DivorceMediators

A KIT FOR CHOOSING WELL

The Mediator Interview Kit

25 questions to ask any divorce mediator before you hire one, and a scorecard to compare the answers.

General information, not legal advice. Arizona notes checked against official sources on November 12, 2026.

START HERE

How to use this kit

Choosing a mediator is one of the first real decisions in a divorce, and most people make it after one phone call. You are allowed to ask more.

This kit gives you the questions, tells you what a clear answer tends to sound like, and gives you a place to write down what you hear. It works for any mediator, anywhere, including us.

It takes three steps

1. **Pick two or three mediators to call.** One call tells you about that mediator. Two or three tell you what your choices are.
2. **Ask the same questions each time.** You do not need all 25. The ten marked ★ cover the ground in about 15 minutes.
3. **Fill in the scorecard the same day,** while you still remember how the conversation felt.

Three things to settle before you call

- **Who is calling?** One of you can make the first calls alone. Before anyone is hired, both of you should have the chance to speak with the mediator.
- **What do you need help with?** Everything, or only the parts you are stuck on? Say so at the start.
- **What matters most to the two of you?** Cost you can plan for, speed, privacy, keeping things calm for children. Tell the mediator. A good one will tell you honestly whether that is what they offer.

> This is an interview, not a cross-examination. A mediator who welcomes your questions is showing you how they will handle the harder conversations later.

THE QUESTIONS · 1 OF 3

Training, and how they work

A. Training and background

- [ ] **1 ★** What mediation training have you completed, and how much of it was specific to divorce and family mediation?
- [ ] **2 ★** What is your professional background (law, mental health, finance, something else), and are you licensed in that profession?
- [ ] **3** About how many divorce mediations have you conducted, and how many in the past year?
- [ ] **4** Do you follow a written set of practice standards, and which one? Do you belong to a professional mediation organization?
- [ ] **5** Are you on any court's mediator roster?

> **What a clear answer sounds like.** Specific. A named training, a number of hours, a licence you can look up, a rough count of cases. You are not looking for the largest number. You are looking for someone who answers plainly and does not mind being asked.
>
> **Worth a follow-up if** the answer is a title you have not heard of. Ask who awards it and what it took to earn. In many places, Arizona included, a person does not need a licence to call themselves a mediator.

B. How they work

- [ ] **6 ★** Can you walk me through the process, from the first meeting to the final paperwork?
- [ ] **7** Do you meet with us together, separately, or both? In person or online?
- [ ] **8 ★** How do you make sure we are both looking at the same financial information before we decide anything?
- [ ] **9** What do you do when we get stuck?
- [ ] **10** How long have cases like ours taken with you, and what tends to slow them down?
- [ ] **11** Who does the work: you, or someone else in your office?

> **What a clear answer sounds like.** A sequence you could repeat back to your spouse tonight. There is no single right method. What matters is that there is one, and that it includes a way for both of you to see the full financial picture.
>
> **Worth a follow-up if** you hear a promise about how your case will turn out, or how fast. Nobody can know that on a first call.

Fairness, legal information and paperwork

C. Neutrality, safety and fairness

- ☐ **12** ★ One of us called you first. How do you stay neutral from here?
- ☐ **13** ★ How do you check that mediation is safe and workable for both of us? Do you speak with each of us privately before we begin?
- ☐ **14** What would lead you to pause or stop a mediation?
- ☐ **15** What is confidential in mediation, and what is not?

> **What a clear answer sounds like.** A mediator who has a routine for this, and who can tell you, without being defensive, when they would stop.
>
> **Why question 13 matters.** Mediation depends on two people being able to speak freely. If you are afraid of your spouse, or could not disagree with them safely, tell the mediator privately, or talk with an advocate first. Resources are on the last page.

D. Legal information, advice and paperwork

- ☐ **16** ★ Will you explain how the law generally treats things like property, support and parenting time? Where is the line, for you, between giving us information and giving one of us advice?
- ☐ **17** Can we each have our own lawyer look things over? When do you suggest doing that?
- ☐ **18** ★ Who writes up our agreement, and who prepares the documents for the court? What are that person’s qualifications?
- ☐ **19** Do you file the paperwork with the court for us? What happens between signing and the final decree?
- ☐ **20** If we have children, how do you help us build a parenting plan and work through child support?

> **What a clear answer sounds like.** A mediator is neutral. They can give both of you the same general information, and they do not tell either of you what is best for you personally. That is legal advice, and it comes from a lawyer who represents you alone. A mediator who is clear about this line, and comfortable with you seeing a lawyer alongside mediation, is describing the job accurately.

Fees, and three questions for yourself

E. Fees

☐	21 ★	How do you charge: a flat fee, by the hour, or by the session? Is that per person or for both of us?
☐	22 ★	What exactly does that cover, and what would cost extra?
☐	23	If you charge by the hour or session: what range have cases like ours come to in total, and what pushed the higher ones up?
☐	24	When is payment due? Is there a payment plan? What is refunded if we stop partway?
☐	25	Will you put the fee, and what it covers, in writing before we start?

What a clear answer sounds like. One you could write down as a number or a range, with a list of what is in and what is out. Court filing fees are charged by the court, not the mediator, so ask whether the quote includes them.

To compare quotes that are built differently, use the quote comparison tool at divorcemediators.com/find-a-mediator/compare-quotes/. It does the arithmetic on the numbers you were given and lists what you still need to ask.

F. After each call, ask yourself

- Did I understand the answers, or did I nod along?
- Would my spouse feel this person was fair to them too?
- Did I feel hurried toward a decision?

Your answers to these three belong on the scorecard as much as anything the mediator said.

Asking your spouse to choose with you

Mediation needs two willing people, and one of you usually starts looking first. The choice of mediator is a good thing to share: it is practical, it has no right answer, and it gives your spouse a real say from the start. Some ways people open that conversation, in your own words:

> "I would rather we both pick the person than have me pick. Could we each choose one to call, and then compare notes?"

> "I spoke with a mediator this week. I have not agreed to anything. I would like you to talk to them too, or to someone you choose, before either of us decides."

Offer the kit, not a conclusion. If the answer is "not now", leave it with them and let it rest. If you do not feel safe raising this with your spouse, skip this section and go to the last page.

SCORECARD

Compare what you heard

Score each line from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). The totals are a guide to your own impressions. They are not a rating of the mediator.

	Mediator 1	Mediator 2	Mediator 3
Name			
Date of call			
Training and background were specific and checkable			
I could repeat their process to someone else			
They have a way to make sure we both see the finances			
They explained how they stay neutral			
They screen for safety and fairness			
They were clear about information versus advice			
I know who prepares the agreement and court documents			
The fee and what it covers are clear			
They will put the fee in writing			
I understood the answers			
My spouse would likely feel they were treated fairly			
I did not feel hurried			
Total (out of 60)			
Fee quoted, and what it covers			
Still need to ask			

IF YOU ARE DIVORCING IN ARIZONA

Arizona notes

General information checked against the sources named, November 12, 2026. Not legal advice. Laws change.

- **There is no licence for private mediators.** The Superior Court in Maricopa County tells the public that there are no licensing or minimum educational requirements to advertise as a mediator, and that some private providers are trained specialists, counselors and attorneys while others are not. That is why questions 1 to 5 are worth asking. (Superior Court in Maricopa County, mediation packet DRADM1.)
- **Mediation is confidential, with exceptions.** Arizona law makes what is said and written during a mediation confidential, and it may not be admitted as evidence, apart from listed exceptions. One of them: the terms of a signed agreement can be shown to a court when that is needed to approve or enforce it. Threatened or actual violence during a mediation is not protected. (A.R.S. § 12-2238.)
- **A court still reviews your agreement.** In a divorce, the court looks at the written agreement before making it part of the decree. Terms about property and spousal maintenance bind the court unless it finds them unfair; terms about children must be reasonable. (A.R.S. § 25-317.)
- **A mediator does not replace a lawyer's advice.** You can consult a lawyer at any point. Arizona also licenses legal paraprofessionals, who can advise and represent clients in family law within a defined scope. Certified legal document preparers can prepare documents and give general legal information, but may not give legal advice. (Arizona Supreme Court, Certification and Licensing Division.)

If you are afraid of your spouse, or are being hurt, threatened or controlled

- In immediate danger, call 911.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (TTY 1-800-787-3224), or text START to 88788. Free and confidential, 24 hours a day.
- Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence: 602-279-2900 or 1-800-782-6400.
- Arizona courts' protective order tool (AZPOINT): azpoint.azcourts.gov. There is no fee to use it.

Next step

Compare what each mediator quoted, like for like: **divorcemediators.com/find-a-mediator/compare-quotes/**

Our guide to choosing a divorce mediator applies in every state: **divorcemediators.com/find-a-mediator/how-to-choose-a-divorce-mediator/**

 © DivorceMediators. You may copy and share this kit unchanged.