

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

PROCEDURES: HOW TO FILE A DEPENDENCY PETITION

These procedures are designed to help you prepare a Dependency Petition and file it with the Clerk of the Court.

STEP 1: Prepare the Court Papers. Complete the enclosed Juvenile Court Cover Sheet, Dependency Petition form and the Notice of Hearing form. Make sure you follow the instructions that go with the forms and carefully read and complete each section of these forms.

STEP 2: Go to the Correct Juvenile Court Facility. You can file a Dependency Petition at either Juvenile Court Center Facility:

Durango Juvenile Court Facility
3131 West Durango Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85009
Telephone: 602-506-4041

OR

Southeast Juvenile Court Facility
1810 South Lewis Street
Mesa, Arizona 85210
Telephone: 602-506-2850

Dependency Petitions are accepted for filing at either Juvenile Court. The case will be assigned to one of the Juvenile Court's listed above based upon the zip code of the residence of the custodial parent of the child(ren) at the time the child(ren) is/are removed from the home, or if not removed from the home, at the time of the filing of the Dependency Petition.

STEP 3: File your Court papers with the Correct Juvenile Court Facility.

A. FEE. There is no fee for filing a Dependency Petition.

B. GIVE YOUR COURT PAPERS TO THE CLERK OF COURT AT THE CORRECT JUVENILE COURT FACILITY. You must present the original Juvenile Cover Sheet, Dependency Petition and Notice of Hearing plus one copy of each of these documents to the Clerk. The copies will be returned to you for you to make copies for the individuals you will need to serve. This will include the parents, guardians, and any custodians of the child(ren). You may also need a copy for Child Protective Services, if ordered by the Court to provide one to them. You will need to either pick up the copies or provide a 9 inch x 12 inch, self-addressed, stamped envelope for them to be mailed to you.

The Clerk will assign a case number that begins with "JD", and a Judicial Officer will review the document. This process will take more than a day. If you believe the matter is an emergency situation and you are requesting some immediate action by the Court, tell the Clerk. Even in an emergency situation, it may not be possible for you to personally wait for the Court's decision.

If the Judicial Officer decides that the Petition meets all legal requirements, a hearing will be scheduled **within 21 days** of the date of the filing of the Petition.

The Court will provide you one free copy of the Judicial Officer's **signed Order** concerning the Dependency Petition. Your copy of this Order is very important to you in completing the next major step of the dependency process - - Service of Process.

STEP 4: SERVICE OF PROCESS. Service of Process means letting the parents and anyone else

entitled to know that you have filed the Dependency Petition, and the Court hearing has been set. **A child will not be made a permanent ward of the court until service is complete.**

Service of Process means providing a copy of the Dependency Petition, Notice of Hearing and Order to the parents or guardian of the child. You do not have to serve the Juvenile Cover Sheet. **You must provide service at least five (5) calendar days prior to the hearing.**

Follow the instructions in the Self-Service Center Packet entitled Service of Process regarding the type of service that applies to your case: 1) You know where the other party lives in the State of Arizona; 2) You know where the other party lives in the United States, but not in Arizona; or 3) You don't know where the other party lives and you have tried to find them.

STEP 5: ATTEND THE COURT HEARING. Once these steps have been completed, you must attend the court hearing on the date given to you in the Notice of Hearing.

If you need a language interpreter for the court hearing, please contact the Juvenile Court Interpreter's Office at 602-506-4086 if the hearing is at the Durango facility or 602-506-2653 if the hearing is at the Southeast facility in Mesa.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION. If you still have questions about filing a Dependency Petition, you should ask a lawyer for legal advice.

- You can find a lawyer by looking under "ATTORNEYS" in the Yellow Pages.
- You may also contact the Lawyer Referral Service of the Maricopa County Bar Association. Their telephone number is 602-257-4434. You should request an appointment with an attorney who handles Juvenile Court dependency matters. There is a fee of \$35.00 for a half-hour consultation.
- The Self-Service Centers have a list of lawyers who can give you legal advice and who can help you on a task-by-task basis for a fee, and a list of court-approved mediators as well. You may view the lists at the Self-Service Centers, or on the Superior Court website at:
www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/SuperiorCourt/Self-ServiceCenter/LawyersAndMediators/
- You may be able to qualify for a free attorney consultation through the Volunteer Lawyers Program. This is based on your income. You may call 602-258-3434, ext. 1 for a phone eligibility interview.