

## THE FAMILY LAW FACILITATOR PROGRAM

The Douglas County Family Law Facilitator assists self-represented parties with their family law cases in Douglas County Superior Court. A person is self-represented if he or she is not represented by an attorney. Sometimes self-represented parties are referred to as acting "pro se." The Facilitator can provide information about court procedures and assist you with legal forms (sometimes referred to as "pleadings").

The Facilitator is not a lawyer and cannot give you legal advice. If you are acting pro se in your case, you are encouraged to consult with a lawyer about your legal rights and responsibilities and what is best for you in your situation. When you meet with the Facilitator, you will be asked to sign a disclaimer informing you of these limitations on the program's services.

### CAN THE FAMILY LAW FACILITATOR ASSIST ME?

The Facilitator can only assist self-represented persons who know what kind of legal proceeding they wish to file. The Facilitator cannot assist you if you are represented by an attorney. The Facilitator cannot advise you as to what kind of legal action you should file.

### WHAT KINDS OF CASES CAN THE FACILITATOR ASSIST ME WITH?

The Facilitator can only assist you with family law cases under RCW Title 26. Family law cases include these kinds of cases:

- Dissolution of Marriage/Domestic Partnership (Divorce)
- Legal Separation
- Invalidity of Marriage (Annulment)
- Establishing a Parenting Plan (Child Custody and Visitation)
- Establishing Child Support
- Establishing Spousal Maintenance (Alimony)
- Modifying a Parenting Plans (Relocation of Child)
- Modifying Child Support
- Establishing Paternity
- Establishing Non-Parental Child Custody
- Temporary Orders for Child Support, Maintenance (Alimony) and Property
- Temporary Restraining Orders
- Family Law Motions
- Orders for Protection – Domestic Violence

The Facilitator **cannot** assist you with adoptions, guardianships, wills and probate, name changes, bankruptcy, criminal cases, juvenile offender cases, juvenile dependency cases, and traffic infractions.

## WHAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE CAN THE FACILITATOR PROVIDE ME?

The Facilitator is not your lawyer, cannot give you legal advice and does not represent you. The Facilitator provides these limited basic services:

- Refer you to legal, social service, and alternate dispute resolution resources
- Assistance you in calculating child support based on the financial information you provide
- Request an interpreter for court hearings, if you need one
- Assist you in selecting legal forms
- Explain legal terms used in legal forms
- Provide information on basic court procedures including requirements for service, filing, scheduling hearings and complying with local procedures
- Review your legal form for completeness
- Review your completed legal forms prior to hearings to determine whether you have met procedural requirements

The Facilitator **cannot** fill out your legal forms for you or give you legal advice. The Facilitator is **not responsible** for the accuracy of the information in the legal forms or papers you file or use in court.

The Facilitator **cannot** assist you to prepare for court hearings or a trial, other than to review your legal forms for completeness and procedural requirements.

The Facilitator **cannot** predict what the court will do in your case. Only an attorney in private practice or in a volunteer legal services program can advise you about your rights and responsibilities, and which course of action is best for you.

## HOW DO I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE FACILITATOR

Appointments for the Court Facilitator are made by calling the Douglas County Clerk main phone number **745-8529**. Walk-in appointments may occur based on availability of the Court Facilitator.

Appointments are for one hour, and are available:

- the **1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday** at the Douglas County Courthouse in **Waterville**, Washington at 12, 2 and 3 pm;
- the **3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday** at Douglas County District Court in **East Wenatchee** at 12, 2, and 3 pm;
- and **every Monday** at Douglas County District Court in **East Wenatchee** at 12, 1, and 2 pm.

**All appointments must be confirmed five days prior**, or the time will be made available to others.

A Facilitator fee of \$30.00 must be paid **prior to your appointment** by cash or money order. Credit/debit cards are accepted through nCourt at the Clerk's counter, by telephone or online. Personal checks are not accepted. If the \$30.00 fee is not paid prior to your appointment, you will have to re-schedule the appointment with the Family Law Facilitator. The Facilitator Fee is **non-refundable**. A reduced fee may be accepted where a pro se litigant in a family matter has been found to be indigent by a Superior Court Order or by discretion of the Family Law Facilitator if the individual has met the indigence standards as defined in General Rule 34, but has not yet been found indigent by the Court.

## **WHAT DO I BRING TO THE FACILITATOR APPOINTMENT?**

You should bring your **completed** legal forms with you to your appointment. This will make the most efficient use of your time with the Facilitator. Approved legal forms for family law cases are available without cost on the [Washington Courts website](http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms) located at [www.courts.wa.gov/forms](http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms), or for a fee at the Douglas County Clerk's office. There are also "do it yourself" legal forms for sale on the Internet and at some book stores.

If you have a "do it yourself" forms or approved legal forms, read the instructions carefully. You will need to gather and organize information to fill out the legal forms. Fill out as much of the information as you can on a working copy of the forms. Use a pencil so corrections can be made easily.

Make a list of the questions you have for the Facilitator. The Facilitator will review the forms you have filled out to see if they are complete. Try to answer the Facilitator's questions clearly and briefly. Take notes during your visit with the Facilitator.

You will need to gather and organize the following information to fill out the legal forms:

### **For Dissolution of Marriage/Legal Separation/Invalidity Cases:**

#### **1. Prepare a complete list of your property and other assets.**

"Property and other assets" includes real estate (include addresses, parcel numbers and legal description), automobiles and other vehicles (include make, model and VIN numbers); bank accounts (include bank name, balance and account numbers), stock and bonds (list details), retirement accounts (list details), life insurance policies with a cash value (list account number and value), inheritances, household items, jewelry and any other property and assets owned by you and/or your spouse/partner.

Make a list of the property and assets. If you and/or your spouse/partner have separately owned property and assets, put that property on a separate list.

If you know how you want the property and assets divided, prepare a list with two headings, "Me" and "My Spouse/Partner" at the top. Under each heading list how you want the property and other assets to be divided by the court.

2. Prepare a complete list of your debts and liabilities (with creditor names and account numbers):

"Debts and liabilities" includes mortgages, loans for automobiles and other vehicles, credit card accounts, student loans, delinquent taxes, and any other loan or debt owed by you and your spouse.

Make a list of all debts and liabilities incurred during your marriage and prior to the date of separation. The creditor's name, account number and balance due should be listed for each debt and liability.

If you have any debts and liabilities incurred prior to marriage or after separation, list these debts and liabilities separately.

If you know how you want the debts and liabilities to be divided, prepare a list with two headings, "Me" and "My Spouse/Partner" at the top. Under each heading list the debts you want to be responsible for paying and the debts you want to be the responsibility of your spouse/partner.

3. If you have children or are requesting spousal maintenance (alimony), be prepared to provide income information for you and your spouse.

Income is used to determine child support and spousal maintenance. You should gather copies of paycheck stubs for the last three months showing gross pay and all deductions (or get statements from your employers), and copies of your income tax returns for the last three years. If you have children from previous relationships, bring in copies of the support orders for those children. The Facilitator will use this information to calculate child support from the Washington State Child Support Schedule.

**For Parentage Cases:**

You will need a copy of the Affidavit of Paternity or Paternity Acknowledgment signed at the hospital at the time of the child's birth. If your child was born in Washington after July 1, 1997, and you do not have a copy of the affidavit, you may request a certified copy from the Center for Health Statistics by sending a written request, together with a copy of your picture identification and a check or money order for \$35.00 to the following address:

Center for Health Statistics  
P.O. Box 9709  
Olympia, WA 98504-9709

When you make the request, be sure to include the name of the child (first, middle and last names), the date of the child's birth, the city in Washington where the child was born, the full name of the father and the full name, including maiden name, of the mother. Allow 4 to 5 weeks to receive the requested affidavit.

[REQUEST FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PATERNITY, LETTER CONFIRMING FILING DATE AND BIRTH CERTIFICATE FOR A CHILD BORN IN WASHINGTON](#)

[REQUEST FOR LETTER CONFIRMING DATE OF FILING OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY FOR A CHILD BORN IN WASHINGTON](#)

**For Child Support Modification Cases:**

You will need a copy of your most recent child support order. You should gather copies of paycheck stubs for the last three months showing gross pay and all deductions (or get statements from your employers), and copies of your income tax returns for the last three years. If you have a child or children from a different relationship, bring in copies of the support order(s) for those children. A copy of the most recent child support order can be obtained from the Clerk's Office in the county where the order was issued. The Facilitator will use this information to calculate child support from the Washington State Child Support Schedule.

**For Parenting Plan (Custody, Visitation and Child Relocation) Modification Cases:**

You will need a copy of your most recent parenting plan. A copy of the most recent parenting plan can be obtained from the Clerk's Office in the county where the parenting plan was approved.

If the action is to change custody of the child(ren), you should gather copies of paycheck stubs for the last three months showing gross pay and all deductions (or get statements from your employers), and copies of your income tax returns for the last three years. If you have a child or children from a different relationship, bring in copies of the support order(s) for those children. The Facilitator will use this information to calculate child support using the Washington State Child Support Schedule.

**For a Third Party Custody Case:**

You will need the full name, birthdate and address of each child. And the same information for the mother and father of the child(ren). If the mother and/or father do not have legal custody of the child(ren), you will need the name and address of the person(s) having legal custody.