



The Superior Court
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NEW PROGRAM PROVIDES CIVIL LITIGANTS WITH ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL LITIGATION

The Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin is pleased to announce the implementation of its new Civil Mediation Program that is now available to all general civil litigants. The Civil Mediation Program is a voluntary court-connected program designed to deliver high-quality affordable mediation services to attorneys and litigants in general civil cases.

Mediation is an informal, confidential, flexible and non-binding process in which an impartial person called a “mediator” helps the parties to communicate better, explore legal and practical settlement options, and reach an acceptable solution of the dispute. Mediation gives litigants a voice in settlement decisions and thereby allows them to play a more direct role in managing the outcomes of their own cases.

The Court received a grant from the California Administrative Office of the Courts to help support the implementation process. This grant funding allowed the Court to bring a respected interactive training course from Pepperdine University’s Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution to local attorneys interested in participating on the Court’s Panel of Civil Mediators. The Court now has a panel of 50 mediators from which litigants can choose, if they wish. All mediators on the Court’s panel meet minimum training and experience requirements.

Litigants can choose to participate in the Civil Mediation Program at any time. Litigants should refer to Local Rule 3-125 for procedures regarding necessary forms and deadlines. The Civil Mediation Program is a market rate, party-pay program. Fees are generally hourly and split equally among the parties. For those parties who might have difficulty paying for mediation services, financial assistance is available after an income-based screening by the Court is completed.

For more information, please see the Court’s website at <http://www.stocktoncourt.org/courts/civil-mediation/> or contact Stephanie Bohrer, Program Manager – (209)468-2878 or sbohrer@courts.san-joaquin.ca.us.

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