# CAMBRIA COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS RULES OF THE ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

## CHAPTER I. PRELIMINARY RULES

## CC Rule 1.1. LOCAL RULES CITATION FORM

- (A) The Orphans' Court Rules for Cambria County, in conjunction with the Supreme Court Orphans' Court Rules and applicable Acts of Assembly regulating the practice and procedure in the Orphans' Court, shall regulate the practice and procedure of the procedure of the Orphans' Court Division of this Court.
- (B) These Rules shall be known as the Cambria County Orphans' Court Rules and shall be cited as "CC Rule \_\_\_\_\_."
- (C) These Rules shall be effective on July 1, 2017.
- CC Rule 1.2 The Local Rules applicable to the civil division shall not be applicable in the Orphans' Court unless directed in these Local Orphans' Court Rules.
- CC Rule 1.3 <u>MEDIATION</u>: All Interested Parties in a matter may use mediation to resolve issues pending before the Court, and, upon either partial or complete resolution, may petition the Court to approve the agreement of all Interested Parties as an order or decree of the Court.
  - (A) The Interested Parties may engage the services of a mediator, either prior to or after any Interested Party has filed a Pleading before the Court, including an Account filed by a fiduciary for audit.
  - (B) Upon the filing of a Pleading before the Court, including an Account filed by a fiduciary for audit, the Clerk, in the Clerk's discretion, may provide the filing party with generic information regarding availability of mediation for the resolution of disputes prior to adjudication by the Court.
  - (C) The filing party may but shall not be required to provide such information to other Interested Parties. The information, which does not bind the Court and which may be in the form of a standard brochure, should include:
    - (1) A brief description of the mediation process;
    - (2) The anticipated benefits of mediation for litigants and associated professionals; and

- (3) Contact information to initiate mediation.
- (D) All the Interested Parties in a matter docketed before the Court may request to engage in mediation at any time during the pendency of the matter.

In such request for mediation, all Interested Parties shall identify:

- (1) The proposed mediator and the proposed source of payment of fees and costs of the mediator;
- (2) Names and contact information of all Interested Parties and any counsel who shall participate in the mediation;
- (3) Names and information regarding any party's interest having diminished capacity or legal disability, whose interests must be adequately protected; and
- (4) The scheduled date for the initial mediation conference.
- (E) All Interested Parties shall execute an Agreement for Confidential Mediation, which is not inconsistent with this Local Rule, which shall remain confidential, and which shall be in materially the same form as set forth on the Form CC 1.6 (E). Upon execution of the Agreement for Confidential Mediation and its acceptance by the mediator, the parties shall return to the Court a Notice of Initiation of Mediation in the form set forth on Form CC 1.6 (EE) and shall provide one copy to the Court and one copy to the mediator.
- (F) Mediation shall not delay the required filing of any Pleading or ordered return dates, or the scheduling of Court Hearings, unless specifically requested by joinder of the Interested Parties and so ordered by the Court.
- (G) The Court will respect the confidentiality of the mediation process and of the mediator's obligation of confidentiality. Upon the completion of the mediation, the mediator shall complete and return to the court, with copies to the parties, a Notice of Completion of Mediation in the form set forth on Form CC 1.6 (G), and all Interested Parties shall sign a memorandum of principal terms, which either shall acknowledge that no resolution was reached, or shall embody the resolution(s) attained. This memorandum of principal terms shall clearly state partial resolutions or complete resolution attained. The memorandum of principal terms shall include a list of unresolved issues to be determined by the Court. Where appropriate, the principal terms may provide for future review in light of changed circumstances or a change in the operative facts. The memorandum of

principal terms agreed upon, or the statement of no resolution, shall be filed with the Court.

- (H) In no event shall the terms agreed upon depart from or violate any provisions of applicable law, specifically including the Older Adult Protective Services Act, the Act of Dec. 18, 1996, P.L. 1125, No. 169 (35 P.S. §§ 10225.101—10225.5102), as may be amended or the Adult Protective Services Act.
- (I) The Interested Parties may request that the Court approve the final mediated agreement, which embodies the principal terms agreed upon in the memorandum referenced above. The Court may grant approval in an order or decree. Alternatively, the Court may recommend any changes that the Court deems appropriate for approval. The parties to the mediation may accept the Court's recommendations, in which event the terms agreed upon, as modified, shall be approved, or the parties may decline to accept the Court's recommendations, in which the matter is deemed not to have resulted in an agreement.
- (J) If a case is resolved by mediation and the parties and/or the Court do not require an order or decree pursuant to paragraph (I), the parties shall file a praecipe with the Clerk of the Orphans' Court to have the pleading, objections, or particular, marked settled or withdrawn.

#### CC Rule 1.4 ENTRY OF APPEARANCE:

Any counsel appearing before the Court or the Register shall enter a written appearance by one of the following means:

- (A) Counsel filing any initial or responsive pleading shall include, at the end of the pleading following counsel's signature, counsel's address, phone number, fax number, counsel's Pennsylvania Attorney ID number, name of firm, and name of any co-counsel.
- (B) Counsel who has not previously filed an initial or responsive pleading in a matter and who is appearing, for the first time at a hearing on behalf of any Interested Party shall file an Entry of Appearance with the Court to include the case caption and number, counsel's name, the name of counsel's firm, counsel's address, phone number, fax number, and counsel's Pennsylvania Attorney ID number.
- (C) Counsel who is filing an initial document with the Register of Wills or the Clerk of the Orphans' Court (such as, for example, a Petition for Letters Testamentary or Administration, an initial inheritance tax return, or other

documents that do not constitute pleadings <u>per se</u> but which could become the subject of Orphans' Court proceedings) shall include on the document counsel's name, the name of counsel's firm, counsel's address, phone number, fax number, and counsel's Pennsylvania Attorney ID number.

(D) Counsel may include his or her e-mail address on any pleading or entry of appearance but are advised that by doing so, they may be deemed to have consented to accept service of pleadings and communications by e-mail pursuant to Pa. O.C. Rule 4.3 (d).

### CHAPTER II. ACCOUNTS, OBJECTIONS AND DISTRIBUTIONS

#### CC Rule 2.1

(A) Time for Filing and Confirmation of Accounts: Accounts of personal representatives to be confirmed shall be filed with the Clerk of the Orphans' Court not later than 4:00 p.m. (prevailing time) of the fourth (4th) Monday preceding the date fixed for confirmation of the said Accounts. If no objections are filed to either the Account or the Statement of Proposed Distribution and the Court is satisfied that the Account and Statement of Proposed Distribution conform with Pennsylvania law, the Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules and these Rules, the Court may, at the time and date specified herein, make a Final decree confirming the Account and directing distribution in accordance with the Statement of Proposed Distribution. The Court shall approve, or pursuant to CC Rule 2.1 (C), refuse to approve the account, by the end of the business day on the last Friday of January, March, May, July, September, and November of each year, provided that if the last Friday of any of the months is a legal holiday, the Court shall take such action on the next business day on which the Court is open. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Court shall not act on any Account or proposed Schedule of Distribution sooner than twenty (20) days following the date of service of the Account or proposed Schedule of Distribution on all persons entitled to notice. The Accountant or counsel for the Accountant shall sign and file a Certificate of Service with the Clerk of the Orphans Court listing the name and address of each person served. The Certificate of Service may be filed with the Account or after filing of the Account, but must be filed not later than 4:00 P.M. of the day prior to the date set for approval of the Account. The Accountant or the attorney for the Accountant shall sign the Certificate of Service. The

(B) <u>Notice by Publication:</u> Notice of filing of the Account shall be given by the Clerk of the Orphans' Court to all persons concerned by advertisement

Court may rely upon the Certificate of Service.

in the Cambria County Legal Journal and in one newspaper of general circulation published in Cambria County at least once per week during the two (2) weeks immediately preceding the time for presentment of the Account to the Court. Said advertisement shall set forth the name of the Accountant, the capacity in which the Accountant is acting, the time at which the Account will be presented to the Court for confirmation and that objections, if any, must be filed on or before 4:00 p.m. on the last business day preceding the date proposed for confirmation.

(C) Procedure Where Court Requires Further Hearing: If the Court determines that the Account and/or Proposed Schedule of Distribution does not conform to Pennsylvania Law, the Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules and/or these Rules, or that clarifications or resolution of factual or legal issues relating to the Account or Proposed Statement of Distribution require further review, the Court may sua sponte request or order the Accountant or the attorney for the Accountant to provide supplemental information and/or may schedule a hearing or argument date at which the Accountant and/or the Accountant's attorney shall be present to respond to questions of law or fact raised by the Court. Notice of the Hearing or Argument schedule shall be given as determined and, if applicable, ordered by the Court.

## CC Rule 2.2 <u>STATEMENTS OF PROPOSED DISTRIBUTIONS</u>:

- (A) A Statement of Proposed Distribution shall be filed with any Account filed pursuant to Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules Chapter II.
- (B) A proposed final Order approving the Statement of Proposed Distribution and Account shall be attached to the Statement of Proposed Distribution.
- (C) The following shall apply to post-audit procedures:

In those cases where the Statement of Proposed Distribution includes a request for a distribution of real estate, the Register of Wills or Clerk of Orphans' Court shall be authorized to execute a Certificate of Award of Real Estate following the entry of the Court's final decree confirming the Account and Statement of Proposed Distribution.

CC Rule 2.3 <u>DISTRIBUTIONS WITHOUT FORMAL ACCOUNTING:</u> In the event the distribution of the assets in an estate is to be made by the personal representative without the filing of a Formal Accounting, a receipt and release maybe filed with the office of the Register of Wills. The original only of the receipt and release form shall be filed with the Register and no court order shall be required in order for the receipt and

release form to be accepted by the Register of Wills. Said receipt and release may be filed with or without a final status report.

### CHAPTER III. PETITION PRACTICE AND PLEADING

## CC Rule 3.1 FORM OF PETITION, EXHIBITS, CONSENTS:

- (A) In those cases where a Petition is alleged to be uncontested and not requiring a hearing unless the Court, in its discretion, deems appropriate, petitioner shall plead and attach the following:
  - (1) On the heading identifying the type of pleading filed, petitioners shall indicate "Proposed Uncontested Matter";
  - (2) Petitioner shall attach the name of all Interested Parties and shall attach the joinder or consents of each interested party who would otherwise be entitled to notice of the Petition.
  - (3) If a Consent is signed by a proposed representative of an interested party, the consent shall state that the proposed representative meets the criteria set forth in the Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules.
- (B) For Petitions filed that require adjudication, petitioner shall state, under the heading identifying the type of pleading, either "Citation required" or "Notice required". Where a citation is required, petitioner shall comply with CC Rule 3.3.
- CC Rule 3.2 <u>FILING OF PLEADINGS</u>: All Pleadings must be filed with the Clerk of Orphans' Court prior to presentation to the Court. The Clerk shall transmit the pleading to the Court for review. Any Order signed by the Court shall be transmitted by the Court back to the Clerk of Orphans Court.
- CITATION PRACTICE: Where a citation is to be issued, petitioner shall attach to the petition an Order in the form complying with CC Form 3.3 attached to these Rules. The Court shall have the discretion to schedule a status conference and/or hearing provided that the status conference or hearing date shall be at least thirty (30) days following the date of the filing, except in cases involving guardianship, adoptions and/or the Abortions Control Act provisions, which are not governed by these Rules. After the Court signs the order and files the same with the Clerk of Orphans' Court or Register of Wills, the Clerk or Register shall issue a citation in the form set forth on CC Form 3.4. The Petitioner shall serve the Citation and Petition in the manner set forth in the Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules.

Nothing contained in this Rule shall modify the requirements for petitions as set forth in Chapter III of the Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules.

#### **CC** Rule 3.4

NOTICE PRACTICE: Where a Petition is filed but no Citation is required, petitioner shall attach to the Petition an Order in the form complying with CC Form 3.3.1 attached to these Rules. The Court shall have the discretion to schedule a status conference and/or hearing provided that the status conference or hearing date shall be at least thirty (30) days following the date of the filing, except in cases involving guardianship, adoptions and/or the Abortion Control Act provisions, which are not governed by these Rules. After the Court signs the order and files the same with the Clerk of Orphans' Court, the petitioner shall serve the Order, together with such other notices as required by the Pa. O.C. Rules for Petitions requiring notice.

Nothing contained in this Rule shall modify the requirements for petitions as set forth in Chapter III of the Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules.

#### CHAPTER IV.

# FORMAT AND SERVICE OF LEGAL PAPER BY PARTIES AND COURT; ELECTRONIC FILING - RESERVED

#### CHAPTER V.

#### RULES GOVERNING SPECIFIC TYPES OF PETITIONS

CC Rule 5.1

Public notice of the sale of real property shall be given as required by law and as may be further required by Court Order in any particular matter.

#### CHAPTER VI.

#### <u>RESERVED</u>

#### CHAPTER VII.

# RULES RELATING TO PRE-HEARING AND HEARING PROCEDURE

CC Rule 7.1

**<u>DISCOVERY:</u>** Depositions, discovery, production of documents, and perpetuation of testimony shall be permitted only by Court Order.

#### **CC Rule 7.2**

# **MOTION FOR JUDGMENT ON THE PLEADINGS:**

After the relevant pleadings are closed, but within such time as not to unreasonably delay the hearing, any party may move for judgment on the pleadings. The moving parties shall attach a proposed Scheduling Order to the Motion. The Motion shall be filed with the Clerk of the Orphans' Court, who shall transmit the Motion and proposed Scheduling Order to the Court. The Court may enter such judgment or order as shall be proper on the pleadings, and may, in its discretion, schedule argument on the Motion.

#### CC Rule 7.3 MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT:

Motions for Summary Judgment shall be governed by Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rule 7.3 supplemented by the following Local Rule: Motions for Summary Judgment shall be filed with the Clerk of Orphans Court. The party against whom the Motion for Summary Judgment is filed shall have a right to respond in accordance with Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rule 7.3 (b). If a response is filed, either party may then file a Praecipe for Argument with the Clerk of the Orphans' Court, to which a scheduling Order shall be attached. In the event that the party against whom the Motion for Summary Judgment is filed fails to file any response or to take any actions as set forth in Pa. R.C. P. No. 1035.3, then the party filing the Motion for Summary Judgment may file a Praecipe with the Clerk of the Orphans' Court for argument, or in the alternative, a Praecipe requesting that the Court enter an Order without argument. If a Praecipe for an Order without argument is filed, the Court shall have the discretion to sign the Order, sign a modified Order, or schedule the matter for argument notwithstanding the Praecipe requested by the moving party.

Consistent with Pa. R.C.P. No. 1035.3(e), nothing in this Rule shall prohibit the Court from ruling upon a Motion for Summary Judgment without written responses or briefs if no party is prejudiced. A party would be prejudiced if he or she is not given a full and fair opportunity to supplement the record and to oppose the Motion. If the Court grants a Motion under this section, the Court shall state its reasons for its decision

### CHAPTER VIII. RECONSIDERATION - RESERVED

#### CHAPTER IX. <u>AUDITORS AND MASTERS</u>

CC Rule 9.1

An auditor or master may be appointed by the Court pursuant to Pa.C.S.A.§751 and when appointed, shall give notice of scheduled hearings to the parties of interest as defined in 20 Pa.C.S.A. § 751(6), provided that the Court shall have the right to enter an order as to whether a guardian and/or trustee ad litem must be appointed to represent the interest, not already represented by a fiduciary, of a person not sui juris, an absentee, a presumed decedent, or unborn or unascertained persons or any beneficiary or heir whose whereabouts are not known.

**CC** Rule 9.2

**NOTICE OF FILING REPORT**: An auditor or master shall give notice of the filing of the Report or of the intention to file the report to all parties entitled to notice by first class mail return receipt requested mailed to the last known address of the parties, unless the Court authorizes notice by another means or to another address. The Notice of Filing Report shall

contain a notice that objections or exceptions to the report must be filed by a date not more than twenty (20) days following the date on which the Notice of Filing Report is mailed, unless the Court, by Order, authorizes a longer period of time for filing objections.

## CC Rule 9.3 <u>CONFIRMATION OF REPORT</u>:

(A) The report of the auditor may be confirmed by the Court if no objections are filed by any party receiving notice pursuant to CC Rule 9.2 and if the Court does not object or propose modifications to the Report, the Court shall schedule a hearing on the Report if the Court objects or proposes modifications to the Report.

## CHAPTER X. REGISTER OF WILLS

CC Rule 10.1 Appeals to the Court from an Order or Decree of the Register shall be by Petition and shall be governed by Chapter III of the Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Rules as supplemented by Chapter III of the Cambria County Rules of Orphans' Court.

CHAPTER XI. RESERVED

CHAPTER XII. RESERVED

CHAPTER XIII. RESERVED

# CHAPTER XIV. SPECIAL FORMS

CC Rule 14.1 Annual Reports of the Guardian of an Incapacitated Person shall be filed as follows:

- (A) Guardian of the Person: The Report of the Guardian of a Person of an Incapacitated Person shall be filed on Pa. O.C. Form G-03.
- (B) Guardian of the Estate: Where an individual has been appointed as the Guardian of the Estate of an Incapacitated Person, that individual shall file periodic reports on Pa. O.C. Rule Form OC-03.

CHAPTER XV. Prior Cambria County O.C. Rule 15.7 CC relating to opening of impounded adoption records is hereby repealed.

Form: CC 1.6 (E)

[CAPTION]

## AGREEMENT TO MEDIATE ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS

This Agreement is effective on the	day of	, 20,	among the ur	ndersigned
persons to initiate a process of mediation regardi	ng disputes among then	that are	in the subject	t matter of
the Orphans' Court Division, of the Court of Con	nmon Pleas, as described	l in an at	tachment.	

- 1. The public is served by speedy and amicable resolution of private disputes. It is in the interests of the Orphans' Court Divisions, of the Courts of Common Pleas of the various judicial districts in the Commonwealth, to encourage Interested Parties to mediate and discuss possibilities for resolution of matters under the Courts' jurisdiction, to resolve disputes in an efficient and fair manner through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes. The Courts encourage Interested Parties to participate voluntarily and mutually, rather than enter into adverse litigation. If mediation is unsuccessful, then litigation can proceed for Court adjudication of remaining disputes under its jurisdiction.
- 2. The Interested Parties and counsel, identified below, agree that they, and their representatives, shall be bound by 42 Pa. C.S.A. § 5949 (Confidential mediation communications and documents).
- 3. Furthermore, during the mediation process, the Interested Parties and counsel shall not disclose the mediation discussions in this matter, except to: (a) the Interested Parties themselves, (b) to their counsel, (c) to any expert(s) assisting counselor (e) as the Interested Parties and their counsel jointly agree In no event shall the Mediator be called upon to disclose what occurred in the mediation.
- 4. If the Interested Parties and the counsel jointly agree to disclose some aspects of the mediation discussions, it shall not be considered a waiver of confidentiality of the other aspects of the mediation discussions.
- 5. No involvement in the mediation discussions will be allowed to any party in interest who declines to mediate on a confidential basis.
- 6. This Agreement does not determine whether any resolution, in itself, would be confidential. This Agreement only determines that the mediation discussions shall remain confidential. Whether or not a resolution itself will remain confidential will be the subject of agreement by the mediation participants.
- 7. If any participant, party in interest, counsel, or other representative breaches this Agreement to mediate in confidence, then any other participant or party in interest shall have the power to void, revoke, and terminate any mediation discussions or resolutions.

- 8. All persons who sign this Agreement agree, for themselves and their agents or representatives, to honor, both in spirit and in letter, the promise of confidentiality of mediation discussions contained in this Agreement.
- 9. All persons who sign this Agreement waive any liability, express, implied, or otherwise, regarding the mediation or the program whereby mediation was initiated, including the actions or omissions of a mediator or a mediation program sponsor.
- 10. All persons who sign this Agreement agree that they will enter into the Mediation in "good faith". Good faith includes, among other things, the following: 1) being fully prepared to discuss all aspects of the dispute, and possible solutions for resolving it; 2) having the person with the authority to approve the terms for resolution attend the mediation session, or, at the least, be available to confer with the party's representative during the mediation regarding the approval of terms; 3) demonstrating a willingness to listen and understand the perspectives of all participating parties; and (4) treating the parties, the Mediator, and all other participants with civility and respect.
- 11. All persons who sign this Agreement agree that the provisions of the Older Adults Protective Services Act, the Act of Dec. 18, 1996, P.L.1125, No.169 (35 P. S. §§ 10225.101 10225.5102), and/or the Adult Protective Services Act as amended, to the extent applicable, shall be honored by the Mediator.

Signatures of Interested Parties / Counsel and Dates:

Acceptance by Mediator, with contact information:

Attachment: General description of matters to be mediated [customized for each mediation]

Note: This sample form relates to the participants in the mediation. A Mediator may utilize a separate or more complete agreement, so long as it is not inconsistent either with the applicable local court rule regarding mediation or with statewide Orphans' Court Rule 1.6 regarding mediation.

Form: CC 1.6 (EE)

[Caption]

# NOTICE OF INITIATION OF MEDIATION

Please complete *prior to* the date on which mediation is initiated. Return it directly to the Judge assigned to this matter (*not* to the Clerk of the Orphans' Court Division) at least ten days prior to the date on which the mediation is scheduled to commence, and also provide a copy simultaneously to the mediator.

Pursuant to the Agreement for Confidential Mediation executed on \_(copy attached), all of the Interested Parties in this matter, including those represented by counsel, those representing themselves, and legal representatives of minors and alleged incapacitated persons, listed below in the capacity shown, state that we have agreed to initiate mediation in this matter on \_\_\_\_\_\_and that the mediator we have engaged is \_\_\_\_\_\_: Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name of Party: Printed Name of Party's Counsel Signature\_\_\_\_ Printed Name of Party: Printed Name of Party's Counsel Signature Printed Name of Party: Printed Name of Party's Counsel Signature\_\_\_\_ Printed Name of Party: Printed Name of Party's Counsel

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Form: CC 1.6 (G)

[Caption]

# **NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF MEDIATION**

Please complete and return to [the Judge assigned to this matter][the Clerk of the Orphans' Court] immediately after the mediation is concluded or upon returning the case to the Court for other reasons.

M	ediation Status:			
0	Case resolved and agreement executed and transmitted to court			
0	Case resolved and Interested Parties drafting agreement to be transmitted to court			
0	Case resolved in part			
0	Case resolved prior to mediation			
0	Case not resolved at this point			
Ö	Mediation terminated because media	tion inappropriate for this case		
Da	te Mediation Completed	Mediator – signature		
		Mediator – please print or type name		
		Mediator phone number		
	•	Mediator – email address		

# CC FORM 3.3

# CAPTION

# **ORDER**

AND I	NOW this	day of	, 20	, it is ORDERED as
follows:				
` '	A rule is issued urelief requested in t	**		why the Petitioner is not
, ,	The Respondent sl the Petition is serve			nin twenty (20) days from
` '	he relief requested i			em that Respondent does sted relief without further
(4.)	a status confe	erence		
	OR			
	a hearing			
			Courthouse, Ebensb	ourg, Pennsylvania, 15931 , 20
= =	The Clerk of the the the form set forth i			d to issue a citation to
		BYT	HE COURT	
		1		

## CC FORM 3.4

# CAPTION

# **ORPHANS COURT CITATION**

TO:

	day of at the Cambria				
•	at		_	=	
respond to and con	nply with the attacl	ned Order.			
			BY THE CLERK		RIA

# **CC FORM 3.3.1**

# CAPTION

# **ORDER**

ORDERED as	AND NOW this day of, 20, it is s follows:
(1.) entitled to the	A rule is issued upon the Respondent to show cause why the Petitioner is not relief requested in the foregoing pleading.
(2.) the date when	The Respondent shall file an Answer to the Petition within twenty (20) days from the Petition is served on Respondent.
, ,	If Respondent fails to file an Answer, the Court may deem that Respondent does he relief requested in the Petition and may grant the requested relief without further condent.
(4.)	a status conference
	OR a hearing
	n is scheduled at the Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, 15931  No at o'clock m. on , 20
	BY THE COURT
	J.