

# Sonoma County's Discovery Facilitator Program

By: Marci Reichbach

December 23, 2016

---



Sonoma County offers a valuable resource for litigants at any stage of a discovery dispute: a Discovery Facilitator. A Discovery Facilitator is an active member of the State Bar with at least ten years of experience, or a retired judge, who has been approved by the Presiding Judge or the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division. He or she donates up to two hours of time to assist the parties in resolving or narrowing their dispute without the need for court intervention. The Court may require participation in the Discovery Facilitator program by referring a discovery motion after it is filed. However, a Discovery Facilitator can be appointed even before a party incurs the expense of preparing a motion. Referral to the Discovery Facilitator Program may be requested by stipulation or motion, or in a CMC statement.

Sonoma County Superior Court Local Rule 4.13 explains that it is the Court's policy to encourage use of the Discovery Facilitator Program in connection with any discovery dispute in a civil case. Attorneys should take advantage of the opportunity to have a neutral third party weigh in on the dispute and facilitate the meet and confer process. I have recently been appointed to the panel of Discovery Facilitators and I look forward to serving in this role.