

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
EASTERN DIVISION**

HARRIS WYATT,

Plaintiff,

v.

ST. CHARLES COUNTY JAIL,

Defendant.

No. 4:17-cv-1584-JAR

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

This matter is before the Court upon the motion of plaintiff Harris Wyatt, an inmate at the St. Charles County Jail, for leave to commence this action without prepayment of the required filing fee. For the reasons stated below, the Court will grant the motion and assess an initial partial filing fee of \$15.35. In addition, the Court will permit plaintiff the opportunity to submit an amended complaint.

28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1)

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1), a prisoner bringing a civil action *in forma pauperis* is required to pay the full amount of the filing fee. If the prisoner has insufficient funds in his prison account to pay the entire fee, the Court must assess and, when funds exist, collect an initial partial filing fee of twenty percent of the greater of (1) the average monthly deposits in the prisoner's account, or (2) the average monthly balance in the prisoner's account for the prior six-month period. After payment of the initial partial filing fee, the prisoner is required to make monthly payments of twenty percent of the preceding month's income credited to his account. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The agency having custody of the prisoner will forward these monthly payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in his account exceeds \$10.00, until the filing fee is fully paid. *Id.*

In support of the instant motion, plaintiff submitted an inmate account statement, detailing his finances for the month of June. According to that statement, plaintiff's average account balance is \$76.76. The Court will therefore assess an initial partial filing fee of \$15.35, an amount that is reasonable based upon the information the Court has about plaintiff's finances. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1); *see also Henderson v. Norris*, 129 F.3d 481, 484 (8th Cir. 1997) (when a prisoner is unable to provide the Court with a certified copy of his prison account statement for the six months preceding the filing of the complaint, the Court should assess an amount "that is reasonable, based on whatever information the court has about the prisoner's finances.").

Legal Standard on Initial Review

Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), the Court is required to dismiss a complaint filed *in forma pauperis* if it is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. A pleading that offers "labels and conclusions" or "a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do," nor will a complaint suffice if it tenders bare assertions devoid of factual enhancement. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (internal citation omitted).

When conducting initial review pursuant to § 1915(e)(2), the Court must accept as true the allegations in the complaint, and must give the complaint the benefit of a liberal construction. *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). However, the tenet that a court must accept the allegations as true does not apply to legal conclusions, *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678, and affording a *pro se* complaint the benefit of a liberal construction does not mean that procedural rules in ordinary civil litigation must be interpreted so as to excuse mistakes by those who proceed without counsel. *See McNeil v. U.S.*, 508 U.S. 106, 113 (1993). Even *pro se* complaints are

required to allege facts which, if true, state a claim for relief as a matter of law. *Martin v. Aubuchon*, 623 F.2d 1282, 1286 (8th Cir. 1980); *see also Stone v. Harry*, 364 F.3d 912, 914-15 (8th Cir. 2004) (federal courts are not required to “assume facts that are not alleged, just because an additional factual allegation would have formed a stronger complaint”).

Discussion

The complaint is defective because it was not drafted using the Court’s form, *see* E.D. Mo. Local Rule 2.06(A), and it is unsigned. Fed. R. Civ. P. 11 (an unrepresented party must personally sign all of his pleadings, motions, and other papers, and this Court must “strike an unsigned paper unless the omission is promptly corrected after being called to the . . . party’s attention”). In addition, the complaint contains only conclusory statements devoid of factual enhancement. Because plaintiff is proceeding *pro se*, the Court will give him an opportunity to file an amended complaint. Plaintiff must prepare the amended complaint using a Court-provided form, and must follow Rules 8 and 10 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. In the “Caption” section of the form complaint, plaintiff should write the name of the defendant(s) he wishes to sue. In the “Statement of Claim” section, plaintiff should begin by writing the defendant’s name. In separate, numbered paragraphs under that name, plaintiff should: (1) set forth the factual allegations supporting his claim against that defendant; (2) state what constitutional or federal statutory right(s) that defendant violated; and (3) state whether the defendant is being sued in his/her individual capacity or official capacity. If plaintiff is suing more than one defendant, he shall proceed in this manner with each one, separately writing each individual defendant’s name and, under that name, in numbered paragraphs, the allegations specific to that particular defendant and the right(s) that defendant violated.

Plaintiff shall have twenty-one (21) days from the date of this Order to file an amended complaint. Plaintiff is warned that the filing of the amended complaint completely replaces the original. Claims that are not re-alleged are deemed abandoned. *E.g., In re Wireless Telephone Federal Cost Recovery Fees Litigation*, 396 F.3d 922, 928 (8th Cir. 2005).

Accordingly,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* (Docket No. 3) is **GRANTED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that plaintiff must pay an initial filing fee of \$15.35 within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this Order. Plaintiff is instructed to make his remittance payable to "Clerk, United States District Court," and to include upon it: (1) his name; (2) his prison registration number; (3) the case number; and (4) the statement that the remittance is for an original proceeding.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this Memorandum and Order, plaintiff shall submit an amended complaint in accordance with the instructions set forth herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of Court shall mail to plaintiff a blank Prisoner Civil Rights Complaint form. Plaintiff may request additional forms as needed.

If plaintiff fails to timely comply with this Memorandum and Order, the Court will dismiss this action without prejudice and without further notice.

Dated this 27th day of July, 2017.



JOHN A. ROSS
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE