

Mediation	Collaborative Law	Litigation
Process may begin before pleadings are filed with the court: pleadings are filed only after settlement is reached. Mediation may also be court-referred if the litigation has been initiated.	Process begins before pleadings are filed with the court; pleadings are filed only after settlement is reached.	Process begins with the filing of pleadings with the court.
Timing of the process is controlled by the parties unless court-referred. Court events may continue to be scheduled, if court referred.	Timing of the process is controlled by the parties.	Timing of the process is controlled by the court.
Spouses may or may not be represented during the mediation process; one spouse must engage an attorney after settlement reached to draft Agreement.	Each spouse is represented by an attorney throughout negotiation of settlement.	Each spouse is represented by an attorney in negotiating settlement and in court applications, if any.
Both spouses meet with one mediator to negotiate settlement; attorneys need not be present during mediation.	Spouses and attorneys meet in 4-way meetings to negotiate settlement; attorneys are present with clients during negotiation.	Spouses and attorneys engage in negotiating settlement; attorneys are present with clients throughout process.
“Discovery” is informal and conducted in the process of mediation.	“Discovery” is informal and conducted in the process of negotiating settlement.	Formal discovery is conducted pursuant to the Court Rules.
May involve court events or court orders.	No court event until Agreement is reached or process fails.	Multiple court events.

This is a brief outline. Your particular situation may need further analysis. Speak to your attorney as to your questions and concerns.