COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

**FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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**FAMILY DIVISION - ADULT SECTION**

**440 Ross Street**

**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15219-2117**

**(412) 350-5600**

**Instructions for Filing Support Exceptions (Pro Se Litigants)**

If you want to file exceptions (appeal) to the Hearing Officer’s Recommendation, you must do so within 20 days of the date indicated at the bottom of the Recommendation, which was handed or mailed to you after the hearing.

You must follow the step-by-step instructions provided below:

1. A transcript of the hearing needs to be ordered if you are filing exceptions. You may order the transcript at the Court Report’s Office, Manor Building, 564 Forbes Avenue, Suite 805, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. OR go to the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania web site and click on Administration. Under Court Reporters, find the Transcript Request form. Complete all parts of the form and email it to gkushner@alleghenycourts.us. Gary Kushner will sign off on the form and email it back. A $50 deposit is required at the time the transcript is ordered. Checks or Money Orders are to be made payable to “Allegheny County”. **If you do not order a transcript, your Exceptions may be dismissed by the Judge.**

If you have no income or are unable to afford the cost of the transcript, you may seek a waiver of the transcript costs by filing a Petition to Proceed *In Forma Pauperis* (IFP). Assistance is available in the Client Service Center, 1st Floor, 440 Ross Street, Pittsburgh, PA. In addition, to make sure your exceptions are timely filed, you will need to file a “Certification of Intent to Seek Transcript Fee Waiver”, which is attached and must be filed at the Family Division Docketing Office, Manor Building, 564 Forbes Avenue, 5th Floor, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

1. Prepare your Exceptions by stating each objection you have to the Hearing Officer's Recommendation. The Exceptions must be hand-written or typed, and each objection should be set forth as a separate paragraph. Exceptions shall be substantially in the form as provided for under Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure 1910.12(f).

1. File your Exceptions at: 1) the Family Division Docketing Office, Manor Building, 564 Forbes Avenue, 5th Floor, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. OR 2) Exceptions can be emailed to: alleghenysupportexceptions@pacses.com OR 3) Exceptions may be mailed to: SUPPORT EXCEPTIONS, ROOM 421, FAMILY LAW CENTER, 440 ROSS STREET, PITTSBURGH PA 15219 You will need to include all of the following documents at the time of filing:
	1. The original and one copy of the hearing officer’s Recommendation. This form was personally handed to you on the day of the hearing or subsequently mailed to you by the Court.
	2. The original and one copy of your written or typed exceptions (see paragraph B. above) to the hearing officer’s recommendation.
	3. The original and one copy of the transcript order form obtained from the Court Reporter’s Office, showing that you paid the $50 deposit for the transcript or “Certification of Intent to Seek Transcript Fee Waiver” (see paragraph A. above). If you fail to pay for the transcript or obtain a waiver of the cost of the transcript, your Exceptions may be dismissed by the judge if the transcript was needed for determining the Exceptions.
2. Once you file your Exceptions, the Court will schedule an argument on the next available exceptions argument list for the assigned judge. The Court will send you a "Scheduling Order", providing you with additional deadlines, as described below:
	1. After you receive your transcript, you will need to prepare a brief. A brief is a written, detailed explanation of why you are objecting to the hearing officer’s Recommendation.
	2. The brief and a copy must be filed at the Docketing Office, Family Division Docketing Office, Manor Building, 564 Forbes Avenue, 5th Floor, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (or filed in the same manner as your exceptions – see “C” above) by the date included in the Scheduling Order. If you fail to file a brief, your Exceptions may be dismissed by the judge at the time of argument.
3. You are responsible for making and delivering a copy of both the Exceptions and the brief to the opposing party or counsel for the opposing party, at the time you file each. You should also retain a copy for your own records.
4. You will need to appear at the date and time scheduled for argument on the Exceptions, before the assigned judge as indicated in the Scheduling Order.
5. Following oral argument, you will be notified of the judge’s decision on your Exceptions by a Court Order, delivered by mail to the address you provided to the judge on the date of the argument.
6. You have the right to file an appeal to the judge’s order to the Superior Court within 30 days of the court order.

**NOTE:** You should always hand deliver your exceptions to the Docketing Office, to make sure the exceptions are timely filed. A courtesy copy of the pertinent section from the Family Division Court Manual is provided as part of this packet, so you have detailed information available regarding the procedure. ANY QUESTIONS? PLEASE CALL 412-350-5600 or EMAIL: familyinfoemails@pacses.com

**If you will require assistance at the time of the exceptions argument due to a disability, please contact (412) 350-5600 at least 20 days prior to your scheduled court date.**