



WILLIAMSON COUNTY DISTRICT COURTS
&
COUNTY COURTS AT LAW

405 Martin Luther King St.
Georgetown, Texas 78626

October 13, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY BAR

SUBJECT: Procedures for **Virtual Settlement Week** November 15-19, 2021

The Williamson County Bar Association and the Judges of the District and County Courts at Law have organized the next Settlement Week for the week of November 15, 2021, setting aside *five* days to facilitate the settlement of civil and family law cases now pending in Williamson County courts. During these five days, attorneys are given the opportunity to appear with their clients, or representatives with authority, to conduct negotiations and potentially settle cases with the assistance of a volunteer mediator.

In consideration of the health concerns brought on by the COVID pandemic, Settlement Week will be a **virtual event** in 2021. This has limited the number of available slots. Because of this, while any one of the attorneys representing a party in a case, or either of the parties, may request mediation, the Court must approve the request for mediation.

The Volunteer Mediators will be providing the link for the virtual mediation meeting. To assure that mediations are set at a time when both parties are available, the following **procedures** will be required. **The party setting the case for mediation shall confer with the other party to determine available times for mediation. The times for which both parties are available shall be submitted with the mediation request.** Once the Court has approved mediation, the Courts' Mediation Coordinator, Amanda Vega, will assign the mediation time and the Mediator will send the link.

Participants, including the lawyers and mediators, MAY NOT reschedule or cancel a mediation once ordered. A case MAY NOT be removed without permission from the Judge of the court who ordered the mediation. Should a case settle prior to mediation, please contact the Mediation Coordinator, Amanda Vega, immediately so that she can notify the mediator. Please be on time for the start of mediation and be respectful of the Mediator's time.

Enclosed with this letter, you will find an information sheet, a Settlement Week submission sheet, and a Volunteer Mediator Application form. **THE COMPLETED SETTLEMENT WEEK SUBMISSION SHEET AND MUST BE RETURNED NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM on OCTOBER 22, 2021.**

SETTLEMENT WEEK SUBMISSION SHEET

MUST BE RETURNED BY 5:00 PM on OCTOBER 22, 2021

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SUBMITTING ATTORNEY. Return this form to: Amanda Vega, Mediation Coordinator, via email to wilcomediation@wilco.org. **YOU MUST PROVIDE AN EMAIL ADDRESS FOR ALL ATTORNEYS AND PRO SE PARTIES THAT REQUIRE NOTICE OF THE MEDIATION.** ALL parties will be notified of the mediation date/time via email.

Court	_____		
Date of Action	_____		
Cause No.	_____		
Style of Case	_____		
Plf Name	_____	Resp Name	_____
Plf Atty Name	_____	Resp Atty Name	_____
Address	_____	Address	_____
City and Zip	_____	City and Zip	_____
Phone No.	_____	Phone No.	_____
Email (required)	_____	Email (Required)	_____

(List names of ALL parties and/or attorneys, including Ad Litem/Amicus. Attach additional pages, if needed.)

Please indicate at least three times for the Mediation which are agreeable to ALL attorneys, parties and/or authorized representatives: **Mark 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices.**

Monday, Nov. 15, 2021	8:30am – 12:00pm _____	1:00 – 4:30pm _____
Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021	8:30am – 12:00pm _____	1:00 – 4:30pm _____
Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021	8:30am – 12:00pm _____	1:00 – 4:30pm _____
Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021	8:30am – 12:00pm _____	1:00 – 4:30pm _____
Friday, Nov. 19, 2021	8:30am – 12:00pm _____	1:00 – 4:30pm _____

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SETTLEMENT WEEK

WHAT IS SETTLEMENT WEEK?

Twice a year, a week is set aside to facilitate the settlement of civil and family cases pending in the Williamson County Courts at Law and District Courts. It affords parties in lawsuits the opportunity to make a concentrated effort to settle their cases with the aid of volunteer, trained mediators. In 2021, Settlement Week will be conducted virtually!

WHO ORGANIZES SETTLEMENT WEEK?

The Williamson County Judiciary (County Courts at Law and District Courts) together with the Williamson County Bar Association. The point of contact is Mediation Coordinator, Mandy Vega.

WHO DECIDES WHETHER A CASE IS MEDIATED?

Any attorney representing a party in a case may submit a case for mediation mindful of the **new procedure** requiring both parties to confer on *available times* for mediation. Once a case is submitted, the judge will sign an order for the parties to appear at the mediation. ALL PARTIES DO NOT HAVE TO AGREE IN ORDER FOR THE CASE TO BE SUBMITTED FOR MEDIATION. ANY OBJECTION TO MEDIATION SHOULD BE PROMPTLY MADE TO THE COURT (that ordered the mediation); however, once a case is set for mediation during Settlement Week, the parties must appear for the mediation.

WHY SHOULD I WANT MY CASE MEDIATED?

You have greater control over the outcome of your case if you mediate. The mediator's job is not to issue a decision, but to help the parties come up with solutions agreeable to both sides. Often, you can achieve a better result by agreement than one that is imposed by a judge or jury. You may be able to achieve a quicker resolution of your case and avoid the substantial cost of continued litigation.

HOW MUCH DOES MEDIATION COST?

There is no fee for the mediation during Settlement Week. The mediators donate their time and services. Your own attorney's fee will vary depending upon what your attorney charges for preparation and representation at the mediation.

HOW LONG DOES MEDIATION LAST?

There are morning mediations and afternoon mediations, each session is 3 ½ hours long. Space is limited, so it is extremely important to stay within your allotted time.

CAN MEDIATION DURING SETTLEMENT WEEK BE CANCELLED OR RESCHEDULED?

A case ordered to mediation can only be cancelled by the judge who ordered it. If a scheduling conflict occurs, you may be able to reschedule for an alternate day/time during Settlement Week if all parties agree, but space is very limited. Contact the Court that ordered the mediation if any issues arise regarding a scheduled mediation. The Court will contact the Mediation Coordinator.

SETTLEMENT WEEK VOLUNTEER MEDIATOR APPLICATION FORM

Return to: Amanda Vega, Mediation Coordinator *via email at:* wilcomediation@wilco.org.

Name: _____

SBN: _____

Firm: _____

Office Address: _____

City/State: _____

Office Phone No.: _____

Cell Phone No: _____
(required)

Email Address: _____
(required)

Years of Practice: _____

Areas of Practice: _____

**Prior Mediation
Trng./Experience:** _____

Please indicate days/times you are available to serve as Virtual Mediator below:

Monday, Nov. 15, 2021	8:30am – 12:00pm _____	1:00 – 4:30pm _____
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