



Seventh Judicial Circuit of Maryland

JOHN HANSON BRISCOE CIRCUIT COURT HOUSE

P.O. BOX 859

LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND 20650

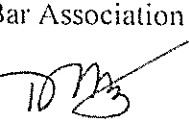
F. MICHAEL HARRIS
Family Magistrate

301-475-7844 x 4120

December 10, 2019

Memorandum

To: Members of the St. Mary's County Bar Association

From: Family Magistrate F. Michael Harris 

Re: Family Services Program

Attached is a summary of the programs and services that are provided by the Family Services Office. These services are available to your clients prior to a court case or as a result of a pending court matter. If you need additional information and/or assistance you can contact the Family Support Services Coordinator, Linda J. Grove at (301) 475-7844, extension *4110. Thank you.

What is the Family Services Program?

In 1998, the Maryland Judiciary was given the responsibility of overseeing the creation of the Family Divisions/Family Services Program. Comprehensive programs were developed by Maryland Circuit Courts to help benefit families accessing the court system to help resolve custody and access issues. The overall mission is *“to improve the experiences and outcomes for the children and families who interact with Maryland’s Court System.”*

Programs offered through the Family Services Office

- **Child Custody and Child Access Mediation**
- **6-hour Co-Parenting Education Program**
- **6-week Intensive Co-Parenting Education Program**
- **Co-Parenting Conflict Resolution Counseling Program (CCRC)**
- **Supervised Visitation Programs**
- **Psychological Evaluations**
- **Home Studies**
- **Family Law Self Help Legal Clinic at the St. Mary’s County Courthouse**
- **Family Law Self Help Legal Clinic at the Lexington Park Library**
- **Family Recovery Court (FRC) Program**

Child Custody and Child Access Mediation

The St. Mary’s County Circuit Court will order parties in contested child access/child custody cases to resolve their disputes through mediation when a case is appropriate for mediation. Pursuant to Maryland Rule 17-201(c) mediation is the process in which parties appear before an impartial mediator and assists the parties in reaching their own voluntary agreement to resolve all or part of their contested issues. The mediator may help the parties develop a parenting plan that is in the best interests of their child (ren). The St. Mary’s County Circuit Court utilizes the mediators with *Community Mediation of St. Mary’s* located at 41620 Courthouse Drive, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650, (301) 475-9118, Mia Bowers, Executive Director. Free

Co-Parenting Education Programs

Six (6) Hour Co-Parenting Divorce and Separation Education Seminar

Pursuant to Maryland Rule 9-204(b) when there are contested issues of custody and/or visitation, the Court will order parties to a 6-hour educational seminar designed to minimize disruptive effects of separation and divorce on the lives of children.

Promise Resource Center is located at 8395 Old Leonardtown Road, Hughesville, Maryland 20637. Contact person is Kelly Hutter, Executive Director at (301) 290-0400. Cost is \$120.00 per person and parties have to pre-register and pre-pay at least 48 hours prior to the next class. Payment is not accepted on the day of the class. The 6-hour seminar is offered the third (3rd) Saturday of every month from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Lunch is provided.

Six (6) Hour Online Co-Parenting Program/Divorce Class

Another resource to complete the required 6-hour Educational Seminar is through **OnlineParentingPrograms.com**

Programs are available in English and Spanish. Low income discounts are available.

Contact by phone at (866)504-2883 or at support@onlineparentingprograms.com

Or go on the website www.stmarys.onlineparentingprograms.com

Six (6) Week Intensive Co-Parenting Education Program

This Program is designed to help reduce court time and litigation expenses for families who have not been able to overcome conflict with other interventions. The goal of this program is that each participant has successfully addressed areas of conflict, develops a plan to utilize in future conflict. Class is structured with six 2-hour sessions and approximately 8 to 12 participants are in a group. Fees are paid through Family Services Jurisdictional Grant Program and provided by Mackensey Kubina with A New Hope Family Therapeutic Services located at 41660 Courthouse Drive, Suite 200, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650.

Co-Parenting Conflict Resolution Counseling Program (CCRC)

The Co-Parenting Conflict Resolution Counseling Program (CCRC) is an informal meeting between both parents and the provider gives parents the opportunity to discuss any issues that brought them before the court, and other concerns or topics areas of their choice that relates to co-parenting. Provider is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW-C) with extensive experience working with families and children.

CCRC is available on Thursdays only and appointments are at 9:15 am, 10:30 am, 12 noon and at 1:00 pm and sessions are held at the Circuit Court for St. Mary's County. Parties participate either by referral or court order. Contact Linda J. Grove, Family Support Services Coordinator at (301) 475-7844, extension * 4110 to schedule sessions. Free

Supervised Visitation Services

The Court will order parties to supervised visitation when there are safety concerns of the non-custodial parent.

Melissa Fletcher, LGSW with Trusted Wings, LLC located at 22738 Maple Road, Suite 113, Lexington Park, Maryland 20653

Phone: (443) 345-0944 and Email: mfletcher@twscounseling.com

Fees: Therapeutic Supervised Visitation services with parenting skills training @ \$100.00 per hour

Observational Supervised Visitation services @ \$60.00 intake fee and \$65.00 per supervised hour

Center for Children @ 6100 Radio Station Road, La Plata, Maryland 20646

Phone: (301) 609-9887. Ext 153 and Email: ibrown@center-for-children.org

Fees: Observational Supervised Visitation Intake @ \$50.00 per parent and Supervised visitation @ \$50.00 per hour per child for 2 or more children

Promise Resource Center Phone: (301) 290-0040/ located at 8395 Old Leonardtown Road, Hughesville, Maryland 20637. Fees for Services: \$60.95 per hour.

Psychological Evaluations

Jennifer Voorhaar, LCSW-C with *Hope and Healing Psychotherapy, LLC* has contracted out with Dr. Alison W. Thir to conduct psychological evaluations with parents and/or children in contested family law matters.

Approximate cost of a psychological evaluation is \$3,750.00 which would include two parents and one child. Each additional child would be \$250.00, and each adult would cost \$500.00. The Evaluation of the parents would take 3-4 hours and each child will take about 2 hours.

A series of Assessment tools will be administered to assess the parenting skills and capacities of the adult as well as the child's psychological functioning and developmental needs. The Court will make the referrals to Hope and Healing Psychotherapy, LLC. Hope and Healing will provide the written report to the court within 45 days of receiving the referral. Jennifer Voorhaar with Hope and Healing

Psychotherapy, LLC @ 22655 Washington Street, Suite 6, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650. Phone: (301) 690-8404 and Email: jennifer@hopehealingtherapy.com

Anger Management (AM)/Abuser Intervention Program (AIP)

AM Group will be held Thursdays from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm

Cost of AM is \$275.00 for 8-week group and a \$95.00 intake fee.

AIP Group will be held Wednesdays from 5:00 pm to 6:15 pm

Cost of AIP is \$680.00 for a 26-week program and a \$80.00 intake fee

Both groups will be held at St. Mary's Church of Christ located at 44850 St. Andrews Church Road, California, Maryland 20619

Individuals need to contact Carolyn Johnsen, Abuser Intervention/Anger Management Coordinator @ The Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy @ (301) 373-4141 or Email Carolyn.smcfa@gmail.com.

Clients seeking either program should contact their office and request to speak to Carolyn Johnsen.

Family Law Self Help Legal Clinics

The St. Mary's County Circuit Court offers **two** free **Family Law Self Help Legal Clinics** to provide legal help and legal assistance with your family law matter such as custody, visitation, divorce, child support, name change, guardianship and domestic violence. Contact person for both clinics is Claire Langeluttig, Magistrate Administrative Assistant at (301) 475-7844, extension *4121.

St. Mary's County Circuit Court Clinic (lawyer speaks English & Spanish)

41605 Courthouse Drive, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650. Held every Wednesday and the first and last Friday of every month at 10:00 am

Lexington Park Library Clinic

21677 FDR Boulevard, Lexington Park, Maryland 20650 The schedule at the Lexington Park Library varies month to month but is typically two Wednesdays of every month.

Family Recovery Court

The St. Mary's County Family Recovery Court (FRC) program began operation in January 2016. The Family Recovery Court program is an alternative for parents with substance abuse and or mental health problems that create dysfunctional behavior and prevents them from providing safe and appropriate emotional care for their children who are experiencing the effects of their parent's separation and/or inability to communicate and co-parent effectively. The St. Mary's County Family Recovery Court builds strong and healthy families by offering timely,

intensive treatment and support for parents with substance abuse problems that prevent them from providing safe and appropriate care for their children. The Family Recovery Court uses a holistic approach to support parents and families, with consistent monitoring, intensive treatment, ancillary services, and collaborative efforts.

Contact Person is Debbie Waxman, Family Recovery Court Case Manager/Coordinator. (240) 925-3696.

Legal and Community Resources

Legal Aid Bureau, Maryland Legal Aid – private, non-profit law firm providing free legal services to low income people statewide. 15364 Prince Frederick Road, Hughesville, Maryland, 20637 (301) 932-6661. <https://www.mdlab.org>

Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy – is a private, non-profit agency whose function is to provide advocacy, legal assistance and information/referral to victims of domestic violence in the Southern Maryland region. The Center has three full time Advocacy Legal Offices and these offices are in the District Court Buildings in Leonardtown (St. Mary's County), La Plata, (Charles County) and Prince Frederick (Calvert County). 23918 Mervell Dean Road, Hollywood, Maryland 20636 and work number is (301) 373-4141.

<http://smcfa.net>

The People's Law Library of Maryland (PPL) is legal information and self-help website maintained by the Maryland State Law Library, a court related agency of the Maryland Judiciary. The purpose of the PPL is to provide self -help litigant's information about the law including summaries of the law, links to legal resources and referrals for legal services. <https://www.peoples-law.org>

St. Mary's County Bar Association P.O. Box 561, Leonardtown, Maryland 20650. www.stmarysbar.org

Email: smc.bar.association@gmail.com

Website for Family Law Forms

www.courts.state.md.us/family or www.mdcourts.gov

Department of Juvenile and Family Administration

Maryland Volunteers Lawyers Services (MVLS)

<https://mvlslaw.org>

Maryland Courts Self Help Center CHAT with a Lawyer about your civil case

Free Legal Help with your Civil Matter

(410) 260-1392 Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 8:00 pm

Civil Justice's Limited Scope Representation Project

Contact Civil Justice at (410) 706-0174

Or you can fill out an online intake form at
<https://www.civiljusticenetwork.org/ForConsumers/Intakeform.aspx>.

Maryland Custody & Divorce Client Notebook

The Maryland Custody & Divorce Notebook helps clients navigate a family law case from start to finish with the help of an attorney(s) from self-help legal services, pro bono or the paid private bar. The notebook helps clients keep papers and evidence with them and in one place. The Topic of Dispute chart helps clients identify and understand the key issues and evidence that will make or break their case. A calendar and journal help the client record facts and gather evidence before they find a lawyer.

The Maryland Custody & Divorce Notebook was developed with assistance, cooperation and funding from groups including the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Department of Family Administration, Circuit Court for Frederick County, People's Law Library, Frederick County Circuit Court Law Library, Bar Association of Frederick County and MSBA Section on Delivery of Legal Services.

To get a copy of the Notebook, you can contact Linda J. Grove at (301) 475-7844, extension *4110 or Claire Langeluttig at (301) 475-7844, extension *4121.

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