

There is a better way.

Collaborative Family Law

Collaborative law can be used to resolve disputes in most family law matters:

- o Divorce or Legal Separation
- o Property Division
- o Custody/Parenting Plans
- o Child Support
- o Maintenance/Alimony
- o Paternity
- o Pre- and post-marital agreements
- o Relationship Agreements for unmarried couples

Collaborative Law *may* not be an appropriate process where there has been a history of violence or in cases involving alcohol or drug abuse.

What is Washington Collaborative Law?

WashCL is an association of attorneys and other professionals who are committed to resolving the disputes of their clients without going to court.

Members of WashCL include attorneys, mediators, financial specialists, mental health professionals, business evaluators, child specialists, coaches, and other professionals who are trained in the collaborative law process or collaborative practice. We are committed to resolving conflicts in the best interests of the parties and their families without court intervention.

To Learn More:

Visit www.WashCL.org for more information and to locate lawyers trained to practice collaborative law.

www.WashCL.org
FLG012306(3)



Family Law

Client Focused

Cooperative Approach

Communication Centered

Creative Results

An effective and professional alternative to resolving disputes

www.WashCL.org

What is Collaborative Law?

The collaborative practice is an effective method of settling disputes where the parties agree to work fairly and cooperatively to resolve their differences without court intervention.

Lawyers serve as advisors and advocates, committed to reaching resolution with integrity, fairness, and the best long-term interests of all involved.

Central collaborative practice principles include:

- o The parties promise to approach resolution without threatening court intervention.
- o Participants agree to negotiate in good faith, disclose all pertinent information, and keep their communications constructive and respectful.
- o A series of substantive discussions occur in “four-way meetings” with the two attorneys and parties in attendance.
- o If either party seeks court intervention, the attorneys for both parties and their firms are disqualified from further participation in that matter.
- o Communications are inadmissible in any subsequent court proceedings without the consent of all.

Choose Collaborative Law IF:

1. You want to participate in a cooperative process that is solution-oriented and client-focused, rather than antagonistic.
2. You want to resolve your case without going to court.
3. You want creative solutions to address your unique needs and concerns.
4. You are willing to voluntarily provide documentation to your spouse or partner.

How to Get Started:

If the Collaborative Law process appeals to you, you will first need to select a collaborative attorney who fits your needs and makes you comfortable. If you are already working with an attorney, ask the attorney to explore the possibility of using collaborative law protocols and direct them to the Washington Collaborative Law web site, www.WashCL.org.

Next, talk with your spouse or partner about the collaborative process to ensure that you are both willing to utilize this approach. Your attorney may be able to assist you by writing a letter and/or providing information regarding the collaborative process for your spouse or partner. Your spouse or partner should then select a collaboratively-minded attorney. Once the attorneys have been selected, the process can begin.

The Goal: Better Results, Less Trauma

Let’s face it. Most people find going to court to be expensive and nerve wracking. It can be demeaning and exhausting. In contrast, collaborative law cases are resolved outside the courtroom, frequently reaching resolution faster and less expensively than through traditional litigation.

The novel difference in collaborative law is how the parties work together: collaborative lawyers and supporting professionals provide a framework to encourage parties to focus on concerns and workable solutions to those concerns. There is also less public exposure of sensitive information.

Lawyers trained in Collaborative Law shift their focus from being adversaries to being problem solvers.

Collaborative law is successfully practiced across the US, Canada and Europe.

**There is a better way.
It’s Collaborative Law.**