

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
CIVIL DIVISION**

**IN RE: ORDER PROMULGATING : ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO: 93
BUCKS COUNTY RULE OF :
CIVIL PROCEDURE 1915.11-1.1 :
PARENTING COORDINATION :**

ORDER

AND NOW, this day of April 2019, pursuant to Pa.R.C.P. No. 239, Bucks County Rule of Civil Procedure 1915.11-1.1, Parenting Coordination, is promulgated as follows:

B.C.R.C.P. No. 1915.11-1.1 *Parenting Coordination*

(a) Appointment of a Parenting Coordinator

- (1) If the parties agree on a Parenting Coordinator or if the Court deems one necessary, an order will be entered in accordance with Pa.R.Civ.P. 1915.22.
- (2) If the parties cannot agree on the selection of a Parenting Coordinator, the Court shall require each party to identify their choice(s) along with the hourly rate of each to all parties. If the parties cannot agree, the Court will select a Parenting Coordinator. The roster of the Court's approved Parenting Coordinators and their stated hourly rates shall be posted at <http://www.buckscounty.org>.
- (3) Any party seeking a pro bono appointment under section (d) below must file with the Prothonotary a Petition to Proceed *In Forma Pauperis* for the appointment of a Parenting Coordinator within three (3) days of the appointment order absent good cause shown. The *In Forma Pauperis* form can be found at <http://www.buckscounty.org>.

(b) Roster of Approved Parenting Coordinators

An attorney or mental health professional seeking to be included on the Bucks County Court's roster of qualified individuals to serve as a Parenting Coordinator shall submit an affidavit to the Administrative Family Court Judge or her/his designee together with the following:

- (1) An affidavit attesting the applicant has qualifications found in Pa.R.Civ.P. 1915.11-1;

- (2) An acknowledgment the applicant will follow the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Parenting Coordinator guidelines and has read the American Psychological Association (APA) Parenting Coordinator Guidelines; AFCC Parenting Coordinator guidelines are posted at <https://www.afccnet.org/Portals/0/AFCCGuidelinesforParentingcoordinationnew.pdf> and the APA Parenting Coordinator Guidelines are posted at <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/parenting-coordination.pdf>; and
- (3) An acknowledgment that for every two (2) fee generating Parenting Coordination assignments, he or she must accept one (1) pro bono assignment (up to 12 hours per pro bono case).

(c) Parenting Coordinator Recommendations

- (1) Parenting Coordinator shall file their Summary and Recommendations with the Prothonotary within two (2) days after the last communication with the parties on the issues in accordance with Pa.R.Civ.P. 1915.11-1 (f)(2).
- (2) Objections to Parenting Coordinator's Recommendation(s) and Petition for a Record Hearing.
 - a. A party objecting to the Recommendations must file with the Prothonotary an original and copy of their Objections and a Petition for a Record Hearing before the Court within five (5) days of service of the Summary and Recommendations together with a Proof of Service upon all parties and the Parenting Coordinator.
 - b. The Prothonotary shall promptly forward the original Objections and Petition to the Family Master's Office for assignment to the parties' Family Court Judge to promptly schedule a record hearing. If the matter is an emergency or time-sensitive, and the assigned Family Court Judge is not available, the matter will be assigned to the Emergency Custody Judge to conduct a record hearing.
- (3) Court Review of Parenting Coordinator's Recommendations.

If no objections to the Parenting Coordinator's Recommendation are filed with the Prothonotary within five days (5) of service of the Summary and Recommendation, the Prothonotary shall transmit the file to the Family Master's Office to be assigned to the appointing Judge, if available, within a reasonable time, otherwise to any Family Court Judge for review of the Recommendation in accordance with Pa.R.C.P. 1915.11-1(f)(4).

(d) Fees

Parties who request the appointment of a Parenting Coordinator or who are identified by the Court as benefiting from the appointment of a Parenting Coordinator shall pay the Parenting Coordinator as follows:

- (1) His or her hourly rate, which may be up to \$300.00 an hour;
 - (2) Absent good cause, each party shall pay up to \$500 as an initial retainer which may be reallocated as deemed appropriate by the Parenting Coordinator or the Court. See Pa.R.C.P. 1915.22(8).
 - (3) If a party is granted *In Forma Pauperis* status by the Court specifically for the appointment of a Parenting Coordinator, the Parenting Coordinator so appointed shall serve on a pro bono (no fee) basis, up to 12 hours.
 - (4) A Parenting Coordinator must accept one pro bono appointment for every two (2) fee generating appointments.
- (e) Bucks County, through its Administrative Family Court Judge, has entered into a 4 County Compact on Parenting Coordination with Philadelphia County, Delaware County and Chester County. The terms of that Compact are incorporated herein, and a copy is annexed hereto. Bucks County's participation in the Compact shall not be affected should any Compact County decline to participate.

This Rule shall take effect thirty (30) days from the date of publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

BY THE COURT:

WALLACE H. BATEMAN, JR., PRESIDENT JUDGE

PARENTING COORDINATION PROGRAM
FOUR COUNTY COMPACT
BUCKS, CHESTER, DELAWARE & PHILADELPHIA

An attorney or mental health professional seeking to be included on the roster of qualified individuals to serve as a Parenting Coordinator in a member County shall submit a letter to the Administrative Judge of the Family Division of one of the member Counties together with the following:

1. Completion of the approved Form Affidavit attesting the applicant has the qualifications as set forth in Pa.R.Civ.P. 1915.11-1(b) "*Qualifications of the Parenting Coordinator*".
2. The following criteria shall apply to the qualifications:
 - A. Five hours in the parenting coordination process since August 9, 2018; provided that at least 2 of the 5 hours must be specific to Pennsylvania parenting coordination practice and procedure;
 - B. Ten hours of family mediation training within the last 10 years (an applicant with 40 hours of mediation training beyond 10 years may satisfy this requirement by verifying the 40 hours of training and significant family mediation practice within the last 10 years);
 - C. Five hours of training in domestic violence within the past 2 years;
 - D. Verification of current professional liability insurance via copy of said policy's coversheet/declaration page (which includes the provision of parenting coordination services);
 - E. Acknowledgement of responsibility to accept pro bono assignments for every 2 paid assignments;
 - F. Verification of Pennsylvania Act 33 child abuse and Act 34 criminal history clearances within the past two (2) years via copies of same;
 - G. Acknowledgement that the applicant has read the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Parenting Coordination Guidelines and the American Psychological Association (APA) Parenting Coordination Guidelines.
AFCC and APA Parenting Coordinator Guidelines are posted at:
<https://www.afccnet.org/Portals/0/AFCCGuidelinesforParentingcoordinationnew.pdf>
<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/parenting-coordination.pdf>
3. Appointments for pro bono assignments shall be made on a rotating basis by each Court on the list maintained by that County. Each parenting coordinator must accept one (1) pro bono appointment for every two (2) fee-generating appointments in a county.

4. There shall be a twelve (12) hour maximum per year on each pro bono case assigned to a parenting coordinator.
5. Each Parenting Coordinator on the roster shall be required to notify the Court Administration of the applicable County, after they have received two fee generating cases in that County, in order to facilitate the appointment of a pro bono case. The failure to affirmatively report this information by a Parenting Coordinator or to accept a pro bono assignment may subject them to removal from the roster. If a Parenting Coordinator is removed from the roster of a member County for this purpose, they shall share this information with the other member counties.
6. Fees:
 - A. The hourly rate shall not exceed \$300.00 an hour subject to the following exceptions:
 - a. If the parties combined monthly net income exceeds the mandatory minimum set forth in the Support Guidelines at 1910/16-2(e)(2) (currently \$30,000 per month), the Court may adjust the hourly rate;
 - b. If a party is granted *In Forma Pauperis* (IFP) status by the Court for the parenting coordination process.
 - B. The maximum initial retainer that may be requested shall be \$1,000.
7. Upon being added to the roster of one member County, a parenting coordinator may be added to the roster of another member County by submitting a letter requesting same with a copy of the approval that was obtained from another member County.
8. A Judge appointing a parenting coordinator may be guided by the parties/counsel in the selection of a specific parenting coordinator from the County roster (and/or shall otherwise select one from the roster).
9. Each member County shall establish a Committee to review and consider complaints received about a parenting coordinator and shall recommend removal of a parenting coordinator from the roster of that County for good cause. All complaints received and dispositions of same shall be shared with the other member Counties.
10. The aforementioned review Committee shall consist of the following: Family Court Administrative Judge (or their designee); the Judge who appointed the parent coordinator at issue (or their designee); Court Administrator representative, one family law attorney (from the roster of parenting coordinators) and one mental health professional (from the roster of parenting coordinators).

FORM AFFIDAVIT ATTACHED

APPLICATION TO BE CONSIDERED FOR APPOINTMENT AS A PARENTING
COORDINATOR FOR BUCKS COUNTY

AFFIDAVIT - MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

I, _____, the undersigned applicant, hereby certify that I possess the minimum qualifications to serve as a Parenting Coordinator as established by Pa.R.C.P. 1915.11-1(b) and the 4 County Compact entered into by Philadelphia, Bucks, Delaware and Chester Counties, as follows:

1. _____ I have the following professional degree: _____
From (institution and date granted): _____
2. _____ I am licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a _____ . My license number is _____.
_____ My license is in good standing.
_____ I have never been subject to professional discipline. (If Applicant has been subject to discipline, provide details on separate sheet).
_____ I have _____ years of experience in dealing with families involved in child custody matters , as follows (or attach CV):

3. _____ I have obtained the special training required by the Rule, and have attached verification for each training:
_____ hours in the Parenting Coordination process, of which 2 or more hours were specific to Pennsylvania PC practice.
Date of training: _____
Provider: _____
_____ hours of Family mediation (or hours of non-specific mediation training and hours of Family Mediation conducted).
Date of training: _____
Provider: _____
_____ hours of Domestic Violence training.
Date of training: _____
Provider: _____
4. _____ I understand that to remain qualified as a Parenting Coordinator in each 2 year period after March 1, 2019, I must take a minimum of 10 additional continuing education credits, of which at least 2 must be on domestic violence.
5. _____ I maintain Professional Liability insurance of \$ _____, which coverage expressly covers me for serving as a Parenting

APPLICATION TO BE CONSIDERED FOR APPOINTMENT AS A PARENTING
COORDINATOR FOR BUCKS COUNTY

AFFIDAVIT - ATTORNEY

I, _____, the undersigned applicant, hereby certify that I possess the minimum qualifications to serve as a Parenting Coordinator as established by Pa.R.C.P. 1915.11-1(b) and the 4 County Compact entered into by Philadelphia, Bucks, Delaware and Chester Counties, as follows:

1. _____ I am licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. My Attorney ID number is _____.

_____ My license is in good standing.

_____ I have never been subject to attorney discipline. (If Applicant has been subject to discipline, provide details on separate sheet).

_____ I have practiced family law for ____ years, as follows (or attach CV):

2. _____ I have obtained the special training required by the Rule, and have attached verification for each training:

____ hours in the Parenting Coordination process, of which 2 or more hours were specific to Pennsylvania PC practice.

Date of training: _____

Provider: _____

____ hours of Family mediation (or hours of non-specific mediation training and hours of Family Mediation conducted).

Date of training: _____

Provider: _____

____ hours of Domestic Violence training.

Date of training: _____

Provider: _____

3. _____ I understand that to remain qualified as a Parenting Coordinator in each 2 year period after March 1, 2019, I must take a minimum of 10 additional continuing education credits, of which at least 2 must be on domestic violence.

4. _____ I maintain Professional Liability insurance of \$_____, which coverage expressly covers me for serving as a Parenting Coordinator. The Declaration page showing the foregoing is attached.

