

MARIN COUNTY'S MODEST MEANS MEDIATION PROGRAM

The Marin County Bar Association has a special program that can help you get your case settled with the help of a neutral person who volunteers to serve as a mediator.

Eligibility

To qualify for the program:

- 1) You must have a civil case, not a criminal or family court matter.
- 2) At least one of the parties must be acting as their own lawyer (pro per), **or** be represented by a lawyer who is working without pay to assist you (pro bono).

Benefits

One benefit is that it costs only a small fee of \$150 per party to use this program. You can save money by doing this. If you settle: You don't have to take time from work to keep going to court or trial on your case. You do not have to go through the stress of continuing with your case if you get it settled in mediation, and a settlement through mediation is valid and when you put it in writing, it is recognized by the court and is enforceable in court.

What The Mediator Does

The mediator listens to both (or all) parties, summarizes the main points of your case and helps you figure out how to get it resolved on your own. The mediator does not decide who is right or wrong and does not take sides in your case. The mediator makes suggestions and guides you if you want to settle it.

How To Use The Program

You can ask for a mediator at any time during the progress of your case. Both or all parties in your case must agree to go to mediation. You can obtain an application to mediate your dispute from the Marin County Bar Association website <http://www.marinbar.org/resources/community-arbitration-mediation/> or you can call the office at 415-499-1314 and request the form be mailed to you. Once all parties have agreed to mediation, you pay your fee and you are assigned to a mediator, the mediator will contact you and explain more about how to participate in your mediation.

Mediation Process

The Marin County Bar Association has many experienced attorney mediators to ready to help you work on settling your case.

The mediator will help you for a four hour period. The mediator meets with everyone who is a party to the case, usually all together. Sometimes the mediator will put one or some of the parties in a different room to speak with them privately. Everything you say in mediation is confidential. However, if you reach a settlement by mediation, the mediation agreement itself, which is written down, is not confidential.

The parties work out settlement by making their own decisions about how to resolve the case, using the guidance of the mediator.

People who pay lawyers to represent them also use mediation to get their cases settled outside court. The difference for you is that this is a far less expensive opportunity because it is a special program run by volunteer attorney mediators and the Marin County Bar Association.