

MEDIATION

Mediation is typically a *voluntary* settlement process by which two or more parties in conflict agree to attempt to settle their differences with the assistance of a neutral third party, or mediator. The mediator works with the parties towards setting out ground rules for the mediation session(s), facilitates productive communication between the parties, and records any resolutions that may result.

Mediation Associates is owned and operated by Barbara Melton, a licensed professional counselor with a master's degree in clinical counseling, who is also trained as a family mediator and certified by the SC Supreme Court as a family mediator. She has had a private practice in mediation since 1989, and currently serves on the local community dispute resolution board of the Mediation & Meeting Center of Charleston (www.mediationcharleston.org) and the SC Chapter of the Assn. for Conflict Resolution (www.acr-sc.org)

There are many benefits to engaging in the mediation process. If conflicting parties can come to court with an agreement settling many, if not all, of the areas of concern, the process can be less time consuming and less costly. It also gives you (and not a judge) control over how you want your conflict resolved. It is always recommended that you have an attorney review your proposed agreement so that you can be fully apprised of any legal rights you may have, as Barbara Melton is not an attorney and is not allowed to dispense legal advice.

FEES: Rates for mediation are \$175 per hour, which is usually split between the parties, or as otherwise agreed or mandated.

OFFICE LOCATION: The office location of Mediation Associates/Barbara Melton is 215 East Bay St., Suite 201-D, Charleston, SC 29401. This is a 5-story red brick building located directly across the street from the Custom House, almost on the corner of Market and East Bay Sts. There are two restaurants in the base of the building, Tsunami's and Mac's Place. The office is located on the second floor at the end of a long hallway.

OTHER QUESTIONS: Call Barbara Melton at (843) 723-8002.