

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

PROCEDURES: HOW TO FILE A DEPENDENCY PETITION

STEP 1: PREPARE the Court Papers. Complete the enclosed forms: **Dependency Coversheet, Dependency Petition** and the **Notice of Hearing**.

- Check your work to make sure you finished each section of these forms.
- Assemble the forms into one original set.
- Photocopy the original set. (You will then have 1 original set + 1 photocopy.)

STEP 2: TAKE the Court papers to the Correct Juvenile Court location.

How to find the correct Juvenile Court location: Your case will be assigned to a location based on the zip code of the **residence of the children's custodial parent** of at the time the children are removed from the home, or if not removed from home, at the time of the filing of the Dependency Petition.

- You may take your documents to either location *at first*. However, the court clerk will inform you the location you should deliver later case documents for faster processing.

Durango (Juvenile) Facility
3131 W Durango Street
Phoenix, AZ 85009

Southeast (Juvenile) Facility
1810 S Lewis Street
Mesa, AZ 85210

STEP 3: FILE the ORIGINAL set and the PHOTOCOPIED set.

Give the Clerk the original set of forms: **Dependency Coversheet, Dependency Petition** and **Notice of Hearing**, *plus* one copy of each of these documents to the Clerk.

- **NO \$ Fee.** There is no charge to file a Dependency Petition.
- While you are at the filing counter, the Clerk will assign a case number that begins with "JD," and give your forms to a Judicial Officer. The Judicial Officer will review the document, which may take more than a day.
- **Mail or Pick up:** After processing the case, the Clerk will give you back your photocopied set of forms with your case number. You will need to either pick up the photocopied set of forms or provide a 9 inch x 12 inch, self-addressed, stamped envelope for the set to be mailed to you.
- Use the returned set of forms to make other sets of forms required in the next step (Service).
- If the Judicial Officer decides that the Petition meets all legal requirements, a hearing will be scheduled.

STEP 4: PHOTOCOPY the set of forms.

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. It may contain Orders making the children a temporary ward of the Court, may establish who has physical custody, may make other orders, and is needed for photocopying and completing the next major step of the dependency process - - *Service of Process*.

For the next step, use the Certified copy of the Judicial Officer's signed Order to make photocopies for the mother, father and/or guardian of the children.

STEP 5: SERVICE OF PROCESS. Service of Process means you are:

- notifying the parents and anyone else entitled to know that you have filed the Dependency Petition, and the Court hearing has been set; and
- 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, (Remember, do not photocopy or serve the Dependency Coversheet.) and
- **Delivering service at least five (5) calendar days before the day of 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: The type of service you choose depends upon your knowledge about where the parties live:

- 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.

- **NOTE: A child will not be made a permanent ward of the court until service is complete.**

STEP 6: ATTEND THE COURT HEARING. Once you complete the above steps, you must attend the court hearing(s) on the date(s) the court gave 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 for a half-hour consultation.
- Ask a lawyer for legal advice.