

The Community Mediation Centers

The MA Office of Public Collaboration operates and administers the Parent Mediation Program in partnership with six community mediation centers across the state (northeastern MA, metro and greater Boston area, central MA, eastern MA):

- Community Dispute Settlement Center
- Family Services of Central Massachusetts
- MetroWest Mediation Services
- North Shore Community Mediation, Inc.
- Quabbin Mediation
- The Mediation & Training Collaborative

The centers provide a range of free or low cost mediation services in their local communities and courts. They focus on resolving conflicts in families, homes, neighborhoods, schools, and small businesses.

In the Parent Mediation Program, the centers schedule mediation, assist parents in preparing for the mediation, assign and supervise their mediators, and follow up with participants when the mediation has ended.



The MA Office of Public Collaboration

The Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration is an institute of the University of Massachusetts Boston. Its mission is to promote effective conflict resolution and collaborative practices within government and communities statewide.

This program is funded by the MA Department of Revenue's Division of Child Support Enforcement through a child access and visitation grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.



To learn more about the program and its eligibility criteria or to schedule a mediation session, please contact:

Community Dispute Settlement Center
Cambridge, MA 02141

Tel: 617-876-5376

Email: cdscintake@communitydispute.org

www.communitydispute.org

Parent

Mediation Program

Pathway to Cooperative Parenting

A program for parents who are no longer able to be together but still want to co-parent. Mediation allows parents the opportunity to discuss how best to arrange their on-going co-parenting arrangement.



Massachusetts Office of
Public Collaboration
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across the state



What is the Parent Mediation Program?

Children whose parents no longer live together generally fare best when they have ongoing involvement from both parents.

Establishing a parenting time schedule is an area where parents often experience conflict as it has to fit the needs of the children and both parents. Children's needs change as they grow older. Parents' circumstances change too over time, and they may need help putting workable plans together or making adjustments to a plan.

Children adjust more easily to change (in routines) if their parents work together to develop healthy ways of communicating, resolving problems, and reducing conflict.

This program has been created to resolve disputes involving child access, visitation and co-parenting plans.

What is mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential, and flexible process in which a neutral mediator assists disputing parents come to mutually acceptable solutions. Mediation promotes communication and cooperation. It empowers people to make the decisions that affect their lives. Mediation is not a determination of who is right or wrong, and the mediator is not a decision-maker. Mediation is not necessarily the end point – other rights, responsibilities, and options are still available.

What are the benefits of mediation?

- Mediation is usually less costly than going to court, both financially and emotionally.
- Mediation allows parents to retain control over the decision-making process.
- Mediation is private and informal.
- Mediation allows parents to create a parenting plan that best fits their needs and the needs of their children.
- Most people find that mediation helps to reduce hostility and support relationships.



What does mediation cost?

Because of grant funding, there is no cost for the first four hours of mediation when discussing parenting plan, access and visitation issues. If other issues are discussed, fees may be charged. Please note that as the grant year progresses, grant funds may not be available to cover the four subsidized hours.

Who are the mediators?

The mediators participating in the program have been trained in managing the mediation process. They have experience mediating family issues, and have knowledge of the unique challenges facing parents and children /youth when the parents no longer live together.

Mediators are assigned based on the needs of the case and the mediator's style, background, and experience. The mediators are qualified to mediate in probate and family court.

Who can participate?

Parents who no longer live together or who currently reside together, but have a desire to move apart may use this program to resolve parenting plan issues.

They must be the biological and/or adoptive parents. At least one parent must be a Massachusetts resident and the other parent must be able to attend the mediation session.

The parents, and other persons both parents feel need to be there, should attend the mediation session. Children are not usually included in mediation unless both parents feel that older children would benefit from participating.

Please contact us to learn more about the program eligibility criteria.

