

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO HEARING ON ABILITY TO PAY FINE

You have been ordered to pay a fine and must do so within the time that the Court allowed. If you do not, the Clerk of Court may ask the Court for a commitment order directing the Sheriff to arrest you and put you in jail for up to six months or until the fine is paid.

If you claim that you can't pay the fine because you are indigent, you may ask the Court to conduct a hearing – called a *Blessinger* hearing – on your ability to pay. You may request a *Blessinger* hearing by completing and submitting to the Clerk of Court **Defendant's Petition for Blessinger Hearing**, along with the accompanying **Financial Disclosure Statement**. These forms are available: (1) at the Clerk of Court office, (2) on the Clerk of Court's website, or (3) can be requested from the Sheriff's Department if you are picked up on a commitment order.

The *Blessinger* hearing will be scheduled before a court commissioner immediately following the bail hearings, which are held daily at 1:00 p.m. in the Manitowoc County Courthouse, Room B-15. You will have the burden of proving that you are unable to pay the fine and will be required to provide personal and financial information to support your claim.

If the court finds that you are indigent, the commitment order will be vacated and you will not be jailed. However, you will still owe the fine. The Clerk of Court will continue collection efforts and your debt may be referred to a collection agency. Should there be a change in circumstance, the Clerk of Court may renew its request for a commitment order in the future.

You may also petition the court and ask to perform community service in lieu of paying the fine. A **Petition for Community Service** is also available at the Clerk of Court office or on the Clerk of Court's website at www.manitowocounty.org, by clicking on "Departments," then "Clerk of Circuit Court," then "Forms/Documents."