

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
JACKSONVILLE DIVISION**

KARINE FRASER,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 3:18-cv-360-J-34JRK

vs.

USAA GENERAL INDEMNITY COMPANY,

Defendant.

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ORDER

THIS CAUSE is before the Court sua sponte. Federal courts are courts of limited jurisdiction, and therefore, have an obligation to inquire into their subject matter jurisdiction. See Kirkland v. Midland Mortg. Co., 243 F.3d 1277, 1279-80 (11th Cir. 2001). This obligation exists regardless of whether the parties have challenged the existence of subject matter jurisdiction. See Univ. of S. Ala. v. Am. Tobacco Co., 168 F.3d 405, 410 (11th Cir. 1999) (“it is well settled that a federal court is obligated to inquire into subject matter jurisdiction sua sponte whenever it may be lacking”). “In a given case, a federal district court must have at least one of three types of subject matter jurisdiction: (1) jurisdiction under a specific statutory grant; (2) federal question jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331; or (3) diversity jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a).” Baltin v. Alaron Trading Corp., 128 F.3d 1466, 1469 (11th Cir. 1997).

On March 13, 2018, Defendant USAA General Indemnity Company filed a notice of removal notifying the Court of its intent to remove this action to the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Jacksonville Division, and purporting to set forth the facts establishing that the Court has jurisdiction over this action. See Defendant USAA

General Indemnity Company's Notice of Removal (Doc. 1; Notice) at 1-2. Specifically, Defendant asserts that the Court has jurisdiction because there is complete diversity of citizenship between the parties and the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000.00, in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1332, and therefore, the action is removable pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1441. See id. In support of this assertion, Defendant declares that "Plaintiff is noted [sic] a resident of Florida, although her resident county is not mentioned in the Complaint." Id. at 2 (emphasis added). However, this allegation does not adequately identify the citizenship of Plaintiff, and the Complaint (Doc. 2) does not offer sufficient additional information to satisfy the Court's jurisdictional inquiry.

For a court to have diversity jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a), "all plaintiffs must be diverse from all defendants." Univ. of S. Ala., 168 F.3d at 412. To establish diversity over a natural person, a complaint must include allegations of the person's citizenship, not where he or she resides. See Taylor v. Appleton, 30 F.3d 1365, 1367 (11th Cir. 1994). A natural person's citizenship is determined by his or her "domicile," or "the place of his true, fixed, and permanent home and principal establishment . . . to which he has the intention of returning whenever he is absent therefrom." McCormick v. Aderholt, 293 F.3d 1254, 1257-58 (11th Cir. 2002) (quotation and citation omitted).

Because the Notice discloses only Plaintiff's residence, rather than her domicile or state of citizenship, the Court finds that Defendant has not alleged the facts necessary to establish the Court's jurisdiction over this case. "Citizenship, not residence, is the key fact that must be alleged in the complaint to establish diversity for a natural person." Taylor, 30 F.3d at 1367 (emphasis supplied). Indeed, although Defendant cites the McCormick case for the proposition that "citizenship is equivalent to domicile," see Notice at 2,

Defendant fails to recognize that “[d]omicile’ is not necessarily synonymous with ‘residence.’” See Miss. Band of Choctaw Indians v. Holyfield, 490 U.S. 30, 48 (1989). As such, Defendant’s allegation as to Plaintiff’s state of residency is insufficient.

In light of the foregoing, the Court will give Defendant an opportunity to establish diversity of citizenship between the parties and that this Court has jurisdiction over the action. Accordingly, it is

ORDERED:

Defendant shall have up to and including **March 30, 2018**, to provide the Court with sufficient information so that it can determine whether it has jurisdiction over this action.

DONE AND ORDERED in Jacksonville, Florida, this 19th day of March, 2018.


MARCIA MORALES HOWARD
United States District Judge

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Copies to:

Counsel of Record
Pro Se Parties