

What types of cases are mediated?

- Dissolution (divorce) actions—all issues including child support, parental responsibility, time-sharing with minor children, distribution of real or personal property, and alimony.
- Modifications of Child Support, Time-Sharing, Parental Responsibility or Alimony.

What are the benefits of mediation?

- In mediation, you have a better opportunity to control the outcome of your dispute
- By discussing your options in mediation, you may discover choices you did not know you had
- You have a chance to present your ideas in an informal and private setting
- Can reduce your legal expenses

What are the limitations to mediation?

- The mediator can't determine who is right or who is wrong
- The mediator can't provide legal advice
- The mediator can't provide counseling
- The mediator can't take sides

Who attends the mediation?

- The mediator
- The parties
- Their attorneys, if any
- At times, a mediator trainee may observe or participate in the session
- No other persons, including current spouses and other family members, may be present without the agreement of all the parties.

What do I bring to mediation?

- Receipt from Clerk of Court showing payment for mediation
- Proof of all income if financial matters are at issue
- Any document you wish to discuss at mediation and feel would be beneficial to the process.
- Please make arrangements for child care prior to the mediation. Be mindful the afternoon sessions typically last until 4pm so you may need alternative child care after school.

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in a court-ordered mediation, please contact Court Administration at 850.747.5327; if hearing impaired, (TDD) 1.800.955.8771 or Voice (v) 1.800.955.8770 via Florida Relay Service.



FAMILY MEDIATION PROGRAM



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What is Family Mediation?

Family Mediation is a process in which parties involved in a disputed matter meet with a neutral third party, the mediator, in an attempt to resolve their differences prior to going before a judge.

The mediator is impartial and trained to help the parties talk about their needs and differences so that they can work things out themselves. The mediator does not make any decisions for the parties but helps them in reaching their own.



The process is meant to be informal and non-adversarial with the objective of helping the parties reach a mutually acceptable and voluntary agreement.

The mediator is not an advocate for either party, but a knowledgeable third person who helps the parties think creatively, find ways to get to the outcomes they need and come up with an agreement that is fair and equitable according to their own values.

Who qualifies for the Program?

To qualify for the Family Mediation Program the parties' combined gross income cannot exceed \$100,000 per year. Gross income means the total income before ANY deductions are taken out. If the parties' combined income exceeds \$100,000 per year they must seek the assistance of a private mediator. The Family Mediation program can provide a list of certified family mediators practicing in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit.



How much does mediation cost?

The cost for mediation through the Family Mediation Program is outlined below:

If the parties' combined **gross income** is no more than \$50,000 per year they will each pay \$60 per session.

If the parties' combined **gross income** is between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year they will each pay \$120 per session.

These fees MUST be paid to the Clerk of Court before the mediation can begin.

What happens at mediation?

The mediator assists the parties in sorting out the issues and concerns and explores alternatives for settlement.

If an agreement is reached, the mediator will prepare a written agreement for the parties to sign.

If the parties can't come to an agreement this is called an impasse and the mediator files a report with the court that the parties are at impasse.

Please set aside **THREE (3)** hours for mediation. The typical mediation takes one session of 3 hours. On occasion, more than one session may be necessary. If another session is agreed to by the parties, each party shall pay the same fee they paid for their first session.

Is mediation confidential?

Except for written agreements and where disclosure is required or permitted by law, all parties to the mediation must keep confidential the communication shared during the mediation.

Also, the mediator can not be subpoenaed to court to testify on behalf of either party.