

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, or call 607-288-3099 to speak with an IACLP member.