

Pre-Argument Settlement Conference Program
for the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals

Settlement Director: John H. Martin

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The primary purpose of the settlement program is to provide a neutral forum for the settlement of cases. In cases not settled, settlement conferences are intended to focus and simplify legal issues for subsequent presentation to the court through briefing and/or argument. Participation in the program is voluntary. However, the Court strongly encourages your participation and cooperation. The program has helped relieve the ever-increasing caseload confronting the Court, and it has also saved litigants and attorneys substantial amounts of time and money.

Mr. Martin, an attorney, has been the program director since 1983. He screens newly filed appeals based on information furnished by both appellants and appellees in the court's Appeal Information Forms A and B. Contact with counsel is by telephone and mediation conferences are held in several cities throughout the Circuit and by telephone. Party decisionmakers participate directly. All communications with Mr. Martin are confidential.

Conferences are usually scheduled substantially before the first briefing deadline, which is established upon docketing in the court of appeals. If counsel are interested in settlement, they are urged to communicate with or promptly respond to the inquiry of the settlement director. Unless settlement is actively considered immediately after appeal, the passage of time alone prior to briefing may interfere with settlement possibilities on a practical level. For that reason, it is important for the parties to file the Appeal Information Forms (Form A by the appellant; Form B by the appellee). Eighth Circuit Rule 3B directs each civil appellant to: (1) file a completed Appeal Information Form A with the Notice of Appeal at the time the Notice is filed with the District Court clerk and (2) forward a copy of the completed Form A and a copy of Appeal Information Form B to the appellee for completion. Appellee may complete Form B and electronically file it with the clerk of the Court of Appeals. These forms are available for electronic filing through the 8th Circuit Clerk's Office CM/ECF system. All civil appeals, with the exception of petitions for post conviction relief, are considered subject to the court's requirement for filing the appeal information forms. If you have any questions about the Program, please contact Mr. Martin at 314/244-2499.