

# STAGES 4 AND 5 : EARLY SETTLEMENT AND ECONOMIC MEDIATION

The court schedules a date for **Early Settlement Panel (ESP)**, where two or three (depending on the county) volunteer attorneys serve as panelists and make recommendations for settlement of financial issues. The parties submit settlement proposals with Case Information Statements prior to the ESP and attend with their attorneys, who will present the case to the panelists.

**WAS FINAL SETTLEMENT REACHED AT ESP?**

**YES**

**NO**

**What if we settle at ESP?**

**IS THERE A WRITTEN AND SIGNED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT?**

**YES**

**NO**

The parties will appear before a judge, after the **ESP** panel, for the uncontested hearing with their attorneys.

The parties will leave the courthouse that day with a final **Judgment of Divorce**.

After **ESP**, the parties and their attorneys will check in with the judge assigned to their case to advise that a settlement has been reached but a formal agreement still needs to be prepared.

Once the agreement is finalized and signed by both parties and their attorneys, a court date is scheduled for an uncontested hearing before the judge to obtain a final **Judgment of Divorce**.

A settlement agreement will be prepared and *signed* by both parties and their attorneys.

A court date will be scheduled for an uncontested hearing before the judge and a final **Judgment of Divorce** will be issued.

**What if we don't settle at ESP?**

If settlement is not reached, the court will mandate that the parties attend economic mediation. The attorneys will select an economic mediator from the approved list before leaving the courthouse.

**How long does court-ordered economic mediation take?**

**Court-Ordered Economic Mediation** - The first two hours of the mediator's time are **FREE**, consisting of one hour preparation time and one hour meeting time. After the first two hours, the parties may discontinue the process or continue at the mediator's hourly rate, with payment to be made by the parties.

**WAS ECONOMIC MEDIATION SUCCESSFUL?**

**YES**

**NO**

**ARE THE CHILD RELATED ISSUES ALSO RESOLVED?**

**YES**

**NO**

A second **Case Management Conference** may be conducted by the judge after close of discovery where the case is on Priority and Complex Tracks, or at the discretion of the Court in Standard and Expedited matters.

**The New Jersey Divorce Process has 7 Stages.**

This is Stage 4 and 5. To get more information on all stages go to: <http://www.wlg.com/divorce-roadmap>



Divorce is never easy. Retaining the right legal representation can make a real difference. Weinberger Divorce & Family Law Group is solely focused on New Jersey divorce and family law, making us uniquely qualified to understand the challenges you are facing, as well as the intricate rules and protocols of family mediation.

For a consultation, call us at (888) 888-0919.