

## How do I schedule mediation?

Contact the ACCESS Center:

E-mail: [accessmediation@sftc.org](mailto:accessmediation@sftc.org), or

Call the Mediation Advisor: **415-551-5993**.

We will send an invitation to the other side. Or, we can help you send your own invitation.

## Where do I go for mediation?

The mediation will be at:

- Civic Center Courthouse
- ACCESS Center, or
- Community Boards (in the Mission District)

We will schedule the mediation at a time that is convenient for both sides. We have day, evening, and weekend appointments.

## ? What if I have more questions?

Visit the ACCESS Center at:

575 Polk Street, Room 001

San Francisco, CA 94102

*(between Golden Gate and Turk Streets)*

Or visit: [www.sfgov.org/courts](http://www.sfgov.org/courts)

## ACCESS Center hours are:

Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 12 Noon

Monday – Thursday: 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.



**ACCESS**



*A Partnership of the Court, Community, and Law Schools*



Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco

# Small Claims



# Mediation

## What is small claims mediation?

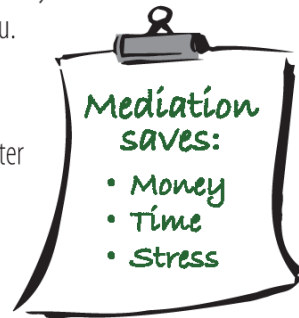
If you have a small claims case (\$7500 or less), you can:

- have a trial in small claims court, or
- try to solve your dispute using mediation.

If you choose mediation, an independent person works with you and the other side to find a solution that works for both of you.

## What are the advantages of mediation?

Small claims mediation is free, confidential, and usually faster than a trial. And, because you do not have a trial, it can be less hostile.



## Is mediation like a trial?

No. In a trial, you have to try to prove you are right. Then one side wins and the other side loses. With mediation, both sides can get some of their needs met.

## Do I have to use mediation?

No. But people who use mediation are usually more satisfied. And, because you work together to find a solution, there is less hostility. This can also make it easier to collect money owed to you.

## Can the mediator give me legal advice?

No. The mediator is not your lawyer. For legal information visit the ACCESS Center.

## When can I use mediation?

You can use mediation before or after you file your small claims court papers.

If you are worried about the statute of limitations, you can file your case before mediation. If mediation works, then you can dismiss your case.

## What if we don't reach an agreement in the mediation?

If mediation does not help you find an acceptable solution, you can still go to court on your scheduled trial date.

If you try mediation first, you will have a better understanding of the other side's case against you.



## Can the other side appeal a mediated agreement?

No. But, if you go to trial, even if you win, the Defendant can appeal the judge's decision. Lawyers are allowed in small claims appeals so you may have to get a lawyer to represent you.

## If you are the Defendant (the person being sued), mediation can be better for you because:

- The agreement is private and confidential. It does not go on your credit report.
- You won't have a judgment against you.
- You learn more about the other side's case if you have to go to court.

## What happens to the court case if we reach an agreement in mediation?

You and the other side will make a written agreement. The mediator can help you with this. Then, the Plaintiff can dismiss the case.

## Can I try mediation before I file my court papers?

Yes, but there may be a deadline to file your case. The ACCESS Center can give you more information about deadlines.