

598.16 Conciliation — domestic relations divisions.

1. A majority of the judges in any judicial district, with the cooperation of any county board of supervisors in the district, may establish a domestic relations division of the district court of the county where the board is located. The division shall offer counseling and related services to persons before the court.

2. Except as provided in subsection 7, upon the application of the petitioner in the petition or by the respondent in the responsive pleading thereto or, within twenty days of appointment, of an attorney appointed under section 598.12, the court shall require the parties to participate in conciliation efforts for a period of sixty days from the issuance of an order setting forth the conciliation procedure and the conciliator.

3. At any time upon its own motion or upon the application of a party the court may require the parties to participate in conciliation efforts for sixty days or less following the issuance of such an order.

4. Every order for conciliation shall require the conciliator to file a written report by a date certain which shall state the conciliation procedures undertaken and such other matters as may have been required by the court. The report shall be a part of the record unless otherwise ordered by the court. Such conciliation procedure may include but is not limited to referrals to the domestic relations division of the court, if established, public or private marriage counselors, family service agencies, community health centers, physicians and clergy.

5. The costs of conciliation procedures shall be paid in full or in part by the parties and taxed as court costs; however, if the court determines that the parties will be unable to pay the costs without prejudicing their financial ability to provide themselves and any minor children with economic necessities, the costs may be paid in full or in part by the county.

6. Persons providing counseling and other services pursuant to this section are not court employees, but are subject to court supervision.

7. Upon application, the court shall grant a waiver from the requirements of this section if a party demonstrates that a history of domestic abuse, as defined in section 236.2, exists. In determining whether a history of domestic abuse exists, the court's consideration shall include but is not limited to commencement of an action pursuant to section 236.3, the issuance of a protective order against a party or the issuance of a court order or consent agreement pursuant to section 236.5, the issuance of an emergency order pursuant to section 236.6, the holding of a party in contempt pursuant to section 664A.7, the response of a peace officer to the scene of alleged domestic abuse or the arrest of a party following response to a report of alleged domestic abuse, or a conviction for domestic abuse assault pursuant to section 708.2A.

[C71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §598.16]

83 Acts, ch 123, §194, 209; 83 Acts, ch 186, §10110, 10201; 93 Acts, ch 54, §11; 2007 Acts, ch 180, §1

Referred to in §331.424, 598.5, 602.11101