

**COWETA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT ADR PROGRAM
THE MEDIATION CENTER
100 RIDLEY AVE., SUITE 3200, LAGRANGE, GA 30240
PHONE (706) 883-2168/2170/2171
FAX (706) 883-2169/298-3732**

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR DIVORCE MEDIATION?

The length of time to successfully mediate a domestic case is determined by a combination of several factors: the number and complexity of the issues, the negotiation styles of the parties and their attorneys, and how prepared the parties are to discuss the issues. The Court schedules the first mediation session. The fee for the session is \$100.00 per hour with a two hour minimum, the fee is split equally between the parties. Usually, the parties and the mediator evaluate where they are after the first couple of hours to determine whether they will continue that day or adjourn to another scheduled time. The fee for any additional hour or part of an hour is \$100 per hour which is also split equally between the parties.

In order to get the most out of the mediation process and better utilize your time and money, you should be well prepared for the mediation session. Since the mediator's role is to remain neutral and impartial, he/she knows very little about your case prior to the session. The mediator comes to the session with basic information on the parties and an idea of what issues may be in dispute (i.e., custody, visitation, property division, etc.) The mediator relies upon the parties to supply the information necessary for an educated discussion of the issues. For example, if the parties want to decide what happens to the marital home, in order to discuss possible solutions, the mediator and parties must know its current value, what's owed on it, etc. The mediator cannot work without this information. If you do not have it, the mediator may stop the session and reschedule when the information is available. If the first session is cancelled and rescheduled for this reason, the parties will still be responsible for the \$200 fee.

The best way to get ready for mediation is to gather all the papers that are important to the dispute. In domestic actions (divorce or modifications), depending upon what issues are to be discussed, you should bring the following:

Issue

Bring the following items:

**Equitable Division
Of Property:**

Sworn Financial Affidavits of both parties are required.	
Real Estate	Description and location of property. Something to show value of property (tax bill, appraisal, realtor's statement). Statements showing original mortgage amount, as well as current balance, payment, and interest rate. Any information about second mortgages or home equity loans.
Personal Property	Detailed list of all property to be divided and values of each item. (Include all household items)
Vehicles/Boats/etc.	Description and current value of item. Include loan information or lease information.

Checking/Savings Accounts; Investments	Most recent statements.
Retirement Accounts	Description of the plan type and amount (i.e., pension plan, profit sharing plan, 401K plan, employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), government plan, etc.). Bring a Summary Plan Description - available thru Administrator.
Life Insurance	Description of types, policy numbers and amounts of all policies.
Debts	Statements of all debt including credit cards, store accounts, vehicle payments, personal debt and any other type debt.

Spousal Support: Sworn Financial Affidavits of both parties are required.

Childrens' Issues: ** Both parties must attend the parent seminar prior to scheduling the mediation.**

- Child Support (Including modifications) Sworn Financial Affidavits and effective January 1, 2007, Child Support Worksheets and Schedules of both parties are required.

*****NOTICE: Go to Website for child support worksheets and schedules: <https://services.georgia.gov/dhr/cspp/do/public/SupportCalc>

Confirmation of all income - bring paycheck stubs, income tax returns.

-Child Custody/ Visitation Bring preferences for the holiday schedule. Bring description of all health insurance including type of coverage, deductibles, and amounts of co-payments.

Attorney's Fees: Sworn Financial Affidavits of both parties are required.

Most divorce and modification cases involve issues which require that you bring a financial affidavit (see above). If you have not completed your financial affidavit, contact your attorney prior to the mediation session to complete one. You must provide the mediator with a sworn financial affidavit which has been filed with the Superior Court. The child support laws changed effective January 1, 2007; discuss changes with your attorney and/or access the internet (see above) address for child support worksheets and schedules.

If there is an existing temporary order in your case or your case involves a modification of a final decree, please bring a copy of the temporary order or the final decree.

We cannot cover all the possible issues which may be discussed during the mediation session, nor can we list all the necessary documents which may apply in your particular case. If you have questions about how to prepare for the mediation session, please feel free to contact the mediation office at (706) 883-2168.