

Won A Case? We Want to Hear About It!

Missouri Lawyers Media's Verdicts & Settlements coverage provides attorneys with details of thousands of cases from across the state. It's the place to go to humble-brag about your courtroom victory while gleaning valuable information that will help you to value the worth of your cases.

We welcome attorney-submitted cases year-round through our online form at verdicts.molawyersmedia.com. While there's technically no time limit, it's best to submit cases as soon as you can - especially for cases worth \$1 million or more, as we tally the largest cases by calendar year in a special edition of Missouri Lawyers Weekly.

We accept any case resolved in Missouri or involving a Missouri-licensed attorney. We give priority to cases resolved in-state, and newsworthy cases may be given higher priority, but we make a good-faith effort to publish every V&S submitted to us. Still, there are a few things attorneys should keep in mind to make it easier to get their reports into print: Think of it like a press release. Missouri Lawyers Media is a news platform, and V&S reports are news articles. Our job is to provide a truthful and accurate portrait of the case.

Any information listed in your submission is fair game to publish, though we reserve the right to leave out unnecessary, unverified or incendiary information. We may supplement your submission with additional reporting, such as interviews with attorneys and details from court records. We may quote directly from your case description as if it were an interview, so spelling and grammar count. The case description you write won't be visible to other readers, however, so don't worry too much if you make a mistake. The more complete your description is, the better our final report will be.

Keeping secrets

With some exceptions, we do publish confidential settlements reached out-of-court. You may withhold details such as case number, caption, identities of defense counsel and other identifying information. You must provide the dollar amount of the settlement. You may withhold either the amount or the identifying details, but not both.

We need enough information to craft a cogent narrative. If there is insufficient information — or your confidentiality agreement is so strict that you can say almost nothing — we may decline to publish the report. Talk to opposing counsel before you submit. We contact both sides, and we've found ourselves in the middle of some awkward disputes when the defense didn't know the case was about to be submitted. Remember, your confidentiality agreement is between you and the other party: If you've told us about it, we are free to publish it unless we specifically agree not to do so.

Confidential exceptions

We don't withhold information from cases tried in open court. That includes settlements approved by a judge and accompanied by a publicly available judgment, such as in wrongful death cases or settlements involving minors. (If the judgment is sealed or omits the amount of the settlement, we will generally accept it as confidential.)

We don't accept confidential settlements involving public bodies, as those amounts are open records under Missouri's Sunshine Law. Our policy is to request such records and publish the result even if the attorney submitted it on a confidential basis. In such an event, we will try to make clear in our article that the information was provided by the public entity, rather than the attorney.

Although our form allows the submitting attorney to keep one party confidential but not the other, we are reluctant to publish cases that unfairly single out one side. If a plaintiff's lawyer identifies the defendant but shields his own client's name, we may opt to list all parties as confidential rather than subject the defendant to scrutiny that the plaintiff is unwilling to share.

Also, if your case has gotten press coverage before, we may not be able to honor a request for confidentiality. If the settlement is obviously linked to a high-profile incident, we would look foolish not to say so.

Dollars and cents

When listing a jury verdict, we regard the value of the case as the amount originally awarded, prior to setoffs, reductions for fault, statutory caps or anything else that reduces the ultimate payout. We do this to try to provide an apples-to-apples comparison. Our final report will explain those reductions and provide the amount of the net judgment.

For defense verdicts, please list the value as \$0.00, unless the defense actually won money as the result of a counterclaim. Our main measure of value for defense verdicts is the last pretrial demand (that is, the amount the defense saved by going to trial and prevailing), so if you're able to share your pretrial negotiations, please do. It's also helpful for us to know the amount the plaintiffs sought at trial or amounts of stipulated damages. ■



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