
MONTANA JUDICIAL BRANCH

Family Mediation Program – DP 104

\$251,155 IN FY27 only and 1.0 FTE

Funded on an OTO basis in 2023

- The family mediation program provides mediation service to litigants in parenting plan cases. The aim of the program is to reduce the number of contested parenting plan cases to save court time and allow judges time for work on other case types.
- Litigants must meet a certain income-level, and the case must involve a contested parenting plan. Parenting plan cases with litigants representing themselves take an inordinate amount of court time. Mediation leaves the litigants in charge of the outcome, reduces conflict, and greatly limits the amount of judicial time needed to resolve the case.
- Litigants who are eligible for the program receive brief legal assistance before mediation to understand what the law allows, free mediation services from a trained mediator, and child support calculations.
- Agreements or partial agreements are presented to the judge or standing master for a final decree using far less judicial time than a contested hearing.
- The program was started with ARPA funding but expanded in the 2023 session with \$300,000 in general fund dollars. The funding will secure the program through June 2027.
- Performance measures and full workplan are available and posted.