

# JUDICIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## FAMILY MEDIATION

### **Family Mediation Program Reaches 10-year Milestone**

The Family Mediation Program is a statewide program that provides a high quality, impartial, and efficient forum for resolving disputed parental rights and responsibilities, as well as grandparent visitation matters through mediation. In 2017, the Family Mediation Program accepted 617 cases into the program. Four hundred thirty-eight cases have been completed as of Feb. 1, 2018. Data for those completed cases indicates 52% reached full agreement, while an additional 24% reached partial agreements for a positive impact on 76% of cases.

There are currently 26 mediators on the Family Mediation Roster.

On March 1, 2018, the Family Mediation Program celebrated its 10-year anniversary. The program has grown from a two-district pilot to a statewide program of the court with contracted mediators in each judicial district. A 2013 evaluation found the program had significant positive impacts on family law cases. The report highlighted a significant drop in post-decree filings per case with districts reporting anywhere from a 49% to 86% decrease in post-judgment modifications. Case length was also shortened by an average of 28%. Data continues to show positive impacts. Settlement rates remain steady with a 10-year average of 50% of the cases in the program reaching full agreement and another 27% of cases reaching partial agreements for a total positive impact on 77% of all cases.

Through the Family Mediation Program, the parties are empowered and encouraged to present their concerns to each other face-to-face and come to a mutual agreement. The parties reduce the expenses and stress of court proceedings and reduce the emotional toll of conflict. The participants can benefit greatly by preserving the possibility of ongoing relationships in the future and by avoiding lengthy court proceedings.

More information on the Family Law Mediation Program can be found at:  
<https://ndcourts.gov/legal-resources/rules/ndrct/8-1>



## Family Mediation Cases

January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017

<b>Total cases referred to the mediation program</b>		<b>1017</b>
Cases rejected or dropped out		400
Custody issues settled prior to mediation	89	
Existence of domestic violence restraining order in case record or domestic violence issues identified	74	
One party resides outside of North Dakota	87	
Default divorce	31	
One party incarcerated	17	
Mediation attempted prior to filing divorce action	2	
One or both parties did not comply with order	58	
Parties reconciled	6	
Dismissed	18	
Miscellaneous	18	
<b>Cases accepted into the Family Mediation Program</b>		<b>617</b>
Cases completed as of February 1, 2018		438
Cases pending as of February 1, 2018		179