

**Court Services**  
**Chief Justice Roberts highlights recent rules amendments.**

Chief Justice John Roberts recently issued his 2015 Year-End Report on the federal judiciary. In his Year-End Report, Chief Justice Roberts announced recent amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. While conceding that “[m]any rules amendments are modest and technical, even persnickety,” Chief Justice Roberts explained that the 2015 amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure—the product of five years of intense study, debate, and drafting—are different. In fact, it is because the changes are so significant that Chief Justice Roberts chose his Year-End Report to highlight them.

The central theme of the rules changes, which went into effect on December 1, 2015, is best summed up by the changes to Rule 1: Rule 1 now directs that the Federal Rules “should be construed, administered, and employed by the court and the parties to secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of every action and proceeding.” Chief Justice Roberts explains that the underlined words were added to “make express the obligation of the of judges and lawyers to work cooperatively in controlling the expense and time demands of litigation” and to highlight that lawyers “have an affirmative duty to work together, and with the court, to achieve prompt and efficient resolutions of disputes.”

Other amendments give life to that express obligation. For instance, Rule 26(b)(1) now limits discovery to non-privileged matter that is “relevant to any party’s claim or defense and proportional to the needs of the case.” Rule 16 now shortens the deadline for judges to meet with lawyers after a complaint is filed to confer about the needs of a case and develop a case management plan. Rule 16, along with Rule 26(f), also now requires the parties to agree on the preservation and discovery of electronically stored information (ESI). In Chief Justice Roberts’ view, these amendments are a “major stride toward a better court system.”

But he cautions that it will require a genuine commitment by judges and lawyers to ensure that is the case. Judges, Chief Justice Roberts explains, must be willing to take on a stewardship role from the outset of a case. And lawyers must be willing to “affirmatively search out cooperative solutions, chart a cost-effective course of litigation, and assume shared responsibility with opposing counsel to achieve just results.” With a commitment from judges and lawyers alike, Chief Justice Roberts is hopeful the 2015 amendments will “help ensure that federal court litigation does not denigrate into wasteful clashes over matters that have little to do with achieving a just result.”

Click [here](#) for a full copy of Chief Just Roberts’ 2015 Year-End Report.