



County Clerk's Office

311 Grand Ave., Suite 301, Bellingham, WA 98225 (360)778-5560

Family Law Settlement Conference Instructions

The mandatory Family Law Settlement Conference is scheduled for the date and time indicated on the **Order Setting Trial Date**. COMPLETE COMPLIANCE WITH ALL THE ELEMENTS OF WCSPR 94.08 IS REQUIRED WELL AHEAD OF THE TIME OF THE SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE, ESPECIALLY THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION (C) concerning Financial Declarations and Verified Statements of Assets and Liabilities.

Settlement Conferences are conducted by a court commissioner in the Commissioner's Conference Room on the fifth floor of the courthouse at 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington 98225. An hour and a half is allotted for the conference. *** Settlement Conferences are currently being held via Zoom. Zoom links are provided to parties via email prior to the settlement conference.***

In order to adequately develop the issues in preparation for the Settlement Conference, each party SHALL, no later than 4:30 PM on the fifth day before the scheduled Settlement Conference, provide the Commissioner and opposing party or counsel with the following documents, which should be supplied and served, but NOT filed:

1. A statement of issues, not to exceed two pages in length, setting out each of the issues being contested and a brief summary of the evidence expected to support each contention. Specific positions on issues in dispute must be set out in the statement, along with any legal authority that is relevant. There is no prescribed form for this statement of issues.
2. A copy of proposed parenting plans, child support worksheets, and the pretrial information form (see Domestic Forms on web page under "Clerk's Office").
3. If a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) has been appointed, a copy of the GAL report shall be furnished to the Commissioner by the Petitioner.

The above documents for the Commissioner shall be delivered to the County Clerk's Office. The copies shall indicate on the top-right corner of the first page of each document the **Date** and **Time** ordered for the Settlement Conference. The name of the Commissioner conducting the Settlement Conference may be obtained from the County Clerk's Office approximately two weeks prior to the date of the Settlement Conference.

Please be aware that the Commissioner will not communicate with either party prior to the Conference. If counsel or a party has questions regarding procedural matters such as time, place, etc., please call the County Clerk's Office. Sanctions, including loss of trial date, may be levied against parties or counsel who fail to supply the above documents by the stated deadline or who fail to appear for the Settlement Conference.

Settlement Conferences do NOT need to be confirmed; however, settlements or other valid reasons for striking a Settlement Conference must be communicated to the County Clerk's Office immediately.
[Effective 4.5.2010]