

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.