

The Traditional Purposes and Responsibilities of Courts

1. To do justice in individual cases
2. To appear to do justice in individual cases
3. To provide a forum for the resolution of legal disputes
4. To protect individuals from the arbitrary use of government power
5. To provide a formal record of legal status
6. To deter criminal behavior
7. To rehabilitate persons convicted of crime
8. To separate convicted persons from society

The Mission of the Chesterfield Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

The Chesterfield Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court's mission is to provide a forum for neutral and impartial dispute resolution, while providing all persons equal access to justice, and inspiring public trust and confidence in the judicial system through transparency and accountability in all that we do.



The Clerk's Office exists to support and carry out the Court's mission and administration in an effective and efficient manner through a highly competent workforce.

The Mission of the Supreme Court of Virginia

To provide an independent, accessible, responsive forum for the just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect all rights and liberties guaranteed by the United States and Virginia Constitutions.

The ordinary administration of criminal and civil justice contributes, more than any other circumstance, to impressing upon the minds of the people affection, esteem, and reverence towards the government. When they are impartial and independent, courts earn public trust and confidence as they balance needs for social order and individual freedom in the ordinary administration of criminal and civil justice.

—Alexander Hamilton, New York Delegate,
The Federalist No. 17

Important Numbers

Chesterfield Community Services Board	804.275.0005
Chesterfield Dept. of Social Services (DSS)	804.748-1100
Chesterfield Mental Health	804.748.1227
Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA)	804.744.1755
Court Service Unit (CSU)/Intake	804.748.1372
CPS After Hours	1.800.552.7096
Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE)	1.800.468.8894
Legal Aid	804.648.1012
Virginia Dept. of Social Services (VDSS)	804.692-1900

Helpful online resources

<http://selfhelp.vacourts.gov/>

and

<https://virginia.freelegalanswers.org/>

CUSTODY, VISITATION, AND SUPPORT

I've filed for
Custody,
Visitation, or
Child
Support....
Now What?

Chesterfield Juvenile
and Domestic Relations
District Court



7000 Lucy Corr Boulevard
Chesterfield, VA 23832

804.748.1379 (Phone)

804.717.6043 (Fax)

<http://www.chesterfield.gov/idrcourt/>

Within 30 days

- **The Clerk's Office** completes your physical and electronic court file, ensures your written request (motion or petition) is scheduled on the correct docket, refers your request for available services such as an interpreter or mediation, and creates appropriate notices and summons for delivery by the Sheriff's Office.
- **The Sheriff's Office** reviews the notices and summons to all necessary parties, schedules them for delivery, and completes a report of all attempts to provide a copy of the notices to the parties. That report is sent to the Court.

What if I don't know where someone lives? The law requires proper notice to necessary parties (such as the other parent) before a Judge can consider your request. Sometimes a Judge will allow the notice to be published in a newspaper or at the Court's website. You may be financially responsible for any costs. Online Publications may be found at the Court's website at <http://www.chesterfield.gov>

- **The Court's Mediation Provider, CMG Foundation,** will contact you if your request is appropriate for mediation. If you reach an agreement in mediation, you will not need to appear for your court date, and the Clerk's Office will mail you a copy of your Order.

Within 60-90 days

- **The Court (Judge)** will hold a brief hearing if all parties received proper notice to determine whether an agreement has been reached, offer mediation again, hear the dispute if time allows (15 minutes is scheduled), or schedule another hearing in order to allow more time for everyone to be heard (a "contested" hearing). If another hearing is scheduled then the Court may appoint a **GAL (Guardian ad litem)** to represent your child's interests, require attendance of a parent education seminar, and mandate completion of a mental health and/or substance abuse assessment.
- Completion of a **Parenting Education Seminar** is required by law when there is dispute regarding custody, visitation or support. For a list of qualified courses see <http://webdev.courts.state.va.us/cgi-bin/parented/providers.cgi/g?041J>
- **GAL's** are paid by the Commonwealth of Virginia. However, the Judge may determine that you must reimburse the Commonwealth for the fee paid to the GAL after considering the validity of the request, your income, and other factors.



Within 30-90 days of your First Hearing

- **The Court** will schedule a hearing for up to two hours if you are unable to come to an agreement. Continuances are rarely permitted. Everyone, lawyers and parties, are expected to be prepared to present information in support of or in response to the written requests (petition or motion) scheduled to be addressed by the Court. It is your responsibility to provide the Court with information which may come from a person testifying under oath or from some other means, such as documents. If a GAL was appointed, then you will be requested to complete a form about your individual financial circumstances. After the information is presented by the parties and GAL, the Judge will state his or her decision and explain the reasons for the decision. This decision will also be stated in a written Order. You will receive a copy either at the conclusion of the hearing or later by mail.
- **An appeal of the Court's final decision** must be requested, or "noted", within ten days from the date the Order is signed. A bond, or guarantee of receipt of payment, may be required for appeals of support decisions.

