

Helpful Article #1: Mediation Preparation Checklist

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If you are considering mediation to work out the terms of your separation and possible divorce, because you have both want to be fair and equitable with each other, now is the time to take some preliminary steps that will make the process smoother for you and the entire family.

1. Learn what mediation is all about, and how it can help ease the process of ending the marital relationship.
2. Set your priorities, and have a clear idea of what you want to achieve in the future.

The following is a list of documentation that we will review during the course of the mediation. Begin assembling these records now. Please be advised that full and complete financial disclosure concerning assets, liabilities and income is mandatory, and essential for your negotiations. Subsequent findings that relevant information has not been fully and truthfully disclosed may constitute grounds for challenging the agreement in the future.

1. The fair market value of the marital home, and any other real property owned by either spouse such as time shares, land, or business properties.
2. The disposition of household furnishings, and items of value within the marital home.
3. The year and make of all vehicles, and their market value.
4. Recent statements for all financial assets, whether held jointly or separately, including bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mutual funds and all other investments.
5. Interests in IRA's, annuities, retirement and pension plans, trusts, etc.
6. Other assets, such as money owed to you, tax shelter investments, and any other assets not listed above.
7. The past three years of separate or joint income tax returns, including W-2 forms.
8. The past three years of income tax returns on any private business interest.
9. The name of any privately held business or professional license, and the actual cash drawn from it annually, per cent of your interest in it, type of business.
10. The type of degree and or professional license earned during the marriage.
11. The amount of life insurance held and any cash value of that insurance.
12. The balances of any mortgages, loans, back taxes, auto/vehicle loans, life insurance or retirement plan loans, and any other outstanding debt, held either jointly or separately.
13. Installment accounts such as credit cards, bank loans, and the like.