

Colorado Legal Services

Legal help for low-income Coloradans seeking assistance with civil legal needs

www.coloradolegalservices.org



Mediation in Colorado

Do you need to change your orders or agreements in a family law case?

For instance, you can't pay child support, or the parenting time schedules aren't working right now.

If yes, you could try Mediation

- If the courts are not able to hear your case right away, you can try mediation.
- During the COVID-19 crisis, mediators are setting up telephone appointments for mediation.
- Mediation lets you and the other party reach your own agreement that works for both of you.
- If you need an interpreter, ask for one.
- **NOTE:** Some courts have rules about what you can change in mediation, so check your local courts first. The Family Court Facilitator at the court is a good person to ask.

How to Find a Mediator

The Colorado Judicial Branch (Colorado court) website has information about mediation, [click here](#).

To find mediators in your county, click on your county on the map [on this page](#).

The Office of Dispute Resolution (ODR) sets the fees for their mediators, currently the cost is \$75 per hour for each party, along with \$150 (a 2 hour) deposit to set up mediation. If you are low-income, the reduced rates start at \$15/hour per person, with a \$30 deposit to start. Your rate will depend on your income. You'll have to fill out a **form** to get a reduced rate - ask for a form to request a reduced rate.

Mediation Tips

- Put the "best interests of the child(ren)" first, especially if the mediation is about child support or parenting time. This is the standard the court will use.
- Think about what you want before the mediation session. You should have a "best case",

and a “bottom line”. The “best case” is if you get everything you want, and the “bottom line” is your basic need to be met. Have an outline of your issues and your suggested solutions.

- Remember that the other party has a “best case” and a “bottom line”, too. You’ll probably have to meet somewhere in the middle. Be flexible and creative in figuring out how to do that. The mediator will help you.
- As always, be respectful of everyone on the mediation. Listen to what the other party has to say. Don’t interrupt. Don’t criticize or complain. Write down notes about what the other person says and what you want to say in reply. Stick to the issues and the facts. You don’t have to agree with the other person, or like the other person. Keep your goal in mind – to do what’s best for your child(ren) and to reach an agreement that will work for everyone.
- If you don’t feel you can agree, think about what that will mean for you. Will you continue to owe child support that you can’t pay? Will you be able to spend time with your child(ren)? Don’t agree to something that will hurt you or your child(ren), of course. If you’re not sure, ask for a break in the mediation session so you can think about it.

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