

DIVORCE RESOLUTION SERVICES

Arbitration, Mediation & Collaborative Representation

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Understanding Limited Assistance Representation

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If you are facing divorce, you may be feeling a lot of uncertainty. If you are also having financial difficulties, you may feel more uncertainty. This article is intended to provide information and resources to help you understand a different alternative when facing divorce; an alternative that may give you more certainty.

What is Limited Assistance Representation (LAR)?

Limited Assistance Representation allows a client to hire an attorney to help with some, but not all, of a client's divorce proceedings. In a written agreement, the client and attorney outline exactly what the attorney will do. For example:

- Limited Assistance for a Court Appearance: This allows the client to hire an attorney to go to court and "appear" for the client, one appearance at a time, for example, appear at a Pre-Trial Conference.
- Limited Assistance for a Service: This allows the client to hire an attorney for one type of service, for example, to review a separation agreement.
- Limited Assistance for Document Preparation: this allows the client to hire an attorney to prepare a document to be filed with the court, for example, a Pre-Trial Memorandum.
- Limited Assistance for Help in Negotiating: This allows the client and attorney to focus on those issues and approaches that will most likely achieve settlement.

Benefits of Limited Assistance Representation:

- Limited Assistance Representation is helpful for those whose financial restrictions keep them from hiring an attorney for the entire divorce process. With Limited Assistance, you only pay for the services you need.
- Limited Assistance Representation allows a client to hire an attorney for "game changing" events such as the Pre-Trial Conference with the judge

when an attorney's experience can make a difference in the outcome of the Conference.

For whom is Limited Assistance Representation Appropriate?

- Limited Assistance Representation is appropriate for those who do not wish to represent themselves and cannot hire an attorney for the entire case, but need representation for a specific matter.
- Limited Assistance Representation is appropriate for persons who feel comfortable taking on certain responsibilities, for example, the preparation of the Financial Statement and the gathering, organizing and producing of financial records.
- Limited Assistance Representation is appropriate for a pending court matter or a matter soon to be filed with the court.

Important Considerations:

- Only Qualified attorneys may provide Limited Assistance Representation services. To see if an attorney has been Qualified, go to <http://www.mass.gov/courts/programs/legal-assistance/pfc-lar-attorneys-lc.html>
- Under the law people who represent themselves are not entitled to special considerations or leniency. This is important because many people believe that if they represent themselves the judge must "go easy" on them.

MORE INFORMATION:

- <http://www.mass.gov/courts/programs/legal-assistance/lar-gen.html>

Anthony C. Adamopoulos has over 25 years of divorce practice experience and is a qualified Limited Assistance Representation attorney. He is a graduate of: The Center for Dispute Settlement, Washington, D.C. where he received Advanced Mediation Training and the Harvard Law School Program of Instruction for Lawyers – Mediation Workshop and Negotiation Workshop. He has received specialized arbitration training from the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, the American Arbitration Association and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. He is founding member and former director of the Massachusetts Collaborative Law Council.

This article is not intended as professional advice and should not be construed as such.