

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF AMADOR**

**MEDIATION/EVALUATION
CLIENT COMPLAINT FORM**

The court appreciates your taking time to inform us of your complaint about the mediation/evaluation services you received. We encourage you to notify us of your complaint as early as possible. The court is committed to responding to your concerns in a prompt and thorough manner. We are interested in helping you and the court make the best decisions possible to meet the needs and interests of your children.

We encourage all parties with complaints about their experience with mediation/evaluation services to first talk directly with the individuals involved in order to try to work things out. Many complaints about mediation/evaluation services are a result of misunderstanding or miscommunication, and many of these misunderstandings can be worked out through direct, honest discussion.

Attached is a complaint form with a set of questions that will help us better understand the nature of your complaint about the mediator/evaluator. Please complete the form and return it to the Court Executive Officer (CEO) of Amador Superior Court. Your complaints will be reviewed thoroughly by the CEO. You will be contacted within 10 working days to describe the next steps.

Below is some general information that may help you understand how mediation and the court work.

- 1. Responsibility for making official orders about your parenting arrangements rests with the court. The mediator does advise the court regarding your agreement, but the mediator does not make a court order or decision. The judge is the only person authorized to order a child custody or visitation arrangement.**

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2. **The mediator cannot reverse or change a court-ordered parenting plan. Only a judge can change the court order. If you are concerned about the custody or visitation orders that were made by a judge, you must make your appeal directly to the court for a review of the case. Your attorney can tell you how to appeal a court decision.**

A complaint about how you were treated in mediation/evaluation or about the procedures used can be addressed directly by the CEO.

3. **Submitting a complaint through the use of the attached form is not an appeal for review or reversal of court orders that have been made in your case. An appeal is a legal process over which the mediator/evaluator has no control. However, this form is the proper way to express your grievances about the way in which the mediator/evaluator handled your child custody mediation/evaluation.**

4. **To process your complaint, the CEO will:**

- **Review your complaint**
- **Talk with the mediator who has been involved with your case**
- **Determine whether your complaint is a matter that the Director can address or a legal matter only the court can address**
- **Contact you to discuss the next steps**

6. **The same process will be used to address complaints about a child custody evaluator. Unlike the mediator, the evaluator will advise the Courts of their recommendations as it pertains to what he/she thinks is in the best interest of the child(ren). Evaluators do not make or change court orders. The judge is the only person authorized to order or change a custody or visitation arrangement.**

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Please complete the following items to help us better understand your complaint. **This form will not be placed in your mediation file or in your court case file.**

Name: _____ Case # _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____

Do you have an attorney? Yes Attorney's Name _____
No

This complaint is about (check all that apply):
 Court order A mediator An evaluator
 Mediation procedure Evaluation procedure

If an individual(s) is the source of your concern, please provide the name(s) below, if known.

When did the action about which you are concerned happen?
 Within the last month Within the last three (3) months
 Within the last year More then one year ago

What is your complaint: Please be specific, but concise.

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What would you like to have done as a result of this complaint?

What other information do you think is important for us to know?

Signature _____ Date _____

(Unsigned or anonymous complaints will not be accepted)

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