

# Small Claims Mediation

## What is small claims mediation?

If you have a small claims case (\$7500 or less), you can:

- Have a trial in small claims court, or
- Try to solve your dispute using mediation.

If you choose mediation, an independent person works with you and the other side to find a solution that works for both of you.

## What are the advantages of mediation?

Small claims mediation is:

- free,
- confidential, and
- usually faster than a trial.

And because you do not have a trial, it can be less hostile.

## If you are the Defendant (the person being sued), mediation can be better for you because:

- The agreement is private and confidential. It does not go on your credit report.
- You won't have a judgment against you.
- You learn more about the other side's case if you have to go to court.

## Is mediation like a trial?

No. In a trial, you have to try to prove you are right. Then one side wins and the other side loses. With mediation, both sides can get some of their needs met.

## Do I have to use mediation?

No. But people who use mediation are usually more satisfied. And, because you work together to find a solution, there is less hostility. This can also make it easier to collect money owed to you.

## Can the mediator give me legal advice?

No. The mediator is not your lawyer.

## Can I try mediation before I file my court papers?

Yes, but there may be a deadline to file your case. The Small Claims Clerk can give you more information about deadlines.

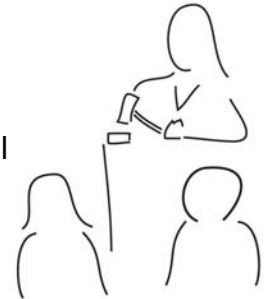
You can also use mediation after you file your court papers.

## What happens to the court case if we reach an agreement in mediation?

You and the other side will make a written agreement. The mediator can help you with this. Then the Plaintiff can dismiss the case.

## What if we don't reach an agreement in the mediation?

If mediation does not help you find an acceptable solution, you can still go to court on your scheduled trial date. If you try mediation first, you will have a better understanding of the other side's case against you.



## Can a mediated agreement be appealed?

No. But if you go to trial, even if you win, the Defendant can appeal the judge's decision. Lawyers are allowed in small claims appeals, so you may have to get a lawyer to represent you.

## How do I schedule mediation?

[Insert scheduling information here.]