

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

PROCEDURES: HOW TO FILE A DEPENDENCY PETITION

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

STEP 1: Prepare the Court Papers. Complete the enclosed **Dependency Coversheet, 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: File your Court papers with the Correct Juvenile Court Facility.

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

B. **File papers with the Clerk of Court, Juvenile Division.** Cases are assigned to a facility 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 home, at the time of the filing of the Dependency Petition. You can present your documents for filing at either location, however, you are encouraged to take subsequent documents to the assigned facility for faster processing.

Durango Facility
3131 W Durango Street
Phoenix, AZ 85009

Southeast Facility
1810 S Lewis Street
Mesa, AZ 85210

C. You must present the original **Dependency Coversheet, 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* (to give notice of this court case as required by law – see STEP 3, below). 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 may take more than a day. If the Judicial Officer decides that the Petition meets all legal requirements, a hearing will be scheduled soon.

The Court will provide you one free certified copy of the Judicial Officer's **signed Order** concerning the Dependency Petition. Your copy of this Order is very important and may contain Orders making the child(ren) a temporary ward of the Court, may establish who has physical custody, may make other orders, and is needed for completing the next major step of the dependency process - - *Service of Process*.

STEP 3: SERVICE OF PROCESS. Service of Process means notifying 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 *Findings & Temporary Order Regarding Dependency Petition* to the parents or guardian of the child. You do not have to serve the Dependency Coversheet. **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 Court Papers” 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 4: ATTEND THE COURT HEARING. Once these steps have been completed, you must attend the court hearings on the dates 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.

IF YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT FILING A DEPENDENCY PETITION:

- You may contact the *Juvenile Court Guides* at **602-506 5903** (Durango) or **602-506-4886** (Mesa) for further assistance including scheduling a (no cost) appointment with the Juvenile Legal Assistance Program (JLAP) if you are seeking legal advice.
- 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.
- Ask a lawyer for legal advice.