

PARENTAGE/CUSTODY

STEP 1 Complete the Domestic Relations Information Sheet, Petition to Establish Parentage and Summons. Complete the caption only for the Order for Mediation, and Order to Produce Discovery for Child Support and Interim Allocation Hearings. The Petition needs to be notarized. There are several notary publics located in the Courthouse. If applicable, complete the Wage Withholding Order.

STEP 2 Go to the Self Help Center located on the first floor to obtain a date for the Order to Produce Discovery for Child Support and Interim Allocation Hearings and the Order for Mediation. Proceed to the judge's office for a signature on both of these documents. Judge Raymond Ortiz and Judge Barbara Vigil are located on the second floor. Judge Daniel Sanchez is located on the first floor.

STEP 3 You will need the original and two copies of all documents you have completed. If you fill out the documents at the Courthouse, you can get copies made in the Clerk's Office for 35 cents per page.

STEP 4 You will then file your documents with the Clerk's Office on the first floor of the Courthouse. **There is a filing fee of \$137.00** which is required to open your parentage case. The Clerk's Office only accepts cash, cashiers check or money order. IF you cannot afford to pay the fee you may file a Motion and Affidavit for Free Process.

STEP 5 When you file your documents the Clerk's Office will assign your parentage case a judge and a case number. The Clerk's Office will keep the original documents for the Court file. Two endorsed (stamped) copies of the documents which have been filed will be returned to you. You will keep a copy for your records and serve a copy on the other party.

STEP 6 Someone over the age of 18 and not involved with the case, or a law enforcement officer, must serve the other party with a copy of the all the endorsed documents you received from the Clerk's Office. It is important that they file a return of service with the Clerk's Office. This is proof that the other party has been served.

STEP 7 Before a Final Decree can be entered, the parties must develop and file a **Parenting Plan** and complete and file a **Child Support Worksheet**. A Parenting Plan form is available in your Parentage Packet. You can ask the Self Help Center for the Child Support Guidelines and Worksheet or you can access the worksheet online at www.legalfacs.org or at the Child Support Enforcement Division's website: www.hsd.state.nm/csed/guidelines.

STEP 8 When all the issues regarding the case are resolved, you may **submit** endorsed copies of the **Parenting Plan** and **Child Support Worksheet** along with the **Final Decree** to the judge assigned to your case. The judge will then review your documents. If your documents have been properly completed, and the judge does not see a problem, the judge will sign your Final Decree. If there is a problem, the judge may schedule a hearing to resolve it.

STEP 9 File your Final Decree with the Clerk's Office. **It is very important that you do not leave the building without filing the Final Decree.** This document will close your case. In some cases a certified copy of your Final Decree may be needed. The Clerk's Office will certify your documents for a fee of \$1.50 per certification.