



DALLAS COUNTY
DISTRICT COURT ADMINISTRATION
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The mediation is over – What to do next?

Your mediation session is over. Now what should you do?

This information provides suggestions on what to do next.

CAUTION: This document is not legal advice. If you have legal questions you should ask an attorney. Only an attorney can give legal advice. The Dallas County Dispute Resolution Center (DCDRC) cannot provide legal advice. We can provide the following general information to help guide your next steps.

IF YOUR CASE SETTLED:

- The mediator will bring the original signed Mediated Settlement Agreement (MSA) to the DCDRC office Room 681 on the 6th floor of the George Allen Court Building.
- The DCDRC keeps the original MSA, and will provide each party with a copy.
- The DCDRC will not file the MSA or any other papers with the Clerk of your court.
- The DCDRC will send a report to your court stating only that the case settled.
- Usually within 30 days, the court will want you to file additional documents so the case can be finalized, closed, and removed from the court's docket.
- It is your responsibility to prepare and submit any documents that the court needs for the case to be finalized and closed. You may need an attorney to assist you in preparing these necessary papers and taking appropriate action.
- For a Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship or divorce cases, in most instances, you will need to schedule a hearing to "prove-up" the divorce or Parent-Child Relationship change.
- TODAY before you leave the courthouse, talk with the Court Coordinator of your court and ask what else you need to do so the case can be finalized and closed.
- Should you file your MSA with the Court Clerk? That is a question the parties must answer, and it should be discussed as part of the mediation process. You should know:
 - Any document filed with the Court Clerk can be viewed by the public. Therefore, if your MSA contains any confidential information that you don't want viewed by the public – such as Social Security numbers, drivers' license numbers, and bank account information – be sure it is blacked out before filing.
 - Some parties choose not to file their MSA because they want the terms of settlement to remain confidential.

IF YOUR CASE DID NOT SETTLE:

- The DCDRC will report to the court only that the case did not settle. The DCDRC will not file any other papers with the Court Clerk.
- TODAY, before you leave the courthouse, talk with the Court Coordinator of your court and ask what else you need to do so the case can proceed.
- It is your responsibility to prepare any documents necessary for the case to proceed and then to submit them to the court. There are rules and procedures that must be followed on a timely basis. You may need an attorney to assist you with preparing the necessary papers and taking any appropriate action.
- The Judge controls the court docket and will decide what happens next in your case in accordance with the rules and processes.

Here are some valuable resources to help answer your questions.

- Dallas County Law Library. The library contains books, forms, and documents that you might find useful. The library is open 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. Monday through Friday on the 2nd Floor of the George Allen Courts Building.
- Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program. This is an organization dedicated to increasing and enhancing pro bono legal services to the poor in Dallas. For more information contact Michelle Alden at (214)748-1234 ext. 2234 or Alicia Hernandez at (214)220-7499.
- Legal Aid Hotline. The Dallas Bar Association provides a Legal Hotline on the 2nd and 3rd Wednesday of every month. You are welcome to call (214)220-7476 and ask for help with your legal questions.
- Lawyer Referral Service. The Dallas Bar Association can provide you with a referral to an attorney who can assist you. For a \$20 consultation fee paid in advance, the attorney will meet with you for 30 minutes to discuss your matter. You and the attorney then decide whether you want to work with each other. You are responsible for paying the attorney.
You may obtain a referral online at www.dallasbar.org/referral. Or call the DBA at (214)220-7444.
- Legal Aid of Northwest Texas. Legal Aid provides free civil services to low-income residents who meet certain eligibility requirements. Call (888)529-5277 or visit www.lanwt.org.
- SMU Law School's Legal Clinics. The SMU Law School provides representation for eligible low-income individuals. You can call the clinic at (214)768-2562.
- Texas Law Help. This website provides information, including “do-it-yourself” forms that you might find useful. www.texaslawhelp.org.

Thank you for using Dallas County Dispute Resolution Center. We are here to help!