

NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND FAIRNESS HEARING

Soto v. Houslanger & Associates, PLLC, et. al., No. 19 Civ. 6691
United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York



- You are receiving this notice because you are part of a proposed settlement of a class action lawsuit.
- You had a consumer debt judgment entered against you in New York City Civil Court.
- At some point between 2016 and 2022, the law firm Houslanger & Associates, PLLC executed on that judgment by garnishing your wages or restraining your bank account.
- Defendants have not admitted to any wrongdoing but if the Settlement is approved by the Court, **Defendants have agreed to stop collecting on your judgment forever.** (But it is possible that someone else may collect on your judgment in the future. If you have a collection issue and need help understanding your rights under the Settlement, call the number or visit the website below.)
- Defendants have also agreed that they will permanently stop collecting on the judgments entered against all other Class Members who participate in the Settlement, and will also stop collecting on certain additional New York City Civil Court judgments.
- Defendants have agreed to pay \$155,000 as part of the Settlement. The lawyers representing the Class Members think this is a good settlement because Defendants have limited money and it might be impossible to get any money from them later, plus Defendants will permanently stop collecting on thousands of judgments, including the judgment against you.
- But, you cannot get money from this settlement award, because Defendants' records show that you paid them less than \$1,000 and did not appear in Court to challenge the judgment. **If you think this is wrong – and that you did pay more than \$1,000, please call 1-800-578-9164.**
- Please read this Notice carefully because your rights are affected whether you act or do nothing.
- If you have questions about this Settlement, visit www.HouslangerSettlement.com or call 1-800-578-9164.

YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS IN THIS SETTLEMENT

You May	What This Means	Due Date
Do Nothing	Defendants will stop collecting on your judgment, <i>but</i> you will give up all your rights to sue the Defendants on your own about the execution on your judgment.	None
Opt Out	Defendants may keep collecting your judgment. <i>But</i> you could sue the Defendants on your own, at your own expense.	September 20, 2022
Object	You must tell the court, in writing, what you do not like about the Settlement. Even if you object, you will get the benefits described above, as long as you do not opt out.	September 20, 2022

1. Why am I getting this Notice?

You are part of a Class Action Settlement in a case brought by three consumers against the law firm Houslanger & Associates, PLLC and two of its attorneys, Todd Houslanger and Bryan Bryks (the Defendants). This case is on behalf of all consumers like you who: (a) had a judgment entered against them in New York City Civil Court; (b) that judgment was later sold or transferred to another company; and (c) on or after April 19, 2016, Defendants issued an Execution on that judgment in order to garnish your wages or restrain your bank account. This case is about whether Defendants' practices were lawful or unlawful.

Both sides have agreed to a settlement. Right now, the lawyers are *proposing* the Settlement. After hearing from Class Members like you, the Court will decide whether to *approve* the Settlement. You are getting this Notice so that you may decide what steps you wish to take with the proposed Settlement.

2. If the Settlement is approved and I don't opt out, what would I get?

No More Collections from Defendants: Defendants have agreed to stop collecting on your judgment forever. However, another company may be able to collect on the judgment against you in the future, and if that happens, you keep all of your rights to challenge that collection.

The lawyers representing the Class believe that this is a good settlement and will give valuable benefits to you and the other Class Members.

3. If the Settlement is approved, will I get money?

No. The Defendants have agreed to pay \$155,000 as a settlement award. Some of this money will be paid to Class Members who paid Defendants more than \$1,000 or who appeared in Court to challenge the collections by Defendants (each of those Class Members will get a payment of approximately \$50 or more). You cannot get money from this settlement, because the records show that you paid Defendants less than \$1,000 and did not appear in Court to challenge the collection. **If you think the records are wrong – and that you did pay the Defendants more than \$1,000 or did appear in Court to challenge the collection – call the Class Administrator at 1-800-578-9164.**

The remaining money will be used to pay: the consumers who brought this case or helped with this case for their time and effort (up to \$11,250); the costs of administering this settlement (sending this Notice, processing claim forms, etc.) (up to \$20,500); and the lawyers who brought this case (approximately \$51,667).

4. Do I have a lawyer in the case? How will the lawyers be paid?

The lawyers representing the Class Members are the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), a non-profit legal services organization. You do not have to pay for these lawyers, and you do not need to hire your own lawyer in order to participate as a Class Member. If you want to be represented by your own lawyer, you may hire one at your own expense. The lawyers have not yet been paid for their work on this case. The lawyers will apply to the Court for an award of approximately \$51,666, which is one-third of the settlement amount. The Court will decide whether to pay Class Counsel this full amount.

5. Why do those lawyers think this is a good Settlement?

The lawyers representing the Class Members think this is a good settlement because Defendants have limited money. The lawyers for the Class have confirmed this by looking at Defendants' financial records. Plus, importantly, as part of the Settlement, Defendants have agreed that they will not collect any more money from the judgments against Class Members and will stop collecting on other New York City Civil Court judgments. If the Parties did not enter this Settlement, it could take years for the case to finish, and Defendants could continue collecting on the judgments during this time.

6. What should I do if someone tries to collect on the judgment against me?

Under the Settlement, Defendants are not allowed to collect on your judgment. In addition, under the Settlement, you would keep all of your rights to challenge any future collection by anyone other than Defendants, and your rights against the owners of the judgment against you. If you face collection on the judgment against you in the future and need help understanding your rights under the Settlement, you may contact the lawyers for the Class, who can advise you at no charge.

7. What happens if the Settlement is not approved?

If the Settlement is not approved, the case will go forward in court. No one will get any money from the Settlement and Defendants may continue to collect money from Class Members, including you. If the case kept going, the Defendants might win, and Class Members would get nothing at all. Or the Class Members might win and get more money than what they would get under this Settlement. It is impossible to predict.

8. When and where will the Court decide whether to approve the Settlement?

The Court will hold a Fairness Hearing at the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, 225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, New York, Court Room 324 North on October 11, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. to decide whether to approve the Settlement. Any Class Member, including you, can attend the hearing to say what you think. You do not need to attend the Fairness Hearing to benefit from the Settlement or receive a payment, but you can go if you want to. It is completely up to you. If you want to speak at the Fairness Hearing to object to the settlement, you need to submit a written objection by September 20, 2022, by following the instructions below. If you want to speak about anything else at the Fairness Hearing, you need to sign up by September 20, 2022 by contacting Houslanger Settlement, c/o Atticus Administration, PO Box 64053, Saint Paul, MN 55164 or sending an email to HouslangerSettlement@atticusadmin.com and explaining what you want to say. Anyone can attend the Fairness Hearing, and to attend you don't need to sign up in advance.

9. How do I opt out or object to the Settlement?

To opt out of the Settlement, you must send a letter stating that you want to opt out of the Settlement in *Soto v. Houslanger & Associates, PLLC, et. al.*, No. 19 Civ. 6691. You must include your name, address, telephone number, email address, and physical or electronic signature. Your opt-out request must be postmarked no later than September 20, 2022 and sent to the following address: Houslanger Settlement, c/o Atticus Administration, PO Box 64053, Saint Paul, MN 55164 or emailed to HouslangerSettlement@atticusadmin.com.

To object, you must send a letter with: your name, address, telephone number, email address, and physical or electronic signature; a statement saying that you object to the Settlement in *Soto v. Houslanger & Associates, PLLC, et. al.*, No. 19 Civ. 6691; the reasons you object; and whether you want to speak at the Fairness Hearing. Your objection must be postmarked no later than September 20, 2022 and sent to the following address: Houslanger Settlement, c/o Atticus Administration, PO Box 64053, Saint Paul, MN 55164 or emailed to HouslangerSettlement@atticusadmin.com.

10. How can I get more information?

This Notice summarizes the proposed Settlement. More details about the Settlement and the lawsuit are available at www.HouslangerSettlement.com. If you have any questions about this Notice or the Settlement, you should **not** contact Defendants. Instead, please contact Houslanger Settlement, c/o Atticus Administration, PO Box 64053, Saint Paul, MN 55164, by email to HouslangerSettlement@atticusadmin.com, or by phone at 1-800-578-9164.