COURT OF APPEALS
DECISION
DATED AND FILED

November 18, 2026

Samuel A. Christensen
Clerk of Court of Appeals

NOTICE

This opinion is subject to further editing. If published, the official version will appear in the bound volume of the Official Reports.

A party may file with the Supreme Court a petition to review an adverse decision by the Court of Appeals. *See* WIS. STAT. § 808.10 and RULE 809.62.

Appeal No. 2026AP1147 **Cir. Ct. No. 2025SC4357**

STATE OF WISCONSIN **IN COURT OF APPEALS**
DISTRICT II

ROBERT I. ROBINSON,

PLAINTIFF-APPELLANT,

V.

PETER COTTON,

DEFENDANT-RESPONDENT.

APPEAL from a judgment of the circuit court for Racine County: DAVID W. PAULSON, Judge. *Affirmed*.

¶1 GUNDRUM, J.[1] Robert I. Robinson, pro se, appeals from an amended small claims judgment. He contends the circuit court "erred in

[1] This appeal is decided by one judge pursuant to WIS. STAT. § 752.31(2)(a) (2023-24). All references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2023-24 version.

modifying the January 22, 2026 final judgment entered in [his] favor" and doing so without affording him "an opportunity to be heard" before such modification. For the following reasons, we affirm.

BACKGROUND

¶2 As best we can tell from the record, Robinson filed this small claims action against Peter Cotton, demanding judgment in the amount of $10,000 and alleging that on August 29, 2025, Cotton "caused undue harm" to Robinson, apparently for "falsifying report(s)" against him. Robinson's complaint adds: "Unduly damaging by harm – Financially, Community Reputation, Living Health, Falsly Confinement." Cotton did not respond to the complaint, and on January 22, 2026, the circuit court entered default judgment in Robinson's favor in the amount of $10,073.83, which included $73.83 in service fees.

¶3 On February 27, 2026, the circuit court, sua sponte, ordered "the judgment reduced to the [small claims] tort maximum of $5000 plus costs," adding, "[a]n amended judgment shall be filed by the clerk." On March 2, 2026, the clerk entered judgment in favor of Robinson and against Cotton in the amount of $5,073.83, in place of the earlier $10,073.83. Robinson appeals from this amended judgment.[2]

[2] We note that we may lack jurisdiction over Robinson's appeal because he failed to timely file his notice of appeal. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.10(1)(e) ("The filing of a timely notice of appeal is necessary to give the court jurisdiction over the appeal."). In a June 2026 order we asked the parties to brief the jurisdictional issue. While Robinson filed a one-page response, it did not adequately address the issues we raised. Nevertheless, assuming without deciding that we have jurisdiction, we conclude Robinson has not met his burden of demonstrating the legal and factual basis for his appeal.

DISCUSSION

¶4 Robinson "submits that the January 22, 2026 judgment was a valid and final judgment entered by the circuit court." He "contends that the March 2, 2026 modification improperly altered that final judgment and that the court should have provided [him] an opportunity to be heard before modifying the judgment," and he "requests that this [c]ourt determine that the modification was improper and reinstate the original judgment." This is the extent of Robinson's "argument" in his appellate brief.

¶5 On appeal, it is the appellant's burden to demonstrate to us how the circuit court erred. *See* ***Gaethke v. Pozder***, 2017 WI App 38, ¶36, 376 Wis. 2d 448, 899 N.W.2d 381. Robinson's brief and position on appeal is entirely conclusory and his "argument" is completely undeveloped. *See* ***Wisconsin Conf. Bd. of Trs. of United Methodist Church, Inc. v. Culver***, 2001 WI 55, ¶38, 243 Wis. 2d 394, 627 N.W.2d 469 (stating that appellate courts do not address arguments that are conclusory and insufficiently developed). We will not abandon our neutrality to attempt to develop Robinson's argument. *See* ***State v. Pettit***, 171 Wis. 2d 627, 647, 492 N.W.2d 633 (Ct. App. 1992) ("We cannot serve as both advocate and judge."); ***Industrial Risk Insurers v. American Eng'g Testing, Inc.***, 2009 WI App 62, ¶25, 318 Wis. 2d 148, 769 N.W.2d 82. As a result, we have no basis for concluding the circuit court erred in amending the judgment. Because Robinson has not demonstrated to us how the circuit court erred, we affirm.

By the Court.—Judgment affirmed.

This opinion will not be published. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.23(1)(b)4.