

**CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY  
DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION**

**MEDIATION INFORMATION SHEET**

The court has ordered that you participate in mediation of outstanding issues in your case. The following is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or legal authority. Please refer to Cook County Circuit Court Rule 13.4(e) for the complete rules related to mediation in the Domestic Relations Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

The Mediator

The mediator is a neutral facilitator who will help you and the other party resolve issues in your case. While one of the purposes of mediation is to help the parties arrive at a settlement, the mediator cannot require that the parties reach settlement.

It is important to remember that the mediator is not acting as an attorney for you or the other party, does not represent you or the other party, and is not providing legal advice to you or the other party. The mediator may however provide information about family law statutes and the legal process.

The Process

Upon entry of an order for mediation, you must contact the mediator within 7 days to schedule the first mediation session. You must attend the mediation session(s). The court may impose sanctions upon any party who does not attend mediation or who in some other way, violates the terms of the mediation referral court order or any other mediation related court order.

An attorney or other individual may accompany you to and participate in the mediation. You have a right to consult with your attorney at any time during the mediation process. The mediator may speak to any party or any party's attorney without the other party or the other party's attorney being present. You may not bring a minor child to mediation unless both parties and the mediator agree.

At any time, you may ask the court (by filing a motion) to terminate the mediation or modify the issues to be mediated. The mediator may terminate the mediation at any time if there is an impediment to mediation. An impediment occurs when there is a circumstance which may render mediation inappropriate or unreasonably interfere with the mediation process. Impediments may include past or present family violence or abuse, mental or cognitive impairment, alcohol abuse, or chemical dependency.

If financial issues are being mediated, you and the other party must willfully disclose all financial information, financial statements, income tax returns, valuations of property, and other relevant information requested by the mediator. You cannot misrepresent financial information.

### Confidentiality

In order to promote communication among you, the other party, counsel and the mediator and to facilitate settlement of the dispute, the mediation process is confidential. All statements made during the course of the mediation are privileged settlement discussions and are not admissible for any purpose with some exceptions. Examples of statements that may be disclosed without either party's express permission include statements that lead a mediator to believe that abuse or neglect of a child has occurred and statements that lead a mediator to believe there is a need to disclose information in order to prevent death or serious bodily harm.

### Fees

Mediation through Family Mediation Services is free of charge. Mediation through mediators other than Family Mediation Services will vary depending on the rates of the mediator providing the mediation. The court may enter an order specifying who will pay the fees.