

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

MARQUIS BRADFORD,

Plaintiff,

v.

ST. LOUIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE
CENTER,

Defendant.

No. 4:17-cv-2206-SNLJ

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

This matter is before the Court on the motion of plaintiff Marquis Bradford for leave to commence this civil action without prepayment of the required filing fee. Having reviewed the motion and the financial information submitted in support, the Court has determined that plaintiff lacks sufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee, and will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$4.55. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). In addition, for the reasons discussed below, the Court will dismiss the complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2).

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 or her prison account to pay the entire fee, the Court must assess and, when funds exist, collect an initial partial filing fee of 20 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 20 percent of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's 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 the prisoner's account exceeds \$10.00, until the filing fee is fully paid. *Id.*

In support of the instant motion, Plaintiff submitted an affidavit and an inmate account statement showing an average monthly balance of \$22.73. The Court will therefore assess an initial partial filing fee of \$4.55, which is twenty percent of Plaintiff's average monthly balance.

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. To state a claim for relief under § 1983, a complaint must plead more than “legal conclusions” and “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action [that are] supported by mere conclusory statements.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009). A plaintiff must demonstrate a plausible claim for relief, which is more than a “mere possibility of misconduct.” *Id.* at 679. “A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Id.* at 678. Determining whether a complaint states a plausible claim for relief is a context-specific task that requires the reviewing court to, *inter alia*, draw upon judicial experience and common sense. *Id.* at 679.

When reviewing a pro se complaint under § 1915(e)(2), the Court must give it the benefit of a liberal construction. *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). However, this does not mean that pro se complaints may be merely conclusory. 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”). In addition, 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).

The Complaint

Plaintiff brings this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Named as the sole defendant is the St. Louis City Justice Center.¹ For his statement of claim, plaintiff writes: “City Justice Center has deprived me as a pretrial detainee, by not providing a balanced meals being house at Criminal Justice Center.” (Docket No. 1 at 5). He seeks injunctive relief and monetary damages.

Discussion

The complaint is subject to dismissal because it is legally frivolous. Plaintiff names the St. Louis City Justice Center as the sole defendant. However, jails and local government detention centers are not suable entities. *Ketchum v. City of West Memphis, Ark.*, 974 F.2d 81, 82 (8th Cir. 1992) (departments or subdivisions of local government are “not juridical entities suable as such”); see also *Ballard v. Missouri*, Case No. 4:13-cv-528-JAR (E.D. Mo. Apr. 22, 2013) (holding that “[p]laintiff’s claims against the City of St. Louis Department of Public Safety, the St. Louis County Justice Center, the St. Louis City Justice Center, and MSI/Workhouse are legally frivolous because these defendants are not suable entities”); *Wallace v. St. Louis City Justice Ctr.*, Case No. 4:12-cv-2291-JAR (E.D. Mo. Jul. 17, 2013) (dismissing claims against the St. Louis City Justice Center because it is not a suable entity).

Even if plaintiff had named a proper defendant, the complaint would be dismissed because it fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Plaintiff merely states, in conclusory fashion, that defendant has not served a balanced meal. He alleges no facts regarding why he believes the meals are unbalanced, nor does he allege that his diet is nutritionally inadequate or has adversely affected his health. Construed liberally, plaintiff’s allegation is merely the unadorned, “the-defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me” accusation that the Supreme

¹ Plaintiff actually names as defendant the “St. Louis Justice Criminal Center.” However, there is no such entity. Because plaintiff is presently incarcerated at the St. Louis City Justice Center and his claim stems from his confinement, the Court understands him to name the St. Louis City Justice Center as defendant.

Court has found deficient. *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678. Even pro se complaints are required to allege facts which, if true, state a claim for relief as a matter of law, *Martin*, 623 F.2d at 1286, and this Court will not “assume facts that are not alleged, just because an additional factual allegation would have formed a stronger complaint.” *Stone*, 364 F.3d at 914-15.

Accordingly,

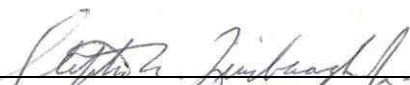
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that plaintiff’s motion to proceed in forma pauperis (Docket No. 2) is **GRANTED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that plaintiff must pay an initial filing fee of \$4.55 within thirty (30) 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) this case number; and (4) the statement that the remittance is for an original proceeding.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this case is **DISMISSED** pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i)-(ii). A separate order of dismissal will be entered herewith.

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that an appeal from this dismissal would not be taken in good faith.

Dated this 12th day of October, 2017.



STEPHEN N. LIMBAUGH, JR.
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE