

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

THE MEDIATION CENTER

FAMILY VISITATION PROGRAM

Tour presented by

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At a glance



Established in 2006



Western North Carolina

Three locations, including Asheville, Hendersonville, and Brevard

Serving Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania Counties



Community served

These communities, characterized by rural Appalachian culture and challenges, have populations with high poverty and low per capita income. The demographic is predominantly White, with significant Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American populations. There are notable disparities in poverty levels among racial and ethnic groups, with a high percentage of renter-occupied households lacking vehicle access. The area attracts middle-to-upper income retirees, which influences per capita income and poverty percentage representation.



The Mediation Center
Finding common ground.

Family Visitation Program

Family Visitation Program Funding

OVW JFF funding synopsis

- We received OVW funding in 2016, allowing us to open our Henderson County location in early 2017.
- We were subsequently funded in 2020 and able to expand to Transylvania County in 2021.
- This funding has allowed us to provide over 1200 visits and serve 50 unique families.

Other uses of funding

- Our partners with the JFF award have been doing amazing work!
- Safelight, the Henderson County victim services organization
 - Includes a Child Advocacy Center, individual and group counseling, emergency shelter and hotline, the Family Advocacy Center (which follows the Family Justice Center model), job training programs, and broad community outreach.
 - Safelight trained a total of 360 individuals, including court personnel, law enforcement, child welfare staff, and more.
- Pisgah Legal Services has provided free civil legal resources to 90 victims.

Other funding sources

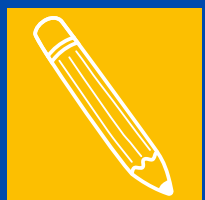
- Our Henderson and Transylvania programs are 100% supported by OVW JFF funds.
- Buncombe County is supported through a variety of grants including Community Foundation, United Way, etc.
 - Because it pays for part of the program director and client services coordinator position, JFF funding indirectly supports Buncombe County operations

Family Visitation Program services



Visitation services provided

The Mediation Center offers supervised visitation and safe exchange services, addressing the needs of child and adult victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.



About our services

We are able to provide families with, at most, one 1-hour visit per week, unless their court order specifies less frequent visits (such as bi-weekly or 1 visit/month)



Hours

- Buncombe County
 - Monday–Friday
- Henderson County
 - Monday–Wednesday
- Transylvania County
 - As requested

As needs increase, we would serve all locations Monday–Friday



About our team

- Program Director
 - Full-time
 - Provides leadership for the program, oversight for staff, and partner and fund development
- Client Services Coordinator
 - Full-time
 - Main point of contact for all clients. Conducts intakes, inquiry calls, collects necessary documentation, etc.
- Part-time Visit Monitors
 - Hours vary between 15–22 hours/week per visit monitor
 - We use 4 part-time/PRN visit monitors to monitor visits. We have one bilingual (Spanish) visit monitor.
- We always have an in-person monitor present with the family, as well as a staff member (visit monitor or higher) who is providing support by watching the visit via video and audio monitoring, as well as being available to support the visit as needed.



Meeting the Diverse and Unique Needs of Our Families

Culturally competent services are a cornerstone, with bilingual coordinators experienced in Appalachian culture enhancing service sensitivity to regional norms. The program also prioritizes language accessibility, employing bilingual staff and translation services to cater to the Hispanic/Latino and immigrant populations. Accommodations for disabilities are thoughtfully integrated, inviting clients to specify their needs during service intake. Additionally, the project ensures effective communication with Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals through sign language interpretation and TTY lines. Staff training is inclusive, covering topics from power dynamics in family violence to culturally sensitive service provision. Moreover, the program's active engagement with diverse community partners and advisory committees contributes to a comprehensive understanding of local needs, helping reduce the stigma associated with accessing services. This multifaceted approach underscores the project's commitment to providing accessible, respectful, and effective services for all clients in these communities.



Community Partnerships

Partners include:

- A non-profit law firm offering free legal assistance to low-income survivors,
- Victim service organizations in Henderson, Transylvania, and Buncombe Counties providing essential support services
- District Court judges ensuring effective court referrals
- Therapists and psychologists offering trauma-informed care
- Department of Health and Human Services - Child Services focusing on child welfare

In addition to these core members, the collaboration extends to include partners specific to the community, reflecting local needs and resources. These community-specific partners are vital in ensuring that the services offered are culturally relevant, accessible, and effectively address the unique challenges faced by survivors in their respective communities.

The Family Visitation Program Physical Spaces

In all locations, we use video and audio monitoring in all hallways, waiting rooms, and visit rooms.

Henderson County

- 1,400 sq. ft.
- Two individual visit rooms
- Visiting parent waiting area
 - Very rarely needed
 - Has toy library
- Custodial parent waiting room
- Two restrooms
 - One for custodial parents and one for visiting parents
- Two staff rooms with video monitors
- Two other offices in the building used by other programs within The Mediation Center outside of visit hours.

Buncombe County

- Around 1,600 sq. ft.
- Three visit rooms
- Large toy room
- No waiting area for visiting parents
- Custodial parent waiting room
- Three staff rooms
 - Includes a monitoring room
- Two restrooms
 - One for custodial parents and one for visiting parents

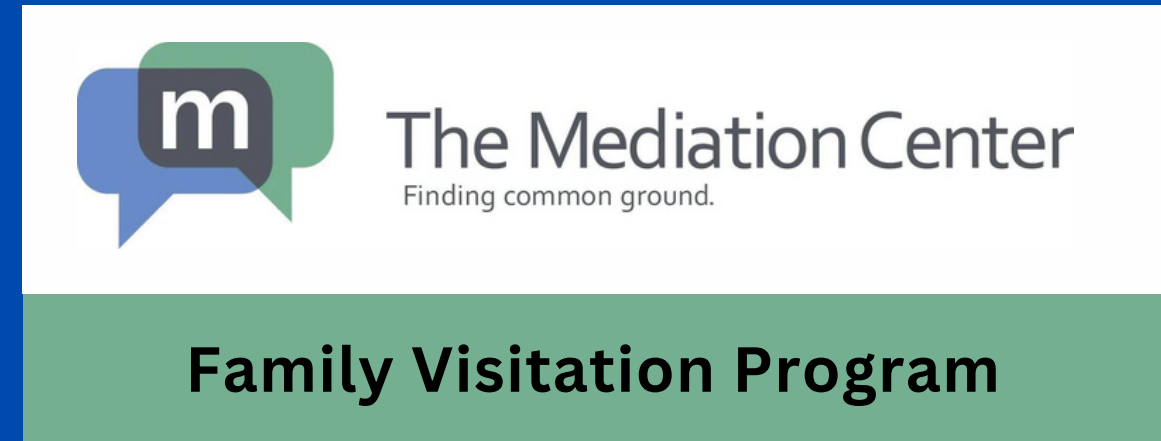
Transylvania County

- Space provided for free within the Children's Resource Center
- Parents use separate entrances
- Audio and video monitoring in addition to room visit monitor
- One visit/play room



Thank you for being part of this tour of The Mediation Center's Family Visitation Program!

Learn more about us at <https://mediatewnc.org/family-visitation/>



Inspire would love to hear your thoughts and input about this Program Spotlight Session 7. Please follow this QR code to our post-event evaluation.



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