

Vermont Family Court Mediation Program

APPLICATION FOR PARENT COORDINATOR CONTRACT

FULL LEGAL NAME _____

SOCIAL SECURITY NO _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

PHYSICAL ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER _____ OFFICE PHONE NUMBER _____

FAX NUMBER _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

BUSINESS NAME _____

Are you currently a member of any professional organizations? If yes, please list:

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? _____ If so, please explain below (include dates and specifics). A criminal check may be done.

Parent coordination is defined as dispute resolution for high conflict parents, as ordered by a family court judge, of issues involving parent/child contact, arising out of separation, divorce, post-divorce (this may include parentage), including but not limited to when, where and how contact will take place, communication between parents about children and extenuating circumstances surrounding parent/child relationships. Parent coordination does not involve parental rights and responsibilities.

In order to provide parent coordination services as a contracted parent coordinator with the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program, a parent coordinator must indicate in writing that he/she has met the qualifications for parent coordination as defined by the program. Contract parent coordinators must agree to abide by the protocols and requirements of the VT Family Court Mediation Program, participate in continuing education and peer supervision, provide professional services on a sliding fee basis and carry professional liability insurance.

Please complete the attached Worksheet describing your training, experience and supervision in the area of work with high conflict families. Include where possible, documentation of trainings, such as agendas, certificates of completion, etc.

MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENT COORDINATORS

160 hours training in the following areas:

- I. 60 hours Mediation Training, including a minimum of
 - 28 hours basic mediation training
 - 32 hours divorce mediation, of which 10 hours involve role play and debriefing activities

- II. 24 hours Domestic and Substance Abuse Training: basic and advanced, including
 - 8 hours basic domestic abuse training
 - 8 hours advanced domestic abuse training
 - 8 hours substance abuse training, including alcohol abuse training(Note: Some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training.)

- III. 20 hours Vermont Family Law and Court Procedures required as substantive family law and family court procedures.
(Note: Some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training.)

- IV. 36 hours Family Dynamics and Child Development, including
- ❑ 20 hours in psychology of families, specifically divorcing family dynamics (must include the effect of divorce on children, power imbalances, communication styles)
 - ❑ 16 hours of child development
- (Note: Some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training.)

- V. 12 hours Parent Coordination Training required, including Parent Coordination Protocols and work with high-conflict families, which may be gained in a combination of the following ways:
- ❑ training provided by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program
 - ❑ individual consultation with the Parent Coordination Program Consultant
 - ❑ regularly-scheduled parent coordinator consultation meetings
 - ❑ shadow a program contracted parent coordinator for a minimum of two cases
- (Note: Some of these hours may be completed after being accepted into the program.)

- VI. 8 hours Document Writing and Giving Testimony in Court
- This training will be provided by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program and may be completed after being accepted into the program.

VII. Each applicant shall shadow a program contracted parent coordinator for a minimum of two cases. The applicant shall be in supervision with the program supervisor during these cases. The applicant will not be paid during this time of shadowing and supervision. The program's case supervisor shall generate a report to the program regarding the applicant's experience in supervision. The program director shall then determine whether to recommend the applicant for contract or not.

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Parent coordinators must have at least five years worth of case work experience working with high-conflict family situations in any of the following areas or combination of areas: mediation, domestic or substance abuse services, child protective services, education, guardian ad litem, child care, mental health services, family law, guidance counseling, family home-based services, special education.

Experience with high-conflict families should be documented in the following ways:

- ❑ types of services provided
- ❑ number of cases or hours

Applicant parent coordinators will be asked to provide the names and phone numbers of three people familiar with their work in the last five years, including supervisors if relevant.

ONGOING SUPERVISION, TRAINING

All parent coordinators will be required to be in close supervision with the program case supervisor for every 3 hours of work on each case for at least their first six cases. All Parent coordinators must attend at least four peer consultation meetings annually. All parent coordinators must attend a minimum of 10 hours training relating to the issues of high-conflict families per year.

CONTRACTS

After a potential parent coordinator has submitted a complete application, including a sample of professional writing, a 4-person committee, including 2 members of the ADR Oversight Committee, the VFCMP Coordinator and a parent coordinator who is not on the Oversight Committee, will review the application and request an interview with the applicant.

If the committee approves the candidate, then the applicant shall begin the case shadowing process. If the case shadowing process and supervision is completed and the director makes a recommendation for contract to the Court Administrator, the applicant must understand that the Court Administrator is not obligated to offer a contract despite an applicant meeting minimum qualifications.

A criminal background check may be done.

After the candidate and the Court Administrator have signed the parent coordination contract, professional liability insurance (minimum of \$250,000) is required of the parent coordinator. The parent coordinator must provide proof of insurance to the VFCMP office before beginning the first case.

WRITING SAMPLE: Three samples of professional writing must be included with your application.

I hereby affirm that all of the information included in this application is true and correct. Further, I understand that as a parent coordinator participating in the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program, I will a) abide by the requirements and protocols of the VT Family Court Mediation Program, b) provide my professional services on a sliding fee basis to qualified and appropriate parties as agreed upon by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program, c) carry a minimum of \$250,000 in professional liability insurance, d) participate in continuing education/training and supervision as required by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program.

I understand that documentation of qualifications does not qualify as certification. The Vermont Family Court Mediation Program and the Vermont Supreme Court do not imply an assumption of my competence as a parent coordinator.

Date

Applicant Signature

Please return this completed form with attached required documentation to:
VFCMP, Office of the Court Administrator, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05609

Date

Approved by Director

Name _____ Date _____
Name _____ Date _____

Worksheet for
MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENT COORDINATORS
MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENT COORDINATORS

160 hours training in the following areas:

Mediation Training – 60 hours TOTAL REQUIRED, including a minimum of 28 hours basic mediation training

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

32 hours divorce mediation training

10 hours must involve role play and debriefing activities.

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Domestic and Substance Abuse training - 24 hours TOTAL REQUIRED.

Some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training.

8 hours basic domestic abuse

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

8 hours advanced domestic abuse

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

8 hours substance abuse, including alcohol abuse

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Vermont Family Law and Court Procedures training - 20 hours TOTAL REQUIRED, as substantive family law and family court procedures.

Some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training.

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Family Dynamics and Child Development training - 36 hours TOTAL REQUIRED.

Some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training.

20 hours in psychology of families, specifically divorcing family dynamics (must include the effect of divorce on children, power imbalances, communication styles)

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____

Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

•16 hours in child development

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

_____ Workshop/Course title _____ Hours _____
Workshop presenter/instructor _____
Workshop date _____ Location _____

Parent Coordination training - 12 hours TOTAL REQUIRED, including parent coordination protocols and work with high conflict families, which may be gained in the following ways:

- Training provided by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program.
 - Individual consultation with the Parent Coordination Program Consultant.
 - Regularly scheduled parent coordinator consultation meetings.
 - Shadow a program contracted parent coordinator for a minimum of two cases.
- Some of these hours may be completed after being accepted into the program.

Document Writing and Giving Testimony in Court - 8 hours TOTAL REQUIRED.

This training will be provided by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program and may be completed after being accepted into the program.

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Parent coordinators must have at least 5 years case work experience working with high conflict family situations in any of the following areas or combination of areas: mediation, domestic or substance abuse services, child protective services, education, guardian ad litem, child care, mental health services, family law, guidance counseling, family home based services, special education.

Documentation of experience with high conflict families:

Type of service provided: _____
Beginning date _____
Completion date _____
Number of cases or hours _____
Supervisor's Name _____

Supervisor's Title _____
Supervisor's Title _____

Type of service provided: _____
Beginning date _____
Completion date _____
Number of cases or hours _____
Supervisor's Name _____
Supervisor's Title _____
Supervisor's Title _____

Type of service provided: _____
Beginning date _____
Completion date _____
Number of cases or hours _____
Supervisor's Name _____
Supervisor's Title _____
Supervisor's Title _____

Type of service provided: _____
Beginning date _____
Completion date _____
Number of cases or hours _____
Supervisor's Name _____
Supervisor's Title _____
Supervisor's Title _____

Type of service provided: _____
Beginning date _____
Completion date _____
Number of cases or hours _____
Supervisor's Name _____
Supervisor's Title _____
Supervisor's Title _____

Type of service provided: _____
Beginning date _____
Completion date _____
Number of cases or hours _____
Supervisor's Name _____
Supervisor's Title _____
Supervisor's Title _____

Type of service provided: _____
Beginning date _____
Completion date _____
Number of cases or hours _____
Supervisor's Name _____

Supervisor's Title _____
Supervisor's Title _____

Please list three professional references:

Name & Title	Address	Phone
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____

If contract is approved by VFCMP, please indicate how you would like to be listed in our directory:

Office address(es) _____

Office Phone Number(s) _____

In which counties would you like to be listed _____

MINIMUM TRAINING and EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
CONTRACT PARENT COORDINATORS

160 hours training in the following areas:

I. Mediation Training

60 hours required, including a minimum of:

- 28 hours basic mediation training
- 32 hours divorce mediation, of which 10 hours involve role play and debriefing activities

II. Domestic and Substance Abuse training: basic and advanced

24 hours required, including:

- 8 hours basic domestic abuse
- 8 hours advanced domestic abuse
- 8 hours substance abuse, including alcohol abuse
(some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training)

III. Vermont Family Law and Court Procedures

- 20 hours required of family law and family court procedures
(some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training)

IV. Family Dynamics and Child Development

36 hours required, including:

- 20 hours in psychology of families, specifically divorcing family dynamics
(must include the effect of divorce on children, power imbalances, communication styles)
- 16 hours of child development
(some of these hours may be included in the divorce mediation training)

V. Parent Coordination Training

12 hours required, including parent coordination protocols and working with high conflict families. May be gained in the following ways:

- training provided by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program
- individual consultation with the Parent Coordination Program Consultant
- regularly-scheduled parent coordinator consultation meetings
- shadow a program contracted parent coordinator for a minimum of two cases
(these hours may be completed after being accepted into the program)

VI. Document Writing and Giving Testimony in Court

- 8 hours required. This training will be provided by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program and may be completed after being accepted into the program.

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS:

Parent coordinators must have at least 5 years experience working with high-conflict family situations in any of the following areas or combination of areas: mediation, domestic abuse or substance abuse services, child protective services, education, guardian ad litem, child care, mental health services, family law, guidance counseling, family home based services, special education.

Experience with high-conflict families should be documented in the following ways:

- types of services provided
- number of cases or hours

VERMONT FAMILY COURT MEDIATION PROGRAM

MEDIATION

PARENT COORDINATION

Is an alternative dispute resolution process	Is an alternative dispute resolution process
Neutral and impartial	Not neutral / advocate for child(ren)
Screens out cases of domestic violence, expressed fear, child abuse, substance addiction	Works with cases of domestic violence, expressed fear, child abuse, substance addiction
Confidential	Not confidential/ parent coordinator obtains releases from parents to talk with child(ren)'s teachers, counselors, others who may have information relating to the well-being of the child(ren)
Voluntary	Court ordered upon parties' agreement
Mediator meets with parties together	Parent coordinator always meets with parties separately if safety is an issue
Mediation assumes parties to be willing to at least try to reach agreement	Parent coordination assumes parties unable to reach agreement without directive professional assistance
Mediators do not make recommendations to the parties or to the court	Parent coordinators often make recommendations to parties, sometimes making recommendations to the Court if parents are unable to agree.
Mediators have no interest in parties' outcome	Parent coordinators make sure the agreements/ recommendations are designed to protect children from further harm
Mediation can assist parties in all areas of separation and divorce such as issues about children, property, debt, etc.	Parent coordinators assist parties in issues only related to parent-child contact; such as kid's schedules, transportation, parent communication
Mediation can assist parents in making decisions about PR&R	Parent coordination is used after PR&R has been decided and/or ordered
Mediators contracted with the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program can provide income eligible parents with a subsidized sliding fee (as low as \$10 an hour) for up to 8 hours of mediator time	Parent Coordinators contracted with the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program can provide income eligible parents with a subsidized sliding fee (as low as \$10 an hour) for up to 15 hours of parent coordinator time

vermont family court mediation program

Parent Coordination Standards of Practice

- Standard I A parent coordinator should recognize that parent coordination is based on the principle of advocacy of the child.
- Standard II A parent coordinator should be qualified by education, experience and training as defined by the Vermont Court Administrator and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Oversight Committee to undertake the parent coordination process. Parent coordination may only proceed by Court Order.
- Standard III A parent coordinator should define and describe the process of parent coordination and assess the parties' capacity and readiness to engage in parent coordination before the parties sign the *Agreement to Enter into Parent Coordination*.
- Standard IV A parent coordinator shall, if either or both parties are represented, define and describe the process of parent coordination to each party's attorney and obtain each party's attorney's signature on the *Agreement to Enter into Parent Coordination*.
- Standard V A parent coordinator should fully disclose and explain the basis of any compensation, fees, subsidy availability, and charges to the parties. The parties shall each receive a statement from the parent coordinator showing activity billed to each parent upon request and/or at the closing of each case.
- Standard VI A parent coordinator should conduct parent coordination in a professional manner consistent with the role of the child's advocate.
- Standard VII A parent coordinator should structure the parent coordination process so that the parties have adequate information and knowledge to make any decisions or agreements.
- Standard VIII A parent coordinator should maintain the confidentiality of all information acquired in the parent coordination process, unless the parent coordinator is permitted or required to reveal the information to the Court or to others involved in the case by the Vermont Family Court Mediation Program protocols, by law, or by agreement of the parties. A parent coordinator should recognize and be sensitive to the personal nature of information acquired during the parent coordination process.
- Standard IX A parent coordinator shall draft agreements, recommendations and reports that accurately reflect the work done in the parent coordination process.
- Standard X A parent coordinator should recognize a family situation involving domestic violence and follow program protocols concerning domestic abuse in parent coordination cases. A parent coordinator should recognize a family situation involving child abuse or neglect and report it to the child protective agency.
- Standard XI A parent coordinator should withdraw from further participation in the parent coordination process when the parent coordinator reasonably believes that further participation will not advance the child's best interest.
- Standard XII A parent coordinator should improve the practice of parent coordination.