

## **U.S. Bank, one of few mortgage servicers to participate in Oregon foreclosure mediation, says 'it's working'**



By [Elliot Njus, The Oregonian](#)

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Though only a handful of mediation sessions have actually taken place, Minneapolis-based [U.S. Bank](#) has emerged as one of the few private banks participating both in mediation mandated as part of the foreclosure process and mediation requested by homeowners not yet in foreclosure.

Of six completed mediation sessions, two involved Minneapolis-based U.S. Bank, which at the end of 2011 reported a \$1.5 billion portfolio of residential mortgages in Oregon. Capital One Bank has also completed one mediation, a mediation program administrator said Monday. Most of the other mediation involve state agencies with home loan programs.

The bank doesn't carry out many foreclosures in Oregon -- it said it would be eligible for an exemption to the mediation law for banks that carried out fewer than 250 foreclosures in the prior calendar year. Less than 2 percent of its Oregon loan portfolio is delinquent on payments.

But it is one of the state's top residential lenders by loan origination and portfolio size.

"We see the mediation process as being very effective," said Malia Wasson, U.S. Bank's president for Oregon and Southwest Washington. "We get quick answers and conclusions, which is of course what our borrower wants."

In another break with many of its peers, U.S. Bank is moving ahead with foreclosures outside the court system despite legal uncertainty from a July decision from an Oregon appellate court.

"If we let uncertainty keep us from acting, we would not be doing the right thing for our clients and customers," Wasson said.

Ryan Murphy, who manages U.S. Bank's mediation programs across the country, said Oregon's program was similar enough to those in other West Coast states to be practicable for the bank, though bank officials deferred to the [Oregon Bankers Association](#) for [changes the mortgage industry would like to see](#).

"From our perspective, it's working," he said.

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