

# It pays to choose mediation

by Laura Briedis

As a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst and someone who has personally gone through a divorce, Leah Villalobos is uniquely qualified to help others with this life transition. In addition to conducting webinars and writing online blogs, she shares her wealth of knowledge with *Mimi* readers in a monthly column.

This month she outlines the benefits of going through mediation rather than litigating a divorce.

“The biggest advantage of mediation is that you and your soon-to-be-ex-spouse make your own decisions about your family and your finances—rather than being told what to do in a courtroom,” explains Leah, who is the co-chair for The Center for Principled Family Advocacy Mediation Practice Group. “As a mediator, I am trained to facilitate the conversation and balance the dynamic between couples to come up with a mutually beneficial agreement that is in the best interest of all involved.”

Other benefits of mediation include:

- **Less costly.** When working through a mediator, you avoid court costs and two separate attorney fees.



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- **Time saving.**

The process is more streamlined when you don't have two attorneys going back and forth with questions and responses.

- **Improved future relations.** If you work together to come up with a mutual agreement, it will be better for the relationship after the divorce, particularly if there are children involved.

- **Less stress.** Compared to litigation, mediation is not as adversarial a process. “The feedback I have received from divorcing couples going through mediation is that they were significantly more confident in making their financial decisions after meeting with me,” comments Leah, who notes she can do virtual mediations so couples don't have to be in the same room together.

*To learn more about mediation, contact Great Lakes Divorce Financial Solutions to schedule a no-cost, 30-minute phone consultation at 216-328-2113 or visit [GreatLakesDFS.com](http://GreatLakesDFS.com) for more information.*