

Time	Litigation	Early-Stage Mediation
Initial Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse 1 calls a lawyer and discusses how to proceed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse 1 calls a mediator and discusses how to proceed • Spouse 2 calls the mediator and discusses how to proceed
First 30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse 1's lawyer files Plaintiff's complaint and ex parte orders • Summons served on Spouse 2 • Spouse 2 finds a lawyer, who files defendant's answer to the complaint • Attorneys begin discovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediator phone screening with each spouse • First session scheduled, mediator sends forms to fill out regarding property and finances • Mediator may send referrals for support persons (attorneys, financial advisors, divorce coaches) • First 2-hour session with spouses and mediator (may have support people if necessary)
Month 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery continues • Attorneys fight motions in court (regarding Discovery, temporary child support, temporary parenting plans) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues 2 hour sessions • Decide together what information to share for full disclosure • Discuss one issue at a time • Mediator writes decisions into an agreement • Spouses and Mediator discuss and edit the agreement together
Month 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Discovery exchanges and related attorney fights in court • Parties and attorneys meet with the "Friend of the Court" which makes recommendations to the judge about financial parenting plan and child support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation Conclusion (if you DO NOT have minor children) - signed, binding settlement agreement usually completed. • Spouses with signed settlement agreement may submit to court a joint filing for divorce
Month 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May still have Discovery exchanges and related attorney fights in court • Hopefully, attorneys will begin settlement discussions, usually by exchange of email proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation Conclusion (if you DO have minor children) - signed, binding settlement agreement usually completed • Spouses with signed settlement agreement may submit to court a joint filing for divorce
Month 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attorneys and Parties attend meeting with judge (Pre-Trial/Status Conference) • Judge orders attorneys and parties to late-stage mediation for unsettled issues and sets a trial date • May STILL have exchange of Discovery responses and more attorney fights in court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation WITHOUT minor children - Judgement of Divorce may be entered by judge (You're done!)
Month 6	<p>Parties attend late-stage mediation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late stage mediation MAY result in signed or recorded agreement, but attorneys must still agree on language for Judgement of Divorce 	<p>Mediation WITH minor children - Judgement of Divorce may be entered by judge (You're done!)</p>
Month 7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attorneys (eventually) agree on language of Judgement of Divorce for entry by Judge • OR, if no settlement TRIAL will be held. More than 95% settle by day of trial. • Sometimes cases can drag on up to 1 year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With or without children, you're done already!