

OFFICES OF THE DISTRICT JUDGES

OFFICES OF THE COUNTY COURT AT LAW JUDGES

Criminal Justice Center
Williamson County
405 Martin Luther King Street
Georgetown, Texas 78626

TO: Attorneys with civil or family cases pending in Williamson County, Texas

RE: **PROCEDURES FOR Settlement Week September 3-6, 2019**

The Williamson County Bar Association, in conjunction with the District Court Judges and the County Court at Law Judges, has organized the next Settlement Week for the week of **September 3, 2019**, setting aside *four* days to facilitate the settlement of civil and family law cases now pending in Williamson County courts. During these four days, attorneys are given the opportunity to appear with their clients, or representatives with authority, to conduct negotiations and potentially settle in the presence of a volunteer mediator.

The success of this project depends on you, as attorneys or parties, submitting cases for mediation. Any one of the attorneys representing a party in a case, or either of the parties, may set that case for mediation. In order to assure 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.**

In order to make this mandated process successful, we will need your cooperation in submitting cases as well as volunteering your time to act as mediators. 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, whether 8:30 a.m. or 1:00 p.m., and be respectful of the Clerks' Offices and Bailiffs' time. Mediation should be concluded no later than 4:30 p.m. to allow the Clerks' Offices time to process any paperwork from your mediation before 5:00 p.m. The doors to the building will be locked at 5:00 p.m.

As an aid to settlement, the Judges of the Williamson County District Courts and County Courts at Law strongly encourage participating attorneys to exchange settlement demands and responses no later than **August 9, 2019**.

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/OR VOLUNTEER MEDIATOR APPLICATION MUST BE RETURNED by August 9, 2019.** Please remember that the submitted cases are given setting preference based on the order in which they are received.

Honorable Betsy F. Lambeth
Local Administrative District Judge for Williamson County, Texas

SETTLEMENT WEEK – VOLUNTEER MEDIATOR APPLICATION FORM

Return by August 9, 2019 to:

Amanda Vega, Mediation Coordinator

Via email to: 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 Mediator
Training:** _____

**Prior Mediation
Experience:** _____

How many cases can you mediate during that week? _____

Will you be submitting cases for Settlement Week? Yes _____ No _____

MUST BE RETURNED BY August 9, 2019

SETTLEMENT WEEK SUBMISSION SHEET

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 & ZIP: _____ **CITY & 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 alternative times for the Mediation which are agreeable to ALL attorneys, parties and/or authorized representatives: **Mark 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices.**

Tuesday, September 3, 2019	8:30 – 12:00 _____	1:00 – 4:30 _____
Wednesday, September 4, 2019	8:30 – 12:00 _____	1:00 – 4:30 _____
Thursday, September 5, 2019	8:30 – 12:00 _____	1:00 – 4:30 _____
Friday, September 6, 2019	8:30 – 12:00 _____	1:00 – 4:30 _____

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.

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.