

What is Mediation?

At some point in a divorce proceeding parties may request, or the Court may order mediation. Mediation is a process for resolving disputes that allows parties, with the help of a mediator, to come to an agreement on contended issues.

The mediator conducts the mediation according to rules and statutes requiring that mediators:

- Remain neutral – not biased toward either party
- Cannot force either party into an agreement
- Always work for the mutual good of the parties.

Why Mediate?

Mediation opens lines of communication and allows parties to explore all settlement options in order to resolve the dispute.

Everything said during mediation is confidential and (except as provided by law) may not be repeated to anyone other than the other party and/or the party's attorney.

Parties have more control over the outcome reached in mediation, than when a judge makes the decisions.

Mediation can usually be scheduled much sooner than a court proceeding.

What Issues Are Addressed in Mediation?

Mediation allows parties to work out an agreement on contended issues, including:

Division of Property & Assets – What is a fair and equitable distribution of the property and assets acquired during the marriage? Who will get what?

Division of Debts – Who will pay credit card, mortgage and automobile loans, or other debts owed?

Alimony – Will either party seek permanent alimony? Lump sum alimony? Rehabilitative alimony for a specified time?

Other Entitlements – Are there any other entitlements such as retirement earnings to be considered or divided?

Shared Parenting Plan – If children were born or adopted during your marriage, what is an agreeable shared parenting plan?

What will be the arrangements and schedule for visitation with the children?

Who will pay child support? Will the amount to be paid be determined by parties or per Florida Statute?
How much life and/or health insurance for the children will be provided by either or both parent(s)?
Who will pay for uncovered medical and/or dental expenses?

How will future education costs be shared or provided?

What Does Mediation Cost?

Fees for the mediation session are charged according to the parties combined income as follows:

\$60 per party if your combined income is less than \$50,000 per year
\$120 per party if your combined income is greater than \$50,000 but less than \$100,000 per year

If your combined income is \$100,000 or more you must seek a private mediator and pay their established fees.

Refunds – If you reach an agreement prior to the mediation, you may request a waiver of mediation and refund of fees through the Clerk of Court.

How Do I Schedule Mediation?

Along with your court order, you will receive a list of family mediators that are trained in family mediation and certified by the Florida Supreme Court. You should select a mediator from that list, and contact them to schedule mediation. If the parties cannot agree on a mediator from the list, call Mediation Services (850-595-4482) and a mediator will be assigned to your case.

You should contact the mediator right away to schedule the mediation. Per the court

order, you have 75 days to complete the mediation. Be sure to inform the mediator of any pending Domestic Violence Injunctions involving you or the other party.

Clerks of Court

For court records and filing information, contact the office of the Clerk of Court in your county.

Escambia County

190 Governmental Center
Pensacola, FL 32502
850-595-4331

<http://www.escambiaclerk.com>

Okaloosa County

Main Courthouse: - Crestview:

101 E. James Lee Blvd.
Crestview, FL 32536
850-689-5000

Shalimar Annex:

1250 N. Eglin Pkwy.
Shalimar, FL 32579
850-651-7200

<http://www.clerkofcourts.cc/>

Santa Rosa County

6865 Caroline St.
Milton, FL 32572
850-981-5552

<http://www.santarosaclerk.com/>

Walton County

571 U.S. Hwy. 90 East
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435
850-892-8115

<http://clerkofcourts.co.walton.fl.us/>

Constitution & Florida Statutes

Website: www.leg.state.fl.us

Florida State Courts

Website: www.flcourts.org

FAMILY COURT MEDIATION

INFORMATION & RESOURCES



Court Administration
First Judicial Circuit of Florida