

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process where a trained impartial mediator helps parties in conflict communicate respectfully and effectively with each other. The mediator facilitates communication by helping the parties define issues, remove communication obstacles, and explore potential solutions.

Mediation empowers people to reach informed, acceptable, and realistic agreements.

The Mediation Process at Court

Court Referred Mediation

The Court may refer parties to mediation in any civil case, with the exception of family cases. Parties may also voluntarily participate in mediation at any stage of litigation, without court referral, by calling the ADR Coordinator for a mediator referral.

Parties may opt to use the Court Panel Mediator or to hire a private mediator. Qualified Court Panel Mediators will be assigned through the ADR Coordinator. If a Court Panel Mediator is chosen, there will be no charge to the parties for the first two hours. If the parties choose to continue the mediation after the two hours, the mediator may charge his or her fee.

Community Mediation

The Lake and Mendocino Superior Courts' Civil Mediation Program works in conjunction with local community mediation service providers to ensure that parties in conflict have the option for settling their disputes without resorting to litigation. Any type of "community dispute" can be resolved through mediation. Some examples include neighbor, employment, consumer, school, roommate or group conflicts.

Benefits of Mediation

- **Privacy** - All discussions during the mediation are confidential.
- **The parties reach their own solution** - The mediator will not impose a solution on the parties. The solution is based on the interests and needs of the parties.
- **No cost or reasonable cost** – The cost of participating in mediation is minimal compared to the cost of litigation - or the cost of doing nothing. Mediations conducted by a member of the Lake County Court Civil Mediation Panel are no cost to the parties. If the parties opt to use a private mediator, the Lake County Court Civil Mediation Program Coordinator will help them find a mediator.
- **Flexible scheduling** – Mediations can be scheduled to accommodate all parties and their attorneys.
- **Clear, respectful communication** – Mediation can provide the opportunity for understanding or reconciliation.
- **Quicker resolution** – Parties are often able to resolve their conflict in one session, though more sessions will be scheduled, if needed.
- **Effective** – The parties know more about their conflict than anyone else does. Developing their own agreements offers satisfaction and success.
- **Agreement options** – Any written agreement made in the course of litigation will be treated as a legally enforceable agreement.



***Mendocino/Lake Superior Courts'
Civil Mediation Program***

**For information or to schedule a
mediation contact:**

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