

Who Pays for Court-Appointed Lawyers?

If the court appoints a lawyer for you or your child:

- The court will pay for your lawyer and the child's lawyer;
and
- The court will ask you for information about your income and expenses to decide whether you can repay some or all of the cost of the lawyers.

Order for Financial Evaluation

- The court will order you to meet with a financial evaluation officer, who will review the information you give and figure out whether you can pay.
- The court will tell you **when** and **where** to go for your financial evaluation meeting.
- The court will not ask you to pay for any appointed lawyer if the judge dismisses the petition.
- **If you do not go to your financial evaluation, the financial evaluation officer will ask the court to order you to pay the full cost of the appointed lawyers.**

What Happens at the Financial Evaluation?

- Bring **all** the information you have about your income and expenses with you. If you did not already fill out a financial declaration form, the financial evaluation officer will probably ask you to do that.
- Tell the financial evaluation officer about any kinds of public assistance you receive. You may not have to pay the cost of the lawyers if your income is very low.
- Tell the financial evaluation officer if you **are reunifying** with your child or **have reunified** with your child **and** if payment would make it too hard for you to support your child.
- Ask the financial evaluation officer whether you might be allowed to pay less than the full cost or to pay a part of the cost every month in installments.
- **If the financial evaluation officer decides that you *can* pay** all or part of the cost of the lawyers, he or she will make a recommendation to the court. The financial evaluation officer will tell you what he or she plans to recommend.
- **If the financial evaluation officer decides that you *cannot* pay**, he or she will not make a recommendation to the court.

If you AGREE with the recommendation:

- You will be asked to fill out and sign a form telling the court that you agree.
- The financial evaluation officer will recommend that the court order you to pay the agreed amount under any payment plan or other agreed terms.

If you DISAGREE with the recommendation:

- The financial evaluation officer will send the matter back to the court for a hearing.
- At the hearing, you will be able to:
 - ♦ Tell your side of the story in person.
 - ♦ Have your lawyer with you.

Court Order for Payment

- **If the court decides that you *can* pay** all or part of the cost of the lawyers, the court will tell you how much you need to pay and when you need to pay it, and order you to pay that amount to the court in a way that the court thinks is fair.
- **If the court decides that you *cannot* afford to pay**, the court will not order you to pay.
- If you are reunifying with your child **and** the court finds that making you pay would make it too hard for you to get your child back or to support your child, the court will **not** order you to pay.
- If the court decides that making you pay for the lawyers would not be fair in your case, the court will **not** order you to pay.

Reevaluation

- Anytime before you have finished repaying, **you can ask the court to change its order** if something happens that makes it harder for you to pay.
- If your case continues after the dispositional hearing, the court can order you to appear again for another financial evaluation.
- If the court does order another financial evaluation, you will have to do the same things and provide the same information as you did at the first evaluation.