

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRIEVANCE FORM

The friend of the court grievance procedure is to be used if you have a complaint regarding the actions of an employee or office operations of the friend of the court office. **A judge's or referee's decision and an order of the court are not issues to be handled through the grievance procedure.**

A grievance shall first be filed in writing with the friend of the court. If you are not satisfied with the decision of the friend of the court, you may file a further grievance, in writing, with the chief judge.

The friend of the court/chief judge will investigate and respond to your grievance in a reasonable period of time. If the response cannot be given within 30 days, you will be given a reason why the response is not possible within that time.

You may also file a grievance regarding friend of the court office operations with your local Citizen Advisory Committee at any time during the proceedings. The Citizen Advisory Committee cannot consider grievances about office employees or a court or office decision or recommendation regarding a specific case. The Citizen Advisory Committee cannot correct problems it discovers. Instead, it will advise the friend of the court, the court, or the county board of the problems in its discretion.

When filling out this grievance form, you should type or press firmly to assure all copies are readable. In the alternative, you may photocopy the appropriate number of copies of the completed form. You must also:

1. Provide the names and addresses of the parties in the court case. This will assist the friend of the court, chief judge, or Citizen Advisory Committee in identifying your case.
2. Name of the county where your domestic relations case is located.
3. Check the appropriate box for the type of complaint (grievance).
4. State your complaint, providing specific details, dates, names, and other important information.
5. Mail or deliver the completed form to the friend of the court, the chief judge's office, or the Citizen Advisory Committee office, whichever is appropriate. Keep the last copy (third copy) for your records.

Release of Information:

MCR 3.218(B) states: A party, third-party custodian, guardian, guardian ad litem or counsel for a minor, lawyer-guardian ad litem, and an attorney of record must be given access to friend of the court records related to the case, other than confidential information.

MCR 3.218(C) states: A citizen advisory committee established under the friend of the court act, MCL 552.501 et seq.; MSA 25.176(1) et seq.: 1) shall be given access to a grievance filed with the friend of the court, and to information related to the case, other than confidential information; 2) may be given access to confidential information related to a grievance if the court so orders, upon clear demonstration by the committee that the information is necessary to the performance of its duties and that the release will not impair the rights of a party or the well-being of a child involved in the case.

"Confidential information" means any of the following: staff notes from investigations, mediation sessions, and settlement conferences; Family Independence Agency protective service reports; formal mediation records; communications from minors; friend of the court grievances filed by the opposing party and the responses; a party's address or any other information if release is prohibited by a court order; except as provided in MCR 3.219, any information for which a privilege could be claimed, or that was provided by a governmental agency, subject to the express written condition that it remain confidential; and all information classified as confidential by the laws and regulations of title IV, part D of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 651 et seq.

