
Cecilia Powers, LCSW-S
Court Ordered Child Custody and Adoption Evaluations

EVALUATION FEES

One of the ways in which evaluators maintain neutrality and ethical practice is by assuring that fee payment is not contingent on a particular recommendation or outcome. As such, all evaluation fees are due in advance as a refundable retainer.

CHILD CUSTODY EVALUATION:

A completed child custody evaluation is billed at a flat base rate as noted below. This base rate covers interviews of up to five persons (adults and/or children) involved in the case. There is an additional charge per party for each additional person to be interviewed beyond the first five.

The base rate also covers the collection of standard collateral information, review of basic documentation, and completion of a report to the Court. It does not cover review of depositions, review of Child Protective Services records, or other substantial records reviews. Such additional work is billed based on an hourly rate.

Base Rate (per party)	Additional Interview Charge (per party)	Standard Hourly Rate for Evaluations
\$1300.00	\$75.00	\$125.00

Should the case settle prior to completion of a report to the court, refunds will be issued based on actual time worked on the case, billed at the standard hourly rate. Unless otherwise specifically ordered by the Court, fees for services will be split between the parties. Additionally, each of the parties will be responsible for any fees for production of records or other information related to the evaluation. Generally, any adults or any children not involved in the litigation but living with the children in question must be interviewed as part of the evaluation. Additionally, in most cases, any long-term boyfriend, girlfriend, or fiancé of either of the parties will be interviewed as well. Who is interviewed and what documents are reviewed are decided solely at the evaluator's discretion.

Unanticipated circumstances may necessitate additional hours of service outside those estimated in the retainer. These include, but are not limited to: additional interviews; extensive telephone contact time; additional document review; any and all procedures to assess fresh allegations or issues which were not included in the original retainer estimate; and other case specific factors. Should costs rise above the retainer estimate, the attorneys will be notified, and the original retainer will be revised.

ADOPTION EVALUATION:

Uncontested adoption evaluations where there is already termination of parental rights (pre-placement, post-placement or combined) are billed at the following base rates:

Grandparent Adoption	Step-Parent Adoption	Non-Relative Adoption
\$650.00	\$650.00	\$1050.00

As with child custody evaluations, there are occasionally unusual circumstances that require additional fees. Assistance in completing the Health, Education, Social, and Genetic History (HSEGH) report for a non-relative adoption can be provided for an additional \$100 fee.

COURT APPEARANCES:

For any requested appearance, deposition, or participation in any type of settlement conference: \$250.00 per hour, with a minimum charge of three hours for personal appearances or a minimum charge of one hour for telephonic appearances. Such fees are due at least one week before the scheduled appearance. Please note: if an appearance request is received without a minimum of one-week advanced notice, there will be an additional \$250.00 express charge added to the total.

EXPEDITED EVALUATIONS:

I usually do not provide expedited evaluations. It generally takes several weeks for completion of paperwork, receiving background checks, and obtaining other collateral records. While interviews can be done concurrently, this is also a process. When this is combined with reviewing collateral information and writing reports, it can take several weeks. Due to the thoroughness of the evaluations, there is a surcharge for an expedited evaluation. If the evaluation is needed by a certain date, please bring that to my attention when services are initiated.

TRAVEL:

There is no additional fee for evaluations conducted in Grayson County. Travel fees are assessed on a case by case basis for Cooke County, Fannin County and Collin County. If any party lives outside of these counties, an additional travel fee may be charged. Travel time is charged per hour, rounded up to the nearest 15-minute increment, at half of the standard hourly rate.

For evaluations requiring airline or overnight travel, in addition to the standard rates, fees are charged for travel time and travel expenses. Travel time is charged per hour, rounded up to the nearest 15-minute increment, at half the standard hourly rate and is logged as any time spent from airport arrival to hotel and back again. Travel expenses include the full expense of the airfare, a hotel room, and a rental vehicle with fuel reimbursement or taxi fees. An additional base retainer will be calculated based on expected travel time and expenses and is due before any travel arrangements will be made.

Other Evaluation Related Services:

These will be determined on a case by case basis.