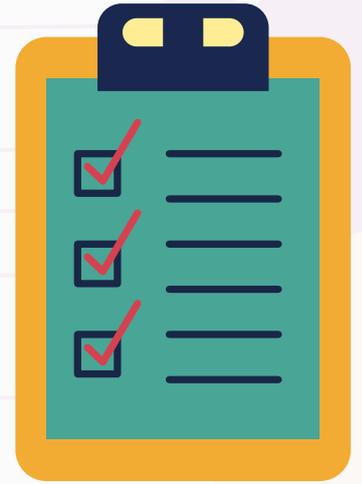


Divorce Mediation Checklist

Success in mediation requires understanding of what each couple needs for their unique case. This 90-item checklist contains everything that your mediator must address.



Prepared By: Principal Divorce Mediator & Founder
(Families First Mediation) Dina Haddad.



What is Divorce Mediation?

Divorce mediation is a cooperative process. Once you start, a neutral third party will help you in your separation with your partner. A mediator can assist those who have simple matters to more complex cases.

Should I Mediate?

Consider the following to decide if you should mediate?

1. Both my spouse and I are willing to attend.
2. We want to keep our matter private.
3. We want to stay in control of our divorce (and not give that power to a judge).
4. We are willing to communicate or negotiate with one another.
5. We want to save time, money and our resources.



Child Support & Alimony



When you are addressing financial support in divorce mediation, you need to make a plan around child support and alimony (spousal support).

Here is a checklist to guide your discussions:

- 1. Income documentation from both parties.
- 2. Calculation of child support based on California guidelines.
- 3. How long the support payments will remain in effect.
- 4. The payment schedule and method.
- 5. Health insurance coverage for children.
- 6. Sharing of uninsured medical expenses.
- 7. Childcare costs division.
- 8. Educational expenses for children.
- 9. Tax implications of support payments.
- 10. Conditions for modifying support.

Be Careful



Power imbalances, domestic violence, or other extreme situations can impact mediation. In some cases, more traditional routes would be more appropriate.

Parenting



Divorce mediation can be a bit more complex for parents who are also seeking custody mediation. Have a look at our blog [Do's & Don'ts of Custody Mediation](#) to get an idea of the basics.

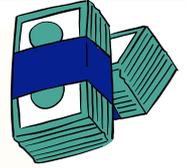
- 1. Custody arrangement
- 2. Parenting Schedule:
 - Regular Schedule
 - Summer Vacation
 - Holiday Schedule
- 3. Child's education: What does your school choice look like?
- 4. Extracurricular activities:
- 5. Co-Parenting Agreements
 - Introduction to romantic interests
 - Access to firearms in the home
 - International travel
 - Travel outside the state of California
 - Make up time (especially if you travel for work)
 - Access to child during non-custodial time such as reasonable video and phone calls

What If Mediation Is...?

To learn more about if mediation is the right path for you, read our article [When Divorce Mediation is Not Recommended](#).



Finances & Divorce Mediation



Assets



- 1. Real estate documents (deeds and/or appraisals)
- 2. Vehicle titles and valuations.
- 3. Personal property inventory.
- 4. Investment and retirement account statements.
- 5. Stock schedules for employee benefits like Restricted Stock Units, Performance Stock Units, and Stock Options.
- 6. Documentation of separate property claims.
- 7. Records of inheritances or gifts.
- 8. Tracing documents for any separate property claims (such as use of inheritance to a down payment of a house).

Income



- 1. Tax returns from the last three years.
- 2. Employment contracts you are currently involved in and the benefit information for those.
- 3. Business financial records (if any).
- 4. Last two months of pay stubs.

Liabilities



- 1. Credit card statements.
- 2. Loan documents that you might have.
- 3. Your mortgage statements.
- 4. Debt repayment plans you are involved in.
- 5. Credit reports for both parties.

Insurance



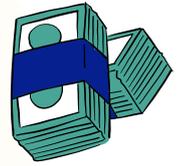
- 1. Life insurance policies you have.
- 2. Health insurance costs and policies.
- 3. Property insurance for your home.

Pets



- 1. Proof of ownership and your care arrangements for the pets involved.
- 2. Pet-related expenses like food, medical care, and grooming.

Finances & Divorce Mediation



Other Financial Statements

- 1. Bank statements for all accounts that you currently have open or have opened during the marriage.
- 2. Current budget and projected post-divorce expenses.
- 3. If you have them, any prenuptial or postnuptial agreements that have been signed.

Marital Documents & Mediation



- 1. Find your marriage certificate and bring it with you to mediation.
- 2. Separation agreement if you and your ex-spouse have already drafted one.
- 3. Wills and trusts if you have already written your will.
- 4. Your power of attorney documents in the event something happened during the divorce.
- 5. Family business agreements or contracts.
- 6. Domestic partnership agreements (if you have one).

What To Discuss In Divorce Mediation?



Besides things that you should bring to your divorce mediation sessions, here is what you can write down in your divorce mediation checklist on things you will want to discuss:

- 1. General topics that you think must be discussed between you and your soon to be ex-spouse.
- 2. A postnuptial agreement if you got one after you two were married.
- 3. Discuss the terms of your prenup (if applicable) and what you already owned before marriage.
- 4. Assets and liability related information.
- 5. Child custody and parenting plans that are related to your divorce.
- 6. Property division and finances.
- 7. Alimony.
- 8. Final Agreement – will it be drafted for you as a Marital Settlement Agreement?
- 9. Insurance information regarding your life, car, or health plans. (Which as said earlier, is why you should bring that information with you).
- 10. Tax return statements.
- 11. Stocks & bonds that you or your ex-spouse have invested into after you were married.
- 12. Areas of agreement that you and your ex-partner have already settled outside of mediation.

What To Bring In Divorce Mediation?



Before you get to your divorce mediation session in California, there are a few things you need to prepare:

- **Financial Documents:** Tax returns, pay stubs, bank statements, credit card statements, mortgage documents, loan agreements, investment and retirement account statements, list of assets and debts.
- **Property Information:** House deeds, vehicle titles, and appraisals for any valuable items you bought during the marriage.
- **Insurance Policies:** Make sure to bring any health, life, auto, and home insurance details. If you don't have them, reach out to your insurance companies and they can upload you a digital copy.
- **Employment Details:** This is an important one, you will want to bring work contracts you are a part of and benefits information (especially if you are discussing spousal or child support).
- **Children's Information:** You will want to provide the accounts you have for your children, including 529 accounts.

If you have any questions about what else you should bring, you can contact your divorce mediator, and they can give you a more comprehensive list based around your situation.

Finding The Best Divorce Mediator In CA



To make sure that your divorce mediation process goes well, you should do your research. That way you can find the best mediator for your situation.

- 1. Learn about the mediator's qualifications and experience: You can evaluate if your mediator is qualified to take on your divorce case.
- 2. Choose a divorce mediator that will work with your schedule. Do you need a remote service? Do you want it in person? .
- 3. Make a shortlist of mediators after some investigation: This way you can narrow down who you and your ex-partner feel comfortable sitting down with for mediation.
- 4. Schedule an initial consultation with each mediator on your shortlist: Talk to them more, find out if they are the right fit for you.
- 5. Finalize your selection and hire the best mediator that you find fit.

Questions To Ask Mediator In A Free Consult



Here are some questions that you can ask your mediator in your free consultation when looking for the right mediator:

- 1. How do they go about the process, and their typical timeline?
- 2. Costs and fee structures that they use?
- 3. What do they do to handle complex financial issues?
- 4. Their approach to child custody matters?

Best Divorce Mediation Service In California



The best divorce mediation service that you can find in California would be Families First Mediation. At Families First Mediation, the name is self-explanatory. They put you and your families first.

Their head mediator, Dina Haddad, can talk with you and schedule a free consultation.

Do not wait, if you want to finalize your divorce as quickly as possible, get your documents together for when you set up your first session at Families First Mediation.

The End



Thank you for giving this article a read. Wish you best of luck for your mediation session.