

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

**FILED**

SEP 09 2016

CLERK OF MENDOCINO COUNTY  
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
*[Signature]*

In Re:

**MEDIATION OF SMALL CLAIMS, UNLAWFUL  
DETAINER AND CIVIL HARASSMENT CASES**

STANDING ORDER  
2016-17

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In California Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) Section 1775, the California Legislature has found and declared that:

- (a) The peaceful resolution of disputes in a fair, timely, appropriate, and cost-effective manner is an essential function of the judicial branch of state government under Article VI of the California Constitution.
- (b) In the case of many disputes, litigation culminating in a trial is costly, time consuming, and stressful for the parties involved. Many disputes can be resolved in a fair and equitable manner through less formal processes.
- (c) Alternative processes for reducing the cost, time, and stress of dispute resolution, such as mediation, have been effectively used in California and elsewhere. In appropriate cases mediation provides parties with a simplified and economical procedure for obtaining prompt and equitable resolution of their disputes and a greater opportunity to participate directly in resolving these disputes. Mediation may also assist to reduce the backlog of cases burdening the judicial system. It is in the public interest for mediation to be encouraged and used where appropriate by the courts.
- (d) Mediation and similar alternative processes can have the greatest benefit for the parties in a civil action when used early. Where appropriate, participants in disputes should be encouraged to utilize mediation and other alternatives to trial for resolving their differences in the early stages of a civil action.
- (e) Courts should be able to refer cases to appropriate dispute resolution processes such as mediation as an alternative to trial, consistent with the parties' right to obtain a trial if a dispute is not resolved through an alternative process.
- (f) The Legislature encourages the use of court-annexed alternative dispute resolution methods in general, and mediation in particular.

In addition, studies have shown that court mediation programs save the parties time and money, improve satisfaction with the courts' services, and reduce future disputes and offenses, thus allowing courts to spend more time on cases that cannot be resolved through mediation.

THEREFORE, the Mendocino Superior Court, in effecting a policy and goal to encourage parties to resolve their disputes through mediation, provides that judicial officers in small claims, unlawful detainer and civil harassment cases have discretion to refer parties to mandatory mediation for attempted settlement before hearing their case in court.

Court-referred mediation for small claims, unlawful detainer and civil harassment cases shall be at no cost to the parties.

This standing order shall expire on **December 31, 2016**.

Dated: 5/9/16

  
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JOHN A. BEHNKE  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court