

**RCW 61.24.031 Notice of default under RCW 61.24.030(8)—**

**Beneficiary's duties—Borrower's options.** (1)(a) A trustee, beneficiary, or authorized agent may not issue a notice of default under RCW 61.24.030(8) until: (i) Thirty days after satisfying the due diligence requirements as described in subsection (5) of this section and the borrower has not responded; or (ii) if the borrower responds to the initial contact, ninety days after the initial contact with the borrower was initiated.

(b) A beneficiary or authorized agent shall make initial contact with the borrower by letter to provide the borrower with information required under (c) of this subsection and by telephone as required under subsection (5) of this section. The letter required under this subsection must be mailed in accordance with subsection (5)(a) of this section and must include the information described in (c) of this subsection and subsection (5)(e)(i) through (iv) of this section.

(c) The letter required under this subsection, developed by the department pursuant to RCW 61.24.033, at a minimum shall include:

(i) A paragraph printed in no less than twelve-point font and bolded that reads:

"You must respond within thirty days of the date of this letter. IF YOU DO NOT RESPOND within thirty days, a notice of default may be issued and you may lose your home in foreclosure.

IF YOU DO RESPOND within thirty days of the date of this letter, you will have an additional sixty days to meet with your lender before a notice of default may be issued.

You should contact a housing counselor or attorney as soon as possible. Failure to contact a housing counselor or attorney may result in your losing certain opportunities, such as meeting with your lender or participating in mediation in front of a neutral third party. A housing counselor or attorney can help you work with your lender to avoid foreclosure.

If you filed bankruptcy or have been discharged in bankruptcy, this communication is not intended as an attempt to collect a debt from you personally, but is notice of enforcement of the deed of trust lien against the property. If you wish to avoid foreclosure and keep your property, this notice sets forth your rights and options.";

(ii) The toll-free telephone number from the United States department of housing and urban development to find a department-approved housing counseling agency, the toll-free numbers for the statewide foreclosure hotline recommended by the housing finance commission, and the statewide civil legal aid hotline for assistance and referrals to other housing counselors and attorneys;

(iii) A paragraph stating that a housing counselor may be available at little or no cost to the borrower and that whether or not the borrower contacts a housing counselor or attorney, the borrower has the right to request a meeting with the beneficiary; and

(iv) A paragraph explaining how the borrower may respond to the letter and stating that after responding the borrower will have an opportunity to meet with his or her beneficiary in an attempt to resolve and try to work out an alternative to the foreclosure and that, after ninety days from the date of the letter, a notice of default may be issued, which starts the foreclosure process.

(d) If the beneficiary has exercised due diligence as required under subsection (5) of this section and the borrower does not respond by contacting the beneficiary within thirty days of the initial contact, the notice of default may be issued. "Initial contact" with

the borrower is considered made three days after the date the letter required in (b) of this subsection is sent.

(e) If a meeting is requested by the borrower or the borrower's housing counselor or attorney, the beneficiary or authorized agent shall schedule the meeting to occur before the notice of default is issued. An assessment of the borrower's financial ability to modify or restructure the loan obligation and a discussion of options must occur during the meeting scheduled for that purpose.

(f) The meeting scheduled to assess the borrower's financial ability to modify or restructure the loan obligation and discuss options to avoid foreclosure may be held telephonically, unless the borrower or borrower's representative requests in writing that a meeting be held in person. The written request for an in-person meeting must be made within thirty days of the initial contact with the borrower. If the meeting is requested to be held in person, the meeting must be held in the county where the property is located unless the parties agree otherwise. A person who is authorized to agree to a resolution, including modifying or restructuring the loan obligation or other alternative resolution to foreclosure on behalf of the beneficiary, must be present either in person or on the telephone or videoconference during the meeting.

(2) A notice of default issued under RCW 61.24.030(8) must include a declaration, as provided in subsection (9) of this section, from the beneficiary or authorized agent that it has contacted the borrower as provided in subsection (1) of this section, it has tried with due diligence to contact the borrower under subsection (5) of this section, or the borrower has surrendered the property to the trustee, beneficiary, or authorized agent. Unless the trustee has violated his or her duty under RCW 61.24.010(4), the trustee is entitled to rely on the declaration as evidence that the requirements of this section have been satisfied, and the trustee is not liable for the beneficiary's or its authorized agent's failure to comply with the requirements of this section.

(3) If, after the initial contact under subsection (1) of this section, a borrower has designated a housing counseling agency, housing counselor, or attorney to discuss with the beneficiary or authorized agent, on the borrower's behalf, options for the borrower to avoid foreclosure, the borrower shall inform the beneficiary or authorized agent and provide the contact information to the beneficiary or authorized agent. The beneficiary or authorized agent shall contact the designated representative for the borrower to meet.

(4) The beneficiary or authorized agent and the borrower or the borrower's representative shall attempt to reach a resolution for the borrower within the ninety days from the time the initial contact is sent and the notice of default is issued. A resolution may include, but is not limited to, a loan modification, an agreement to conduct a short sale, or a deed in lieu of foreclosure transaction, or some other workout plan. Any modification or workout plan offered at the meeting with the borrower's designated representative by the beneficiary or authorized agent is subject to approval by the borrower.

(5) A notice of default may be issued under RCW 61.24.030(8) if a beneficiary or authorized agent has initiated contact with the borrower as required under subsection (1)(b) of this section and the failure to meet with the borrower occurred despite the due diligence of the beneficiary or authorized agent. Due diligence requires the following:

(a) A beneficiary or authorized agent shall first attempt to contact a borrower by sending, by both first-class and either registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, a letter to the address in the beneficiary's records for sending account statements to the borrower and to the address of the property encumbered by the deed of trust. The letter must be the letter described in subsection (1)(c) of this section.

(b) (i) After the letter has been sent, the beneficiary or authorized agent shall attempt to contact the borrower by telephone at least three times at different hours and on different days. Telephone calls must be made to the primary and secondary telephone numbers on file with the beneficiary or authorized agent.

(ii) A beneficiary or authorized agent may attempt to contact a borrower using an automated system to dial borrowers if the telephone call, when answered, is connected to a live representative of the beneficiary or authorized agent.

(iii) A beneficiary or authorized agent satisfies the telephone contact requirements of this subsection (5)(b) if the beneficiary or authorized agent determines, after attempting contact under this subsection (5)(b), that the borrower's primary telephone number and secondary telephone number or numbers on file, if any, have been disconnected or are not good contact numbers for the borrower.

(iv) The telephonic contact under this subsection (5)(b) does not constitute the meeting under subsection (1)(f) of this section.

(c) If the borrower does not respond within fourteen days after the telephone call requirements of (b) of this subsection have been satisfied, the beneficiary or authorized agent shall send a certified letter, with return receipt requested, to the borrower at the address in the beneficiary's records for sending account statements to the borrower and to the address of the property encumbered by the deed of trust. The letter must include the information described in (e)(i) through (iv) of this subsection. The letter must also include a paragraph stating: "Your failure to contact a housing counselor or attorney may result in your losing certain opportunities, such as meeting with your lender or participating in mediation in front of a neutral third party."

(d) The beneficiary or authorized agent shall provide a means for the borrower to contact the beneficiary or authorized agent in a timely manner, including a toll-free telephone number or charge-free equivalent that will provide access to a live representative during business hours for the purpose of initiating and scheduling the meeting under subsection (1)(f) of this section.

(e) The beneficiary or authorized agent shall post a link on the home page of the beneficiary's or authorized agent's internet website, if any, to the following information:

(i) Options that may be available to borrowers who are unable to afford their mortgage payments and who wish to avoid foreclosure, and instructions to borrowers advising them on steps to take to explore those options;

(ii) A list of financial documents borrowers should collect and be prepared to present to the beneficiary or authorized agent when discussing options for avoiding foreclosure;

(iii) A toll-free telephone number or charge-free equivalent for borrowers who wish to discuss options for avoiding foreclosure with their beneficiary or authorized agent; and

(iv) The toll-free telephone number or charge-free equivalent made available by the department to find a department-approved housing counseling agency.

(6) Subsections (1) and (5) of this section do not apply if the borrower has surrendered the property as evidenced by either a letter confirming the surrender or delivery of the keys to the property to the trustee, beneficiary, or authorized agent.

(7) (a) This section applies only to deeds of trust that are recorded against residential real property of up to four units. This section does not apply to deeds of trust: (i) Securing a commercial loan; (ii) securing obligations of a grantor who is not the borrower or a guarantor; or (iii) securing a purchaser's obligations under a seller-financed sale.

(b) This section does not apply to association beneficiaries subject to chapter 64.32, 64.34, or 64.38 RCW.

(8) As used in this section:

(a) "Department" means the United States department of housing and urban development.

(b) "Seller-financed sale" means a residential real property transaction where the seller finances all or part of the purchase price, and that financed amount is secured by a deed of trust against the subject residential real property.

(9) The form of declaration to be provided by the beneficiary or authorized agent as required under subsection (2) of this section must be in substantially the following form:

#### **"FORECLOSURE LOSS MITIGATION FORM**

**Please select applicable option(s) below.**

The undersigned beneficiary or authorized agent for the beneficiary hereby represents and declares under the penalty of perjury that [check the applicable box and fill in any blanks so that the beneficiary, authorized agent, or trustee can insert, on the beneficiary's behalf, the applicable declaration in the notice of default required under chapter 61.24 RCW]:

(1) [ ] The beneficiary or beneficiary's authorized agent has contacted the borrower under, and has complied with, RCW 61.24.031 (contact provision to "assess the borrower's financial ability to pay the debt secured by the deed of trust and explore options for the borrower to avoid foreclosure") and the borrower responded but did not request a meeting.

(2) [ ] The beneficiary or beneficiary's authorized agent has contacted the borrower as required under RCW 61.24.031 and the borrower or the borrower's designated representative requested a meeting. A meeting was held on (insert date, time, and location/telephonic here) in compliance with RCW 61.24.031.

(3) [ ] The beneficiary or beneficiary's authorized agent has contacted the borrower as required in RCW 61.24.031 and the borrower or the borrower's designated representative requested a meeting. A meeting was scheduled for (insert date, time, and location/telephonic here) and neither the borrower nor the borrower's designated representative appeared.

(4) [ ] The beneficiary or beneficiary's authorized agent has exercised due diligence to contact the borrower as required in RCW 61.24.031(5) and the borrower did not respond.

(5) [ ] The borrower has surrendered the secured property as evidenced by either a letter confirming the surrender or by delivery

of the keys to the secured property to the beneficiary, the beneficiary's authorized agent or to the trustee.

Additional Optional Explanatory Comments:

. . . . . "
[2021 c 151 § 4; 2014 c 164 § 2; 2012 c 185 § 4; 2011 c 58 § 5; 2009 c 292 § 2.]

**Effective date—2021 c 151 §§ 1-4, 6-8, and 10:** See note following RCW 61.24.005.

**Findings—Intent—2021 c 151:** See note following RCW 61.24.005.

**Findings—Intent—Short title—2011 c 58:** See notes following RCW 61.24.005.