

COURT NOTICES

AMENDMENT OF RULE

Uniform Civil Rules for the Supreme and County Courts

Pursuant to the authority vested in me, and upon consultation with the Administrative Board of the Courts, I hereby amend, effective immediately, section 202.5 of the Uniform Civil Rules for the Supreme and County Courts, to add a new subdivision (d) related to the filing of papers in civil actions and proceedings, to read as follows:

§ 202.5 Papers Filed in Court

(d)(1) In accordance with CPLR 2102(c), a County Clerk and a chief clerk of the Supreme Court or County Court, as appropriate, shall refuse to accept for filing papers filed in actions and proceedings only under the following circumstances or as otherwise provided by statute, Chief Administrator's rule or order of the court:

- (i) The paper does not have an index number;
- (ii) The summons, complaint, petition, or judgment sought to be filed with the County Clerk contains an "et al" or otherwise does not contain a full caption;
- (iii) The paper sought to be filed with the County Clerk is filed in the wrong court; or
- (iv) The paper is not signed in accordance with section 130-1.1-a of the Rules of the Chief Administrator.

The County Clerk shall require the payment of any applicable statutory fees, or an order of the Court waiving payment of such fees, before accepting a paper for filing.

(2) A County Clerk or chief clerk shall signify a refusal to accept a paper by use of a stamp on the paper indicating the date of the refusal and by providing on the paper the reason for the refusal.

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Uniform Civil Rules for the Supreme and County Courts

Pursuant to the authority vested in me, and with the advice and consent of the Administrative Board of the Courts, I hereby amend, effective February 13, 2010, section 202.12-a of the Uniform Civil Rules for the Supreme and County Courts, relating to settlement conferences in residential mortgage foreclosure actions, to read as follows:

§ 202.12-a. Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Actions; Settlement Conference

(a) Applicability. This section shall be applicable to residential mortgage foreclosure actions [brought on or after September 1, 2008, involving one- to four-family dwellings owned and occupied by the defendant where the underlying loan is high-cost, subprime or nontraditional, as defined in section 6-1 of the Banking Law and section 1304.5(c) and (e) of the Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law, and was entered into between January 1, 2003, and September 1, 2008.] involving a home loan secured by a mortgage on a one- to four-family dwelling or condominium, in which the defendant is a resident of the property subject to foreclosure.

(b) Request for judicial intervention. (1) At the time that proof of service of the summons and complaint is filed with the county clerk, plaintiff shall file with the county clerk a specialized request for judicial intervention (RJI), on a form prescribed by the Chief Administrator of the Courts, applicable to residential mortgage foreclosure actions covered by this section. The RJI shall contain the name, address, telephone number and e-mail address, if available, of the defendant in the action and shall request that a settlement conference be scheduled.

(2) Upon the filing of the RJI, the court shall send either a copy of the RJI, or the defendant's name, address and telephone number (if available), to a housing counseling agency or agencies on a list designated by the Division of Housing and Community Renewal for the judicial district in which the defendant resides, for the purpose of that agency making the homeowner aware of housing counseling and foreclosure prevention services and options available to the parties.

(c) Settlement conference.

(1) The court shall promptly send to the parties a Notice scheduling a settlement conference to be held within 60 days after the date of the filing of the RJI. The Notice shall be mailed to all parties or their attorneys, which must include mailing to the address of the property subject to the mortgage. The Notice shall be on a form prescribed by the Chief Administrator, and it shall set forth the purpose of the conference, the requirements of CPLR Rule 3408, instructions to the parties on how to prepare for the conference, and what information and documents to bring to the conference. The Notice shall further provide that the defendant contact the court by telephone, no later than seven days before the conference is scheduled, to advise whether the defendant will be able to attend the scheduled conference.

(2) The conference shall include settlement discussions pertaining to the relative rights and obligations of the parties under the mortgage loan documents, including determining whether the parties can reach a [unilaterally] mutually agreeable resolution to help the defendant avoid losing his or her home, and evaluating the potential for a resolution in which payment schedules or amounts may be modified or other workout options may be agreed to. The court may also use the conference for whatever other purposes the court deems appropriate. Where appropriate, the court may permit a representative of the plaintiff to attend the conference telephonically or by video-conference.

(3) If the parties appear by counsel, such counsel must be fully authorized to dispose of the case. If the defendant appears at the conference without counsel, the court shall treat the defendant as having made a motion to proceed as a poor person and shall determine whether permission to so appear shall be granted pursuant to the standards set forth in CPLR 1101. *If the court appoints defendant counsel pursuant to CPLR 1102(a), it shall adjourn the conference to a date certain for appearance of counsel and settlement discussions, and otherwise shall proceed with the conference.*

(4) *The parties shall engage in settlement discussions in good faith to reach a mutually agreeable resolution, including a loan modification if possible. The court shall ensure that each party fulfills its obligation to negotiate in good faith and shall see that conferences not be unduly delayed or subject to willful dilatory tactics so that the rights of both parties may be adjudicated in a timely manner.*

(5) Documents. (i) Plaintiff should bring the following documents to the conference: current payoff and reinstatement documents; mortgage and note; payment history; workout forms or packet; copies of any recent paperwork regarding reinstatement, settlement offers or loan modification proposals; and an itemization of the amounts needed to cure and pay off the loan. (ii) Defendants should bring the following documents to the conference: current income documentation, including pay stubs and benefits information; list of monthly expenses; recent mortgage statements, property tax statements, and income tax returns; loan resolution proposals; and any information from previous workout attempts.

[(4)](6) The court may schedule such other conferences as may be necessary to help resolve the action.

(7) *Motions shall be held in abeyance while settlement conferences are being held pursuant to this section. A party may not charge, impose or otherwise require payment from the other party for any cost, including but not limited to attorneys' fees, for appearance at or participation in the settlement conference.*

(8) *Plaintiff must file a notice of discontinuance and vacatur of the lis pendens within 150 days after any settlement agreement or loan modification is fully executed.*

(d) *Training. The Chief Administrator shall establish requirements for education and training of all judges and nonjudicial personnel assigned to conduct foreclosure conferences pursuant to this section.*

(e) *Reports. The Chief Administrator shall submit a report no later than the first day of November of each year to the Governor, and to the legislative leaders set forth in section 10-a(2) of chapter 507 of the Laws of 2009, on the adequacy and effectiveness of the settlement conferences, which shall include number of adjournments, defaults, discontinuances, dismissals, conferences held and the number of defendants appearing with and without counsel.*