

# No-Cost Collaborative Program (TCACP)

## No-Cost Collaborative Program

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### Custody and Parenting Time

Offered through the *Tompkins County Assigned Counsel Program (TCACP)*.

Qualified participants do not have to pay for their lawyers, and free access to Child Specialists may be available.

### Tell me more ...

At the beginning of the Collaborative Law Process each parent/guardian and their respective lawyers sign a Participation Agreement.

The agreement requires both parents/guardians to:

1. Exchange information openly and honestly so that each parent/guardian can make well-informed decisions.
2. Maintain confidentiality during the process, so that each parent/guardian can feel free to express his or her needs and concerns.
3. Strive to reach a written agreement on all issues and concerns outside of contested court proceedings.
4. Be represented by a Collaborative lawyer whose representation ends if either parent/guardian files or

restarts a contested court proceeding.

## How the Program Works:

- Each party (parent or guardian) who would like to participate in the No-Cost Collaborative Program must apply for – and qualify to receive – services through TCACP.
- Eligibility for the program is determined by meeting certain income and household guidelines.
- A petition involving Custody or Visitation is filed in Tompkins County Family Court.
- All parties must be willing to participate in the Collaborative Law Process.
- If the other party does not qualify for TCACP, the Collaborative Law Process may still be used, as long as the other parent/guardian hires a Collaborative lawyer, and all participants sign a Participation Agreement.
- There may be one court appearance at the beginning of the case where the Court will put the petition on ‘hold’ for a period of time so the parties can proceed using the Collaborative Law Process.

## How do I (We) enroll?

To see if you qualify to receive services through TCACP, fill out the [Assigned Counsel Application](#), and be sure to **check the box at Item 50**, indicating that you want a lawyer trained in Collaborative Law.

You can also go to the Tompkins County Courthouse at 320 N. Tioga St., (tel: 607-216-6640) or the Assigned Counsel Office at Center Ithaca, Suite 223, (tel: 607-272-7487) to fill out and submit the application.

Submit the completed application, either with a petition to Family Court, or directly to the Assigned Counsel Office.

If the other parent has already filed a court petition, you can still request a Collaborative lawyer when you submit your application for Assigned Counsel, and the court will inquire whether the other parent/guardian agrees to use the Collaborative Law Process.

## **Further Questions?**

You may send an email to: [inquiry@collab-law.com](mailto:inquiry@collab-law.com), or call 607-288-3099 to speak with an IACLP member.