

RCW 12.20.060 Judgment for costs—Attorney's fee—Costs in civil actions for the recovery of money only. (1) When the prevailing party in district court is entitled to recover costs as authorized in RCW 4.84.010 in a civil action, the judge shall add the amount thereof to the judgment; in case of failure of the plaintiff to recover or of dismissal of the action, the judge shall enter up a judgment in favor of the defendant for the amount of his or her costs; and in case any party so entitled to costs is represented in the action by an attorney, the judge shall include attorney's fees in the amount provided in RCW 4.84.080 as part of the costs: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That the plaintiff shall not be entitled to such attorney fee unless he or she obtains, exclusive of costs, a judgment in the sum of fifty dollars or more: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That if the plaintiff obtains judgment, exclusive of costs, of at least fifty dollars but less than two hundred dollars, the judge shall include attorney fees of one hundred twenty-five dollars as part of the costs.

(2) (a) In any district court civil action for the recovery of money only, the plaintiff will be considered the prevailing party for the purpose of awarding costs, including a statutory attorney fee, if: (i) The defendant makes full or partial payment of the amounts sought by the plaintiff prior to the entry of judgment; and (ii) before such payment is tendered, the plaintiff has notified the defendant in writing that the full or partial payment of the amounts sued for might result in an award of costs. The plaintiff is not entitled to a statutory attorney fee unless the amount prayed for, exclusive of costs, is fifty dollars or more, and if the amount prayed for, exclusive of costs, is at least fifty dollars but less than two hundred dollars, the judgment must include a statutory attorney fee of one hundred twenty-five dollars as part of the costs.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "plaintiff" includes a counterclaimant, cross-claimant, and third-party plaintiff, and "defendant" includes a party defending a counterclaim, cross-claim, or third-party claim.

(c) A party may demand, offer, or accept payment of statutory costs before the entry of judgment in an action.

(d) This section may not be construed to (a) [(i)] authorize an award of costs if the action is resolved by a negotiated settlement or (b) [(ii)] limit or bar the operation of cost-shifting provisions of other statutes or court rules. [2009 c 240 § 3; 2004 c 123 § 2; 1993 c 341 § 1; 1985 c 240 § 2; 1984 c 258 § 89; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 30 § 1; 1915 c 43 § 1; 1893 c 12 § 1; Code 1881 § 1785; 1873 p 350 § 84; 1854 p 237 § 85; RRS § 1862.]

Court Improvement Act of 1984—Effective dates—Severability—Short title—1984 c 258: See notes following RCW 3.30.010.

Attorneys' fee as costs in damage actions of ten thousand dollars or less: RCW 4.84.250 through 4.84.300.