

# A Checklist to Help You Prepare for a Successful Divorce Mediation



Provided by MWI Divorce & Family Mediator

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At MWI we often hear clients say, “I wish we knew about divorce mediation sooner.” Some delayed starting the divorce process for fear it might be too overwhelming and some had previously spent money on other process options that did not have the results they had hoped for.

Divorce mediation creates the opportunity for couples to work out the terms of their divorce or separation in less time and often for much less cost than other ways to divorce.

This helpful checklist is designed to help you and your spouse gather all the information necessary to complete the divorce process amicably.

**Here’s what is included:**

- A checklist of supporting financial documents & information;
- A list of topics divorcing couples need to discuss and reach agreement on before obtaining a divorce;
- Important dates to consider when making plans for parenting;
- Insightful comments from our past clients.

*Please note that not all of the information contained on the mediation checklist is needed at the first appointment, but having the information accessible may save you time later.*

**Contact Josh Hoch at [jhoch@mwi.org](mailto:jhoch@mwi.org) or 617-895-4028 with questions or to learn more about MWI's Divorce and Family Mediation and Arbitration Services.**

During the divorce process, spouses often find it helpful to have and share information on the following topics:

### Assets

- Savings/interest-bearing accounts
- Checking and money market accounts
- Stocks, bonds, mutual funds
- Retirement accounts
- Pension plans
- Other Accounts: IRA, SEP, KEOUGH, etc.
- Insurance policies

### Property

- Real estate
- Rental property
- Vehicles (*cars, motorcycles, boats—year, make, and model*)
- Personal property
- Household property

### Liabilities

- Mortgage(s)
- Home equity loans
- Motor vehicle loans
- Credit card debt
- Student loans
- Other debt

#### **What Is Divorce Mediation?**

*Divorce mediation is a process that creates an opportunity for couples to work out the terms of their divorce or separation in less time and often for less cost than other ways to divorce.*

## Why MWI?

MWI's Divorce and Family Mediation Service has been providing professional and cost effective services to clients since 1994. MWI is a leader in the field holding the distinction of Approved Provider from the Probate and Family Court Department.

## Insurance

- Medical and dental
- Uninsured medical and dental expenses
- Life insurance

## Pets

- Food
- Grooming
- Registration/taxes

## Taxes

- Pending refunds
- Pending liabilities
- Deductions for child(ren)

## What Are Benefits of Divorce Mediation?

- Control over important decisions affecting you (and your children).
- Discovery of unique and appropriate ways to resolve areas of disagreement and interpersonal conflict.
- Greater likelihood that the terms of the agreement reached will be honored in the future.
- Less trauma for the children involved.
- Reduction of hostility between participants.
- Growth in the ability of each participant to assert him or herself and to understand, articulate, and provide for his or her own needs.

*The following are topics you and your spouse should prepare to discuss during the mediation process.*

### Property Division

- Home: buy out, sell or keep.
- Other assets: personal effects, household goods, cars, land, etc.
- Savings and mutual funds accounts
- Retirement benefits
- Debt (credit cards, loans, etc.)
- Timing of transfers

*Divorce mediation requires the active participation of both parties. Together, they meet with a mediator in an atmosphere that promotes understanding and a fair outcome.*

### Additional Topics

- Alimony
- Trusts
- Wills
- Storage units
- Royalties
- Pending judgments
- Inheritances
- Merge or survive
- Mediation clause
- Legal names (now and after the divorce)
- Filing fee of \$215
- Parent education program

*This list is helpful for spouses with minor children to begin discussing topics involving children.*

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Massachusetts requires parents of minor children of the marriage to attend a parenting education program.

This program is focused on providing information about the emotional well-being of the children and how to strengthen the parent-child relationship during and after divorce. See [www.better-parent.org](http://www.better-parent.org)

### **Education**

- School tuition & fees
  - Private or parochial school
  - College
  - Graduate school
- School books
- Lessons—music, art, etc.
- Day care
- Activities and lessons

### **Child Support**

- How much?
- How often?
- How paid?
- How long?
- Tax consequences
- Future adjustments

### **Children**

- Custody
- Parenting plan (*including weekly schedule, vacations, and holidays*)
- Traveling
- Moving
- Emergency care
- Relationships with relatives
- Religion
- Camp
- Allowances

Use the chart below to start marking down important dates for your parenting plan.  
A detailed parenting plan will reduce future conflict and uncertainty in your child's schedule.

	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PARENT</u>	<u>PARENT</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> New Year's Eve	<u>12/31</u>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> New Year's Day	<u>1/1</u>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Martin Luther King Day (Observed)	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> President's Day	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Spring Break	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Mother's Day	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Memorial Day (Observed)	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Break	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Father's Day	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Independence Day	<u>7/4</u>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Labor Day	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Columbus Day (Observed)	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Halloween	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Thanksgiving Day	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Break	_____	_____	_____

	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PARENT</u>	<u>PARENT</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> School Institute Days	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent's Birthday <u>Name:</u> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent's Birthday <u>Name:</u> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Child's Birthday <u>Name:</u> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Child's Birthday <u>Name:</u> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Child's Birthday <u>Name:</u> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Religious Holidays			
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Important Dates:			
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____



"We feel very lucky to have been referred to MWI. It left my wife and I on very good terms. We finished a few months ago and we are now working together much better on raising our daughter than when we were married."

"They helped get right to the core issues and find a positive for each side."

"We came in there fighting and left with agreements."

**WE ASKED OUR CLIENTS,  
"IN WHAT WAYS WERE MWI & OUR  
MEDIATORS HELPFUL TO YOU?"**

"They did a great job with a difficult situation. They were very empathetic and warm. They made me feel safe."

"I would recommend MWI to others and have. The people were great and my divorce was a difficult one that was handled extremely well and successfully."

"The mediators did a great job and were very responsive to each of my questions about the process."

"MWI was a great resource. They helped put the divorce file together and made sure that the filing went smoothly. "

### Learn More:

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