

DOMESTIC RELATIONS ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION FUND PLAN OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF MADISON COUNTY

Amended June 2026

The undersigned, who are all Judges of the Circuit Court who exercise jurisdiction over domestic relations and paternity cases in Madison County, Indiana, adopt, and submit the following Alternative Dispute Resolution Domestic Relations Fund Plan (hereinafter referred to as the "Plan") to the Judicial Conference of the State of Indiana, pursuant to I.C. §§ 33-23-6-1 - 4, to seek approval from the Executive Director of the Indiana Supreme Court Office of Court Services.

Program Overview

The purpose of the County Alternative Dispute Resolution Program (hereinafter "ADR Program") is to allow qualified low-income and unrepresented litigants the opportunity to participate in alternative dispute resolution for matters involving dissolution of marriage, legal separation, and paternity cases. The ADR Program will utilize qualified mediators and other appropriately trained providers to assist litigants in reaching agreements to prevent long, costly, and contentious judicial proceedings. An additional goal of the ADR Program is to provide services that foster opportunities for litigants to build skills needed to effectively co-parent, develop conflict management skills, and be able to successfully resolve subsequent family issues without court intervention.

The different programs of alternative dispute resolution may include, but are not limited to, mediation, facilitation, and co-parenting conflict management counseling/education. The parties will be assisted by family professionals at various times to determine the appropriate support referral.

While the primary service provided to Plan participants will be mediation, litigants with a history of frequently returning to Court may be ordered to participate in programs for high conflict management counseling/education, family therapy, and/or parenting classes.

The Madison County Clerk of the Court will collect the additional \$20.00 alternative dispute resolution fee, pursuant to I.C. § 33-23-6-1, unless fees are waived by a judicial officer.

Forms, documents, and reports to be utilized by the Courts with respect to the ADR Program will be developed by the undersigned Judges and will be adopted before the implementation of the Plan and referrals to various programs.

Eligibility Criteria

The Plan is designed to financially assist indigent and low-income parties by providing other resources to enable them to resolve family conflicts more quickly and efficiently. Only those parties involved in a pending legal separation, dissolution, or paternity case are eligible to participate voluntarily or may be required to participate if referred by the Court.

Referrals cannot be made from outside sources, such as attorneys or litigants.

The funds shall be used to benefit domestic relations and paternity cases in Madison County exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Cases involving minor children.
2. Cases where the parties have filed multiple post-decree motions/correspondence related to issues involving minor children.
3. Cases where one or more of the parties are proceeding unrepresented.
4. Cases in which the best interest of the children is not being adequately protected by the parties to the case.

A judicial officer seeking to make a referral to services under this plan will inquire if either party has current charges or has ever been convicted of a crime under I.C. § 35-42 (Offenses Against the Person). If either party has such a criminal history, the judicial officer overseeing the case will determine and make a record that participation in the plan does or does not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to either party or the service providers.

Parties participating in the Plan will make a one-time co-payment for Plan services based on his/her income. Criteria for subsidies will be based on a sliding fee scale as set forth below, based on the annual federal poverty guidelines (example structure below using 2026 poverty guidelines). Parties whose income is more than the maximum discounted level are expected to pay the full hourly rate, and no money will be distributed from the ADR fund. Those parties also have the option of hiring private service providers at their discretion. When both parties each have income less than the full pay rate, the maximum amount that the mediator will be paid from the ADR Fund is \$110/hour up to three (3) hours, including the co-pay per party. If the co-pays exceed the amount owed to the mediator based upon the mediation time, the mediator may keep such additional fees. If one party has income above the maximum discounted level and the other has income within the range of the discounted level, the party earning income within the discounted range is only responsible for the co-pay and the party earning more than the discounted level is responsible for paying the full ADR hourly rate for up to three (3) hours (minus the other party's co-pay amount) and no money will be disbursed from the ADR Fund. Priority for use of ADR Plan subsidies and contracted service providers will be given to those with the most financial need.

FPL % Tier	Household (1)	Household (2)	Household (3)	Household (4)	Co-Pay
≤ 100%	\$0 – \$15,960	\$0 – \$21,640	\$0 – \$27,320	\$0 – \$33,000	\$20
101% - 125%	\$15,961 – \$19,950	\$21,641 – \$27,050	\$27,321 – \$34,150	\$33,001 – \$41,250	\$40
126% - 150%	\$19,951 – \$23,940	\$27,051 – \$32,460	\$34,151 – \$40,980	\$41,251 – \$49,500	\$65
151% - 175%	\$23,941 – \$27,930	\$32,461 – \$37,870	\$40,981 – \$47,810	\$49,501 – \$57,750	\$85
176% - 200%	\$27,931 – \$31,920	\$37,871 – \$43,280	\$47,811 – \$54,640	\$57,751 – \$66,000	\$100
> 200%	\$31,921+	\$43,281+	\$54,641+	\$66,001+	\$110

Parties will be provided with a copy of the sliding scale at the time of referral by the court and instructed to present the scale to the service provider, mediator, or facilitator along with the co-payment. It shall be the service provider's responsibility to obtain income information from the parties in a form to be prepared by the Courts. The parties will be required to verify under oath that the income information they are providing is true and accurate. The ADR service provider will be responsible for providing the income verification information to the Plan Administrator at the time that a claim for payment is made.

Referral and Acceptance Process

Litigants who can be involved in programs using the ADR Funds may only be referred by a presiding judicial officer. A referral form and order for services will be submitted by the presiding judicial officer to the appointed service provider.

The Courts will encourage mediation for matters set for hearing needing one-half day or longer. All other matters may be referred to mediation at the Court's discretion or upon the motion of the parties. The A.D.R. Rules shall apply if mediation is utilized. Absent exigent circumstances and prior Court approval, mediation sessions funded by the Plan shall generally be limited to not more than three (3) hours in length, and mediators shall be paid at the rate of \$110.00 per hour for time spent mediating and preparing a signed agreement to submit to the presiding judicial officer for approval. The plan administrator is the Court Administrator of the Circuit Court and is tasked with paying claims from the ADR fund and collecting data for the annual report.

Plan Administration (summarized steps):

1. Referrals at the discretion of the presiding judge, primarily focused on low-income and unrepresented litigants who qualify for the program under the program guidelines.
2. A judicial officer seeking to make a referral to services under this plan will inquire if either party has current charges or has ever been convicted of a crime under I.C. § 35-42 (Offenses Against the Person). If either party has such a criminal history, the judicial officer overseeing the case will determine and make a record that participation in the plan does or does not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to either party or the service providers. The judicial officer will sign a court order for the parties to participate in the ADR Plan and complete the "Judges ADR Referral Worksheet" form, indicating relevant information about the parties. Then, the completed "Judges ADR Referral Worksheet" and the court order, and any other relevant case information will be sent to the service provider by the court;
3. Participating mediators who have agreed to provide services for qualifying parties at a rate of \$110 per hour per mediation (*not* per party per mediation), with the amount to be remitted from the Fund not to exceed \$290 (considering a 3-hour mediation for \$330 minus a minimum of \$20 one-time co-pay per party). The Indiana ADR Rules will apply. If mediation is utilized. The family law attorneys in the County Bar and senior judges will be encouraged to participate in the mediation training provided by the State to assist in this aspect of the Plan.

4. The co-pay or full-pay fees will be collected by the ADR service provider. (Note: Neither the Court nor the Plan Administrator will collect any fees directly under any circumstances.) A claim fully detailing all service time provided to the parties and fully detailing payments made by the parties, along with the income verification form completed by the parties, will then be submitted to Court Administration for submission to the County Auditor. The Auditor will remit from the Fund any remaining balance owed for services to the provider. The ADR service provider is responsible for collecting the required sliding scale fee from the participants on the day that services are provided. Preferably, the fees will be collected before services are provided. In no event will the ADR Fund pay the mediator/service provider money which should have been collected as co-pays under the sliding fee scale.
5. Once mediation, facilitation, or co-parenting conflict resolution counseling/education has been completed, an Outcomes form (plus the claims form) will be forwarded by the service provider to the court for approval of payment, then forwarded to Court Administration to submit a claim to the auditor.

The undersigned Judges retain the authority to amend the Plan Administration to meet the goals of the Plan and/or the needs of the target population, or as fairness and justice otherwise require, and will submit any proposed amendments to the OJA for approval prior to implementation.

The funds collected by all the courts shall be placed in a single consolidated ADR fund held by the County Auditor and will be managed and administered on a day-to-day basis by the County Auditor and the Plan Administrator. Funds shall be distributed only by an order that is executed by the presiding judicial officer that made the referral. It is the sense of the judiciary of Madison County that the funds should be distributed according to the needs of the Court and that no specific percentage allocation to each Court will be made. As described above, representatives of all the separate courts retain authority over the distribution and use of the funds. Representatives from each of the courts and the Plan Administrator shall meet periodically to discuss the administration and use of the consolidated ADR fund.

Plan Evaluation

The County Alternative Dispute Resolution Program will maintain statistics including, but not limited to, the following information:

- Number of Referrals by Court
- Demographics of Families
- Original of Referrals and Reason for Referrals (i.e., unrepresented, high conflict, etc.)
- Representation of Parties
- Success Rates
- Length and Average Costs of Programming per Family

An annual report will be submitted to the Judicial Conference of Indiana no later than January 15 of each year, summarizing the results of the program.

Projected Budget

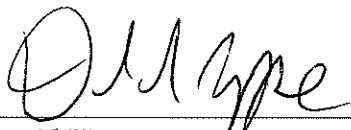
The Madison County Courts estimate combined total annual income from filing fees assessed by the Courts in Madison County at \$11,000 based on prior collections.

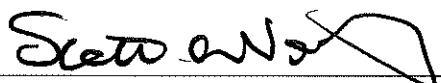
Respectfully Submitted for approval this 8th day of May, 2026 to the
Judicial Conference of Indiana.

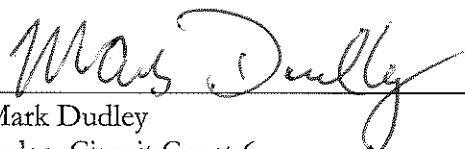

Angela Sims
Judge, Circuit Court 1


Stephen Koester
Judge, Circuit Court 2


Andrew Hopper
Judge, Circuit Court 3


David Happe
Judge, Circuit Court 4


Scott Norrick
Judge, Circuit Court 5


Mark Dudley
Judge, Circuit Court 6

MADISON CIRCUIT COURT ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR) REFERRAL

CIRCUIT COURT: _____

CAUSE NUMBER: _____

PETITIONER: _____

RESPONDENT: _____

I. REFERRAL INFORMATION

The Court finds that the parties qualify for the ADR Program based on the following characteristics:

- ☐ Unrepresented Litigants
- ☐ High Conflict / Multiple Post-Decree Filings
- ☐ Involvement of Minor Children
- ☐ Best Interests of Children

II. SAFETY DETERMINATION (I.C. § 35-42)

The Court has inquired regarding any history of offenses against the person:

- ☐ No relevant criminal history found.
- ☐ Criminal history exists; the Court determines participation does not pose an unreasonable risk.

III. ORDERED SERVICES

The parties are referred to: ☐ Mediation ☐ Facilitation ☐ Co-parenting Counseling

Provider Name: _____

Contact Info: _____

JUDICIAL OFFICER SIGNATURE

DATE

ADR PLAN SLIDING FEE SCALE & INCOME VERIFICATION

FPL % Tier	HH (1)	HH (2)	HH (3)	HH (4)	Co-Pay
<= 100%	\$0 - \$15,960	\$0 - \$21,640	\$0 - \$27,320	\$0 - \$33,000	\$20
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> 200%	\$31,921+	\$43,281+	\$54,641+	\$66,001+	\$110

AFFIDAVIT OF INCOME

I verify under oath that my annual household income is \$_____ and my household size is _____. My required co-payment is \$_____. I understand that payment is required prior to receiving services.

ATTESTATION OF CRIMINAL HISTORY

I affirm under oath that I have the following prior convictions or a pending case for the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Murder
☐ Voluntary Manslaughter
☐ Involuntary Manslaughter
☐ Reckless Homicide
☐ Feticide
☐ Battery
☐ Domestic Battery
☐ Aggravated Battery
☐ Criminal Recklessness
☐ Strangulation
☐ Kidnapping
☐ Criminal Confinement
☐ Interference with Custody
☐ Promotion of Human Sexual Trafficking
☐ Child Sexual Trafficking | ☐ Human Trafficking
☐ Rape
☐ Child Molesting
☐ Child Exploitation/Possession of Child Sexual Abuse Material
☐ Vicarious Sexual Gratification/Sexual Conduct in Presence of a Minor
☐ Child Solicitation
☐ Child Seduction
☐ Sexual Battery
☐ Sexual Misconduct with a Minor
☐ Sex Offender Internet/Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Offense
☐ Robbery
☐ Carjacking |
|---|---|

_____ I affirm under oath that I have no prior history of crimes against a person as outlined above.

SIGNATURE

DATE

ADR OUTCOMES FORM

(Submit with billing to Court Administration)

CASE STATISTICS

Referring Court: Circuit Court _____ **Cause Number:** _____

Number of Children served: _____

Outcome: Full Agreement [☐] Partial Agreement [☐] No Agreement [☐]

Total Hours of Service: _____ (Limit: 3 hours per plan)

CLAIM FOR PAYMENT

Petitioner Co-pay Collected: \$ _____

Respondent Co-pay Collected: \$ _____

Balance billed to ADR Fund: \$ _____

PROVIDER SIGNATURE