

MEMO

**TO: 3LT CBA SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**FROM: HELEN C. SHREVES, ESQ.**  
**RE: ALTERNATIVE FORUM**  
**DATE: AUGUST 28, 2015**

A proposal for an alternate forum for hearing disputed family law cases with the concept of an Administrative Law Judge or Magistrate for Small Claims Court::

A. The forum shall be based on the concept of Small Claims Court and bankruptcy court procedures, named Simplified Family Claims Court and will provide a hearing for disputes:

B. Procedures to Utilize Simplified Family Claims Court (SFCC):

1. Form completed to request SFCC with agreement of parties.
2. Concept based on knowledgeable family law lawyer.

C. Special Procedures in FCC:

1. No attorneys of record are allowed.
2. Parties may bring a support person to the hearing.
3. Due process followed with appropriate notices to parties.
4. Witnesses allowed with or without subpoena.
5. Forms will be prepared as in bankruptcy court with lists to check for pleadings, documents, exhibits.
6. Parties must submit Request for Hearing - form to complete.
7. All completed forms submitted 10 days prior to hearing.
8. Hearings scheduled for two hours maximum.
9. Parties are responsible for three hour cost on sliding scale.
10. Hearing officer issues arbitration award entered as an order of court.

B. Areas of disputes defined and/or exempted from process:

1. Any parental responsibility matters, except child support.
2. Completed Parenting Plan must be submitted.
3. Any issues regarding defined benefit plan, i.e., pensions.
4. Any business ownership requiring valuation.
5. Any asset which has a verifiable cash value allowed.
6. Division of personal property, except by agreement to alternate choice method