



**Summit County
Domestic Relations Court**
Administrative Judge Katarina Cook
Judge Kani H. Hightower

SETTLEMENT WEEK

JULY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

**July 13, 2026
Lunch N Learn**

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**Summit County Domestic Relations Court
Settlement Week**

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July 27, 2026 – July 31, 2026

Resolving Family Law Cases Peacefully and Quickly



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What is Settlement Week?

Per Supreme Court of Ohio:

"A court-managed program to reduce court backlogs by using mediation to resolve pending civil or domestic relations cases."

"The court designates a specific time period, which can be a week or just a few days, and selects cases for mediation, based on recommendations from judges, attorneys, or parties in dispute."



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Benefits of Conducting a Settlement Week:

Settlement Week can be beneficial for all involved.

- Parties have an opportunity to work with a trained mediator to settle their disputes expeditiously, "outside of court," saving the time and expense of going to trial.
- The court can reduce its caseload, allowing the courts to focus on the cases which cannot be resolved, except by trial.
- Settlement Week is an opportunity for Summit County Domestic Relations Court to review the extent of the Court's mediation/alternative dispute program.



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Number of Cases Scheduled

**Referred
Scheduled**

Mediation

Neutral Evaluation



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What is involved in Settlement Week?

- Mediation
- Neutral Evaluation
- Agreement Express
- Informal Proceedings



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General Information for Settlement Week

- Informational emails will be sent to parties/counsel the week of July 20th
- Settlement Week Tables located on 2nd and 3rd Floor during the event
- Daily check in on the 2nd Floor at Settlement Week Registration Desk
- Counsel will check in their clients. *Both counsel and client must be present to check in.*
- Parties/counsel will be directed to appropriate floor (2nd, 3rd, 4th) for their session
- Attorney Lounge will be open for counsel and family law professionals
- Community agencies will be available: Community Legal Aid; CSEA and Victim's Advocates
- Quiet Room available on first come first served basis.
- Child Care available on first come first served basis by requesting in advance.



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Check in Procedures

- All should arrive no later than 15 minutes in advance of their session.
- Counsel will check in for their clients. Both counsel and client must be here to check in.
- Unrepresented will check in individually.
- If attorneys would like to confer with client privately, there is an assigned room for your session. Ask the mediator/evaluator.



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Procedures for Mediation & Informal Proceedings

- All parties should have completed Agreement to Mediate (SW MED FORM 6A) and Summary of Issues (SW FORM 4B)
- Parties/counsel should bring all requested documents in the Order to Mediate and Judge's Order for Divorce, if applicable
- If an agreement is reached, the mediator will complete a Memorandum of Understanding for the parties/counsel (SW Form 11A, 11B and 11 C)



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Procedures for Neutral Evaluation

- All parties should have completed the Perspective Brief (SW NE FORM 10A – Financials and SW NE FORM 10B – Parenting)
- Each party will have 15 minutes to present his/her argument to the Neutral Evaluators
- Neutral Evaluators will then confer privately for approximately 20 – 30 minutes
- Neutral Evaluators will reconvene the session and provide recommendations to the parties
- Parties/counsel can ask questions regarding the recommendations
- Parties/counsel can have opportunity to negotiate and session may convert to mediation phase to narrow issues



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Procedures for Agreement Express & Confirmation Hearings

- Magistrates will be available to confirm agreements and stipulations through the week
- Judge Cook and Magistrate Heimbaugh are available to confirm any final agreements for divorces assigned to her.
- Judge Hightower is on vacation that week. Magistrate Ford and Magistrate Kinney will be available to schedule a confirmation hearing for divorces assigned to her (if there is not a hearing already scheduled after Settlement Week).
- Agreed Entry of Stipulations will be available in the event agreements need to be subsequently drafted or in case of partial agreements.
- Summit County Domestic Relations Court Forms will be available.



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Procedures for Check Out

- Mediator/Neutral Evaluator will bring all parties/counsel to Settlement Table on the 3rd Floor to Check Out (no one should just leave)
- Mediator/Neutral Evaluator will complete the mediation/NE Outcome Report
- All participants to complete the Exit Survey (available by QR Code)
- Once the Exit Survey is completed the parties will be free to leave
- Need a second session? Ask at the Settlement Week Table if



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Questions ?



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