

RCW 11.96A.300 Mediation procedure. (1) Notice of mediation. A party may cause the matter to be subject to mediation by service of written notice of mediation on all parties or the parties' virtual representatives as follows:

(a) If no hearing has been set. If no hearing on the matter has been set, by serving notice in substantially the following form before any petition setting a hearing on the matter is filed with the court:

NOTICE OF MEDIATION UNDER RCW 11.96A.300

To: (Parties)

Notice is hereby given that the following matter shall be resolved by mediation under RCW 11.96A.300:

(State nature of matter)

This matter must be resolved using the mediation procedures of RCW 11.96A.300 unless a petition objecting to mediation is filed with the superior court within twenty days of service of this notice. If a petition objecting to mediation is not filed within the twenty-day period, RCW 11.96A.300(4) requires you to furnish to all other parties or their virtual representatives a list of acceptable mediators within thirty days of your receipt of this notice.

(Optional: Our list of acceptable mediators is as follows:)

DATED:

.
(Party or party's legal representative)

(b) If a hearing has been set. If a hearing on the matter has been set, by filing and serving notice in substantially the following form at least three days prior to the hearing that has been set on the matter:

NOTICE OF MEDIATION UNDER RCW 11.96A.300

To: (Parties)

Notice is hereby given that the following matter shall be resolved by mediation under RCW 11.96A.300:

(State nature of matter)

This matter must be resolved using the mediation procedures of RCW 11.96A.300 unless the court determines at the hearing set for . . . o'clock on , (identify place of already set hearing), that mediation shall not apply pursuant to RCW 11.96A.300(3). If the court determines that mediation shall not apply, the court may decide the matter at the hearing, require arbitration, or direct other judicial proceedings.

(Optional: Our list of acceptable mediators is as follows:)

DATED:

.
(Party or party's legal representative)

(2) Procedure when notice of mediation served before a hearing is set. The following provisions apply when notice of mediation is served before a hearing on the matter is set:

(a) The written notice required in subsection (1)(a) of this section may be served at any time without leave of the court.

(b) Any party may object to a notice of mediation under subsection (1)(a) of this section by filing a petition with the superior court and serving the petition on all parties or the parties' virtual representatives. The party objecting to notice of mediation under subsection (1)(a) of this section must file and serve the petition objecting to mediation no later than twenty days after receipt of the written notice of mediation. The petition may include a request for determination of matters subject to judicial resolution under RCW 11.96A.080 through 11.96A.200, and may also request that the matters in issue be decided at the hearing.

(c) The hearing on the petition objecting to mediation must be heard no later than twenty days after the filing of that petition.

(d) The party objecting to mediation must give notice of the hearing to all other parties at least ten days before the hearing and must include a copy of the petition.

At the hearing, the court shall order that mediation proceed except for good cause shown. Such order shall not be subject to appeal or revision. If the court determines that the matter should not be subject to mediation, the court shall dispose of the matter by: (i) Deciding the matter at that hearing, but only if the petition objecting to mediation contains a request for that relief, (ii) requiring arbitration, or (iii) directing other judicial proceedings.

(3) Procedure when notice of mediation served after hearing set. If the written notice of mediation required in subsection (1)(b) of this section is timely filed and served by a party and another party objects to mediation, by petition or orally at the hearing, the court shall order that mediation proceed except for good cause shown. Such order shall not be subject to appeal or revision. If the court determines that the matter should not be subject to mediation, the court shall dispose of the matter by: (a) Deciding the matter at that hearing, (b) requiring arbitration, or (c) directing other judicial proceedings.

(4) Selection of mediator; mediator qualifications.

(a) If a petition objecting to mediation is not filed as provided in subsection (3) of this section, or if a court determines that mediation shall apply, each party shall, within thirty days of receipt of the initial notice or within twenty days after the court determination, whichever is later, furnish all other parties or the parties' virtual representatives a list of qualified and acceptable mediators. If the parties cannot agree on a mediator within ten days after the list is required to be furnished, a party may petition the court to appoint a mediator. All parties may submit a list of qualified and acceptable mediators to the court no later than the date on which the hearing on the petition is to be held. At the hearing the court shall select a qualified mediator from lists of acceptable mediators provided by the parties.

(b) A qualified mediator must be: (i) An attorney licensed to practice before the courts of this state having at least five years of experience in estate and trust matters, (ii) an individual, who may be an attorney, with special skill or training in the administration of trusts and estates, or (iii) an individual, who may be an attorney, with special skill or training as a mediator. The mediator may not have an interest in an affected estate, trust, or nonprobate asset, and may not be related to a party.

(5) Date for mediation. Upon designation of a mediator by the parties or court appointment of a mediator, the mediator and the parties or the parties' virtual representatives shall establish a date

for the mediation. If a date cannot be agreed upon within ten days of the designation or appointment of the mediator, a party may petition the court to set a date for the mediation session.

(6) Duration of mediation. The mediation must last at least three hours unless the matter is earlier resolved.

(7) Mediation agreement. A resolution of the matter that is the subject of the mediation must be evidenced by a nonjudicial dispute resolution agreement under RCW 11.96A.220.

(8) Costs of mediation. Costs of the mediation, including reasonable compensation for the mediator's services, shall be borne equally by the parties. The details of those costs and fees, including the compensation of the mediator, must be set forth in a mediation agreement between the mediator and all parties to the matter. Each party shall bear its own costs and expenses, including legal fees and witness expenses, in connection with the mediation proceeding: (a) Except as may occur otherwise as provided in RCW 11.96A.320, or (b) unless the matter is not resolved by mediation and the arbitrator or court finally resolving the matter directs otherwise. [2001 c 14 s 4; 1999 c 42 s 505.]