

Foreclosure Mediation Program

Notice of Availability of Mediation

What is the foreclosure mediation program?

Your county's Foreclosure Mediation Program (the Program) is administered by Metro Milwaukee Mediation Services, Inc. (MMMS) and is part of the Wisconsin Foreclosure Mediation Network (WFMN). This Program has the support of your County Circuit Court.

The Program is available to assist homeowners facing a mortgage foreclosure action filed in County Circuit Court. Mediation is a confidential and voluntary process where you and the lender seeking to foreclose on your home may discuss ways to resolve your foreclosure case, including reinstatement of the loan and possible modification of the loan terms.

The Program is available to parties to a first or second mortgage foreclosure action involving a one-to-four family residential property. You need not reside in the property, but you may not own more than four other rental properties. In addition, the action must be pending in County Circuit Court. Vacation properties or "seasonal homes" are not eligible, nor are homes under bankruptcy protection.

How does the homeowner request foreclosure mediation?

Along with this notice, you have received the Mediation Request Form. This form is also available through your local Clerk of Circuit Courts website and at <http://MediateWisconsin.com>. You should complete and send your request form to the program within 20 days of receiving the summons, but if that date has passed, you can still make a late request, as mediation might still be a possibility.

Within two business days of receiving the Mediation Request Form, the Program Administrator will refer a housing counseling agency or documents specialist to you via mail or email. Your second step is to contact your housing counselor or documents specialist to set up a meeting for compiling a complete loan modification application. Once complete, the housing counselor or documents specialist sends the loan modification application directly to the Program Administrator. Your third step is to pay the Program fee by mailing your check or money order to MMMS at P.O. Box 633, Milwaukee, WI 53201 or by calling our office at 414-939-8800 or toll-free at 877-721-6262 with your credit card payment.

After you have completed all three mediation request steps, the Program Administrator will notify your lender to request their participation, seeking a response within 10 business days. Your Lender's non-refundable mediation fee of \$300 is due at the time of their consent.

Is participation in mediation required?

Participation is voluntary for the homeowner/borrower and lender. Sometimes, lenders will choose not to participate in mediation, particularly when prior refinances/modifications didn't work out.

While entry into the Foreclosure Mediation Program is voluntary for both parties, by consenting, the parties agree to abide by the process set forth in the court's local rules.

If the Lender declines the invitation to mediate, the Program Administrator will refund all but \$50 of your mediation application fee. The \$50 is non-refundable and used to off-set program administrative costs. If the Lender agrees to mediate, the entire fee is non-refundable.

How can the Housing Counselor help?

To increase the chance of success at mediation, you are matched with a housing counselor or documents specialist in your area. Housing Counselors are specially trained and certified to go over financial information with you, and to discuss programs that may be available to avoid foreclosure. Documents Specialists are specially trained to help you compile the forms and documentation necessary to submit a complete financial documents package to your mortgage servicer. If you do not take this step, the mediation cannot proceed.

What does mediation cost?

There is no cost to request mediation or to work with a housing counselor/documents specialist. You and your lender must each pay a non-refundable Program fee before the case can be scheduled for mediation. The homeowner fee for cases involving Milwaukee County properties is \$100 and for all other counties administered by MMMS, the fee is \$200. The Lender fee for all cases administered by MMMS is \$300. To make your payment you may mail a check or money order to MMMS, P.O. Box 633, Milwaukee, WI 53201. You may also pay with credit or debit card by phone at 414-939-8800 or toll-free at 877-721-6262.

Does the foreclosure stop during the mediation process?

Even after applying for mediation, you are required to comply with all mandatory deadlines set by the court, including the time to answer the Complaint. Please read the Summons and Complaint *carefully* and make sure you understand your rights and the time-period for filing an Answer or Responsive Pleading. If you do not file an Answer or Responsive Pleading, the court may grant judgment against you and you may lose your right to object to anything that you disagree with in the Complaint.

Do you need a lawyer to participate in the mediation program?

While everyone is always strongly encouraged to consult with an attorney, you are not required to be represented by an attorney.

You may contact the statewide Lawyer Referral and Information Service at (800) 362-9082 to obtain the names of attorneys who may be able to assist you. You may also try the following legal aid organizations based on geographic area: Wisconsin Judicare at (715) 842-1681; Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee at (414) 727-5300, and Legal Action of Wisconsin at (800) 236-1127. Income restrictions may apply.

If you are working with a lawyer, please notify the Program Administrator of their name and contact information.

Who must attend the mediation session?

The mediation session must be attended in person by all homeowners who signed the note. All attorneys must also attend in person or by video conference, if available. The loan servicer will attend by telephone. Either party may have other support persons such as attorneys, loan officers and tax advisers attend or available by phone.

Where can I find additional foreclosure resources?

More information on resources for homeowners facing foreclosure is available at www.MediateWisconsin.com.



Toll-Free Hotline: (877) 721-6262
Milwaukee: (414) 939-8800
Madison: (877) 721-6262
Northeast: (877) 721-6262
East Central: (920) 236-4925
Central: (877) 721-6262
Northwest: (715) 262-5551
Southwest: (608) 785-5810

Mediate Wisconsin » Foreclosure Mediation Rules

Foreclosure Mediation Rules

A. GOAL.

The Foreclosure Mediation Program is patterned after the Wisconsin Foreclosure Mediation Network Model. The goal of the Program is to assist parties determine, within a reasonable period of time, whether foreclosure can be avoided by an alternate mutually agreeable arrangement, such as a loan modification or repayment plan, or to allow for a graceful exit from the property. The mediation program seeks to achieve this goal by structuring the collection and exchange of information to prepare the parties for their mediation session. The neutral and impartial mediator then guides and summarizes the communications so that parties gain a complete and clear understanding of any options that may exist, or the reasons retention options are not available.

B. ELIGIBILITY.

The Program is available to parties to a first or second mortgage foreclosure action involving a one-four family residential property. The homeowner need not reside in the property, but they may not own more than four other rental properties. This is consistent with the eligibility criteria for the U.S. Treasury's Making Homes Affordable loan modification program. In addition, the action must be pending in a participating county. Vacation properties or "seasonal homes" are not eligible, nor are homes subject to a bankruptcy.

C. REQUEST/CONSENT PROCESS:

1. Mediation Request Form. To initiate the mediation process, either party may make a request. The homeowner's request must utilize the "Mediation Request Form." Within two business days of receiving the Request Form, the Program Administrator will refer a housing counseling agency to the homeowner via mail or email. The homeowner's second step is to contact a housing counselor to set up a meeting for the purpose of compiling a complete financial package. The housing counselor sends the package directly to the Program Administrator. The homeowner's third step is to pay the program fee of by check or money order.

If the homeowner does not complete all three steps within 60 days from receipt of the Mediation Request Form, in the absence of extenuating circumstances, the application will be deemed inactive.

2. Lender's Consent. After the homeowner has completed all three application steps, the Program Administrator will notify Lender's counsel and request Lender's participation, seeking a response within 10 business days. Lender's non-refundable fee is due at the time of consent. If no response is received within 30 days, the Program Administrator will notify the Court that Lender has not responded and will close the mediation

D. MEDIATION PREPARATION/DOCUMENT EXCHANGE:

1. On-line Portal. By consenting, Lender agrees to utilize an Administrator selected secure internet based portal to:

- a. Post the lender required loan modification application forms and requirements,*
- b. Receive the homeowner's loan modification package documents and*
- c. Exchange messages about any outstanding documents or information.*

2. Initial Submission of Loan Modification Request Packet ("Financial Package"). Within 2 business days of lender's consent, the Program Administrator will send the homeowner's financial package to the lender, either via the Portal or via lender's counsel.

3. Notice of Deficient Package and (Lender's Confidential Loan Data Sheet). Within 5 business days after receipt of homeowner's initial submission of information, Lender shall:

- a. Notify the Program Administrator of any known deficiencies, including any missing information or documentation required for the loan modification application to be complete, and*
- b. Send the completed Confidential Loan Data Sheet.*

4. Supplemental Submission. Within 10 days from the date of the Lender's notification of deficiencies in the financial package, homeowner shall submit supplemental information or documents. This deadline may be extended for compelling circumstances beyond the homeowner's control.

5. Notice of Commencement of Review Period. When no outstanding Lender requests for information or documents remain, the Program Administrator will send a Notice to the Court advising that:

- a. The Homeowner has delivered to Lender, via Program Administrator, a completed application for a loan modification;*
- b. Lender is reviewing the application for alternatives to foreclosure; and*
- c. The next scheduled mediation activity.*

E. MEDIATION SESSION

1. Assignment of Mediator. At the time of the Initial Submission, the Program Administrator will assign a trained neutral and impartial mediator, who will utilize the facilitative style of mediation, refraining from directing or advising the parties, and will abide by the Uniform Model Standards of Mediator Conduct.

2. Attendance by Parties with Authority. By consenting, Lender agrees to designate a representative with knowledge of all of the Lender's loss mitigation programs either with full authority to make a determination on the homeowner's request or access to persons having such authority. Such representative may appear via video or teleconference. All attorneys will appear in person or via

videoconference (if such accommodations are available). Absent prior arrangements, all mortgagors and the mediator must be present at the mediation session. If subsequent mediation sessions are scheduled, all appearance may be via teleconference.

3. Confidentiality and Privilege. All communications made by the parties, attorneys and other participants at or in connection with the mediation shall be privileged and not reported, recorded or placed into evidence, or made known to the Court or construed for any purposes to be an admission. The Mediator will keep confidential all statements made during the mediation session, and will report to the Court only the results of the mediation or the procedural status of the mediation case.

4. Scope of Subject Matter. The mediation session may include negotiation of a modification of the homeowner's loan, whether by new payment terms, reduction or forgiveness in principal, interest, escrow shortage or advanced costs, surrender or sale of the mortgaged property or otherwise. Disputes of the amount due, application of payments, or other claims are within the scope of mediation only if both parties expressly make such election.

5. Close of Mediation. The Mediator shall cause the mediation process to conclude when:

- a. The homeowner has withdrawn from the mediation process,*
- b. The Lender has reached a determination about the Homeowner's eligibility for a loan modification and the Homeowner has been afforded an opportunity to discuss the determination during a mediation session, or*
- c. The Homeowner has failed, after 10 business days, to supply information or documents identified as outstanding by the Lender and the Lender has requested that mediation be closed.*

The Program Administrator shall send to the Court a Final Mediation Report no later than 10 days after the conclusion of the mediation.