittee will not respond to questions or make any comments. Please register for this session using the link in the flyer and email ejcrulesreview@mdcourts.gov to ensure that you receive the Zoom link prior to the meeting. If you have any comments related to a posted agenda item, you may e-mail them to ejcrulesreview@mdcourts.gov no later than 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting in order to distribute them to the members of the subcommittee.

This listening session, including all communications made through the Zoom platform by participants, will be recorded for future use by the Rules Review Subcommittee. By registering to participate, you acknowledge and consent to the audio and video recording of the session.

Members of the public must observe the following protocols during the virtual listening session:

- Upon joining the meeting, please note that your microphone will be muted unless you are recognized to speak.
- Each member of the public will be given two (2) minutes to speak. Please begin by providing your initials and your preferred pronoun as well as the county/counties to which your comment refers. Your identifying information will be removed from any and all reports made of the public meeting. Speakers may request anonymity in any reports. However, speakers consent to audio recording of their remarks upon requesting to speak.
- If you would like to request permission to speak, you may send a chat message in the Zoom platform to the meeting host. If there is an opportunity for you to speak, you will be recognized. You must have your camera turned on and your microphone will be unmuted by the host for the duration of your comment.
- If there are any concerns regarding these procedures during the meeting, questions may be submitted via the chat.
- All participants and speakers will engage in civil, respectful communications. Participants who fail to adhere to this request may be subject to having their microphone, chat, and/or video feature disabled.
- Requests for spoken language interpreters and auxiliary services (ASL/CDI interpreters or CART) may be directed to Ksenia.Boitsova@mdcourts.gov.
- For any other accommodations please contact ejcrulesreview@mdcourts.gov.