

## Court Information Release



United States District Court  
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division  
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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## EARLY SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE PROGRAM

CHICAGO – The judges of the United States District Court have announced a court-wide Early Settlement Conference Program to assist litigants in minimizing costs.

Chief Judge James F. Holderman stated that the idea for the Early Settlement Conference Program came from the court's magistrate judges, particularly Magistrate Judge Morton Denlow, to assist litigating parties in reaching amicable resolution of their federal cases.

The Early Settlement Conference Program procedures can be initiated either by: (1) the district judge to whom the case is assigned; or (2) counsel for the parties after conferring with one another about settlement.

When the assigned district judge initiates the Early Settlement Conference Program, that judge will send a "Notice to Plaintiff's Counsel of Early Settlement Program" through the Electronic Case Files system. Plaintiff's counsel is then requested to contact defense counsel within 14 days, if plaintiff's counsel knows the identity of defense counsel, or within 14 days of defense counsel filing an appearance in the case. If both sides believe that early judicial involvement may assist settlement, they are to complete and file a "Request for Early Settlement Conference" form in the case, and a conference with the district judge or the assigned magistrate judge will be arranged.

If both sides' attorneys desire to initiate an early settlement conference on their own, they may complete and file a "Request for Early Settlement Conference" form in their case and a conference will also be arranged.

The "Request for Early Settlement Conference" form is available on the district court's website in the "Attorney Forms" category at <http://www.ilnd.uscourts.gov/home/Onlineforms.aspx?tab=2>.

Chief Judge Holderman stated: "Many civil cases filed in our court are resolved by settlement. We believe the Early Settlement Conference Program will further assist the settlement process, by initiating a settlement dialogue early in the case, and having judicial involvement earlier in the litigation process than has been done before in the past. Our hope is that this Program will minimize the expenses and costs necessary to resolve the litigation initiated in our court."