

# King County Bar Association

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## Family Law Mentor Program

The Family Law Mentor Program facilitates the representation of low-income clients in contested dissolution of marriage or parentage proceedings where the children's safety is an issue. The program assigns inexperienced or non-family law attorneys (Mentees) to an experienced family law attorney (Mentor) who provides initial training and continues to assist each Mentee throughout the case. Each Mentee attends the training and represents one client on a *pro bono* basis.

The Mentor Program training offers two "nuts and bolts of family law" workshops, as well as a Program Manual covering legal and procedural issues, information about domestic violence and other problems facing clients, and lists of community resources. The program also provides a computer disk containing the required family law forms. Mentees receive 6 CLE credits [5.25 general and .75 ethics], free of charge, for their attendance at the workshops and *pro bono* representation of one of the clients. Under a new rule enacted in 2000, Mentees can also receive up to four additional hours of CLE credit for time spent representing the client.

The first workshop, which usually runs from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on a Tuesday, covers the program's procedures, an overview of family law, and the steps involved in processing family law cases. At the second workshop a week or two later, the Mentor and Mentees review case summaries of the available clients and decide which case each Mentee will take. Clients arrive for their first meeting with individual attorneys at 5:30. After approximately one hour, Mentees and the Mentor regroup to debrief and to discuss each attorney's next steps. After that, the Mentor attorney will be available for guidance and advice to the Mentees as they complete the necessary pleadings and strategize their cases. The amount of contact with the Mentor will depend on the needs and the requirements of the case. The KCBA Managing Attorney serves as a back up if the mentor is on vacation, in trial, or temporarily unavailable.

Many new attorneys represent their first client through the Family Law Mentor Program and continue to use the skills they acquired through the program long after their cases are completed. Some Mentee attorneys continue to supplement their practices with the occasional *pro bono* service to an indigent client in order to help make legal services available to the most vulnerable members of our community, who would otherwise be without representation.

For an application or for more information, contact Kimberly Todaro, Family Law Mentor Program Managing Attorney, at (206) 267-7020 or [kimlt@kcba.org](mailto:kimlt@kcba.org).

