

GR 27
COURTHOUSE FACILITATORS

(a) Generally. RCW 26.12.240 and RCW 11.130.165 allow counties to create a Courthouse Facilitator Program to provide basic services to self-represented persons in family law and guardianship cases. This rule applies only to Courthouse Facilitator Programs created pursuant to RCW 26.12.240 or RCW 11.130.165.

(b) The Washington State Supreme Court shall create a Courthouse Facilitator Advisory Committee supported by the Administrative Office of the Courts to establish minimum qualifications; develop and administer a curriculum of initial and ongoing training requirements; and address legal, ethical, and access-related issues (including access for persons with disabilities, language barriers, and others who experience barriers that limit their ability to effectively participate in legal proceedings) for Courthouse Facilitators. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall assist counties in administering Courthouse Facilitator Programs and update the training curriculum biennially.

(c) Definitions. For the purpose of this rule, the following definitions apply:

(1) Basic Services include but are not limited to:

(A) Referrals: Making referrals to legal and social service resources, including legal aid, pro bono, lawyer referrals, alternate dispute resolution programs, and other appropriate resources, including online resources where relevant forms and instructions can be obtained.

(B) Access and Accessibility: Assisting individuals in the preparation of forms and materials for the waiver of filing fees and surcharges (GR 34), requests for reasonable accommodations (GR 33), and the appointment of interpreters for individuals who are Deaf; hard of hearing; or who do not speak, read, or write English proficiently. Additionally, educating individuals about available language and accessibility resources. Explanation and instruction regarding court rules and procedures related to use of technology, including but not limited to remote or virtual court appearance and e-filing; assistance with remote/virtual appearance at hearings to assist the court and self-represented persons.

(C) Court Procedures: Assisting self-represented persons to identify and understand how basic court rules, procedures, and logistics apply to their cases, including how to comply with requirements for starting the case, when and how to file and serve motions and other necessary documents, scheduling hearings, authenticating and presenting documents, preserving and appealing decisions, discovery rules and options, obtaining and enforcing judgements or other final orders (including trial setting and related rules) and other procedures relevant to their cases.

(D) Completion of Forms: Explaining legal terms, assisting self-represented persons to identify, select, and complete forms that have been approved by the court, Clerk's Office, or the Administrative Office of the Courts, and reviewing documents to determine whether the forms have been properly completed and procedural requirements satisfied. This includes assisting self-represented persons to calculate child support using financial information they provide on required forms.

(E) Assisting with Proceedings Under Directions of the Court: Attendance at hearings to assist the court where allowed by local practice; assistance with preparation of court orders under the direction of the court.

(2) A **Courthouse Facilitator** is an individual who has met or exceeded the minimum qualifications and completed the curriculum developed by the Courthouse Facilitator Advisory Committee and provides basic services in family law or guardianship cases in a Superior Court.

(3) **Family Law cases** refer to those initiated under Title 26 RCW and include, but are not limited to: divorce, invalidity, and legal separation; establishment of parentage, de facto parentage, parenting plan, and child support; modification of child support, parenting plan, and previously entered nonparental custody orders; and relative (nonparent) visitation.

(4) **Guardianship cases** include adult, minor, and veteran guardianship cases filed under chapters 11.90, 11.130, and 73.36 RCW.

(5) **Protection Order cases** include cases filed under Chapter 7.105 RCW.

(d) No attorney-client relationship or privilege is created, by implication or by inference, between a Courthouse Facilitator providing basic services under this rule and the users (self-represented persons) of Courthouse Facilitator Program services.

(e) Courthouse Facilitators providing basic services under this rule are not engaged in the unauthorized practice of law. Upon a Courthouse Facilitator's voluntary or involuntary termination from a Courthouse Facilitator Program, that person is no longer a Courthouse Facilitator providing services pursuant to RCW 26.12.240, 11.130.165, or this rule.

(f) Courthouse Facilitators shall, whenever reasonably practical, obtain a written and signed disclaimer of attorney-client relationship, attorney-client confidentiality and representation from each self-represented person utilizing the services of the Courthouse Facilitator. The prescribed disclaimer shall be in the format outlined in the Courthouse Facilitator Manual.

(g) Courthouse Facilitators shall ensure their services are meaningfully available to persons with disabilities and persons for whom English is not their primary language. Consistent with the general expectations outlined in GR 33, Courthouse Facilitators shall, upon request, make reasonable accommodations to enable persons with disabilities to effectively access services from the Courthouse Facilitator. Courthouse Facilitators shall coordinate interpreter services to enable persons for whom English is not a primary language and persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing to effectively access services from the Courthouse Facilitator.

[Adopted effective September 1, 2002; Amended effective August 2, 2016; July 27, 2021; September 1, 2025.]