

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Administrative Order No. 2026-05-UFC

**ESTABLISHING UNIFORM ORDER FOR ORDERING FAMILY CASE
TO MEDIATION**

(a) Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(3) states the Chief Judge “ensures the efficient and proper administration of all courts within [this] circuit, considering available resources.”

(b) In accordance with the authority vested in the Chief Judge by Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, it is hereby **ORDERED**:

(1) The Circuit has established a family mediation program as authorized by section 44.102(2)(c), Florida Statutes.

(2) The Order of Referral to Family Mediation attached as Exhibit A to this Administrative Order shall be used by the judges assigned to a Unified Family Court division when ordering a family case to mediation.

(3) This Administrative Order supersedes and vacates Administrative Order 2018-1-UFC.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida, this 19th day of February, 2026.

/s/ Carol-Lisa Phillips
Carol-Lisa Phillips, Chief Judge

Exhibit "A"

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case NO.: FMCE

JUDGE: _____

Petitioner,

and

Respondent.
_____ /

ORDER OF REFERRAL TO FAMILY MEDIATION

THE COURT [] sua sponte / [] upon the motion of a party, refers the above captioned matter to mediation as authorized by statute and rules of procedure. It is ORDERED as follows:

A. Appointment of Mediator

[] 1. **Private Mediation**

- a. The parties shall within ten (10) days of entry of this Order submit a stipulation with an order designating the mediator to the undersigned judge. The parties shall provide a copy of the stipulation and order to Court Administration's Court Mediation and Arbitration Program at fammed@17th.flcourts.org. The parties may stipulate to the use of communication technology in order to facilitate the mediation in accordance with Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.740.
- b. If the parties fail to submit a stipulation with an order designating the mediator, the Court orders the following:

[] Court Administration's Court Mediation and Arbitration Program shall select a mediator by rotation and provide the name, email address and telephone number of the mediator to the parties.

[] Appoints as mediator:

Name:

Telephone:

Email:

- c. If the mediator stipulated to by the parties or appointed by the court cannot serve, the parties shall either submit a stipulation with an order designating a substitute mediator or advise the court so that a substitute mediator can be appointed by the court. If the

appointed mediator cannot serve, he/she must notify the court and the parties immediately.

d. **Fees for Private Mediation.** The private mediator shall be entitled to compensation at the rate of \$ _____ per hour subject to any written agreement entered into between the parties and mediator. If any party objects to the mediator's fee, the party shall file an objection as required by the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure. If the parties do not object to the mediator's fees, the parties shall pay the total fee for mediation as follows: _____ % Petitioner and _____ % Respondent, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties.

[] 2. **State Subsidized Mediation.** The parties are ordered to Court Administration's Court Mediation and Arbitration Program ("CMAP") located in Room 19150, 201 S.E. Sixth Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301. The mediation shall be conducted through the use of communication technology unless the parties mutually agree otherwise or otherwise stated in this order. If the petitioner's last name begins with **A - L** call (954) 831-6313. If the petitioner's last name begins with **M - Z** call (954) 831-6010 to coordinate the mediation. The parties may also email CMAP at fammed@17th.flcourts.org. If the parties cannot agree on an available mediation date within 14 days of this order, CMAP may unilaterally set the mediation date and time.

a. **Fees for State Subsidized Mediation**

[] The total mediation fee is \$120.00 per mediation conference when the parties' combined income is less than \$50,000.00. The parties shall pay the total fee for mediation as follows: _____ % Petitioner and _____ % Respondent, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties. (If the foregoing percentages are not designated, then the petitioner and respondent shall each be responsible for 50% of said fee.)

[] The total mediation fee is \$240.00 per mediation conference when the parties' combined income is greater than \$50,000.00. The parties shall pay the total fee for mediation as follows: _____ % Petitioner and _____ % Respondent, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties. (If the foregoing percentages are not designated, then the petitioner and respondent shall each be responsible for 50% of said fee.)

b. The mediation conference fee shall be paid to the Clerk of the Courts prior to mediation taking place. **No refund of the mediation fee will be paid to any party after payment is received by the Clerk of Courts.**

c. The scheduled mediation conference may be cancelled only if there is a settlement of the issues that were referred to mediation that is reduced to writing and signed or by agreement of both parties. The mediation conference is set for a maximum of three (3) hours. For each additional session, if needed by the parties, the parties shall pay the same amount charged for the prior session.

[] 3. **Indigent Mediation Services.** If a party was declared **indigent by the Clerk of the Courts**, that party is not required to pay for the mediation conference. The parties are referred to Court Administration's Court Mediation and Arbitration Program ("CMAP") located in Room 19150, 201 S.E. Sixth Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301. The mediation shall be facilitated through the use of communication technology. If the petitioner's last name begins with **A - L** call 954-831-6313. If the petitioner's last name begins with **M - Z** call 954-831-6010. The parties may also email CMAP at fammed@17th.flcourts.org. If the parties cannot agree on an available mediation date within 14 days of this order, CMAP may unilaterally set the mediation date and time.

The scheduled mediation conference may be cancelled only if there is a settlement of the issues that were referred to mediation which is reduced to writing and signed or by agreement of both parties. The mediation conference is set for a maximum of three (3) hours.

B. General Provisions Applicable to All Court Ordered Mediation

1. The preparer of this order of referral shall furnish a copy of this order to the Court Mediation and Arbitration Program, Room 19150, 201 S.E. Sixth Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301, fammed@17th.flcourts.org.
2. The parties are ordered to attend the mediation conference(s) through the use of communication technology (unless otherwise ordered or agreed upon) as permitted in Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.740. The date, time and virtual location shall be coordinated by the Court Mediation and Arbitration Program.
3. Prior to attending mediation, the parties attending mediation at the Court Mediation and Arbitration Program shall view a short video that explains the mediation process at: <https://www.17th.flcourts.org/mediation-information-videos/>
4. The parties may present a brief written summary of the case to the mediator at least five (5) calendar days prior to the mediation conference. The summary may also include a list of issues that remain unresolved. If financial matters are at issue, an updated financial affidavit and compliance with Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.285 is required.
5. If a settlement is reached, it shall be reduced to writing and signed by all parties.
6. The conference(s) conducted pursuant to this Order is governed by the Mediation Confidentiality and Privilege Act.
7. During the mediation conference, the mediator may meet and consult privately with any party, participant or counsel.
8. Mediations as ordered are governed by the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure and Chapter 44, Florida Statutes, as now in effect, or as may be amended from time to time.

9. The mediator shall complete the Mediator's Statistical Information Sheet and file it with the court within twenty (20) days after the final mediation conference.
10. All provisions of this Order may be enforced by contempt proceedings or other appropriate actions. The appearance of all parties is mandatory. The court shall have the power to impose sanctions against any party who does not attend the conference in accordance with Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure.
11. The provisions of this Order are subject to a hearing upon proper motion and notice concerning allegations of domestic violence.
12. Persons who require an interpreter must obtain those services at their own expense.
13. Parties are hereby ordered to attend mediation on _____, 20____ at _____ am/pm.
14. Specific issues to be addressed (if applicable): _____

15. Unless otherwise ordered, mediation shall be completed prior to any scheduled hearing or calendar call. Mediation shall be completed within _____ days of this Order.
16. This Order supersedes any previous order of referral to mediation entered by this court.

DONE AND ORDERED in chambers at Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, Florida on this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Circuit Judge

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this mediation conference, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator, Room 20140, 201 S.E. Sixth Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301, 954-831-7721 at least 7 days before your scheduled mediation conference, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days. If you have a hearing or voice disability, you can contact the court through the Florida Relay Service by calling 711.

Copies Furnished:

Counsel of Record / Parties of Record

Court Mediation and Arbitration Program, Room 19150, Broward County Courthouse, 201 S.E.

Sixth Street, Fort

Lauderdale, Florida 33301