

Report card

of the Small Claims Courts System



CALIFORNIA

Overall Grade: **B**

About California's Small Claims Court

- Overall grade of "B" is the highest grade of any jurisdiction in the country.
- Dollar limit of \$5,000 is only slightly above the national median of \$4,000.
- Grades in most categories other than dollar limit are excellent.
- California's small claims courts are among the most accessible nationwide:

All counties have easy-to-use forms and guides to the small claims courts.

State's website gives detailed instructions on how to file small claims actions.

Several counties hold a weekly session outside of usual court hours — one of only six states to do so.

- Small claims advisor system, particularly in San Francisco, is a model for other jurisdictions.

Dollar Limit	B
Injunctive Relief	A
Help with Collecting A Judgement	F
Small Claims Advisors	A
Extended Courtroom Hours	B
Guides & Simplified Forms	A
Low Filing Fees	B
Encourages Self-Representation	A
Uses Mediation	C
Overall Grade	B

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