

Pre-Merits Hearing Conference Training

Who should attend: All current DSS, OID, and GAL attorneys and DSS and GAL staff in the designated regions

Overview: This training will provide DSS, OID, and GAL attorneys and DSS and GAL staff with an overview of the background and use of the Pre-Merits Hearing Conference (PMHC) protocol and procedures being added into the practice of DSS foster care cases in the South Carolina family court system. The goal of the PMHC is to expedite the completion of merits hearings and the possible return of children in foster care to their families. Attendees will be able to: 1) recognize that children in foster care have poorer outcomes than children who remain in their home or in the home of a kinship care provider, 2) differentiate between safety concerns that prevent a child from remaining in their home versus risk concerns for a child, 3) understand the purpose of the Pre-Merits Conference, and 4) demonstrate the ability to conduct a PMHC.

This live webinar event for the above-mentioned DSS staff and family court attorneys is being offered on four dates for different designated regions. Attendees are strongly encouraged to attend on the date the webinar is being conducted for the region in which they work, as there could be discussions that relate to practices in your counties and limited registration spots require us to prioritize admission to those in the corresponding region over those from other regions. However, if someone is unable to attend the webinar on the date it is being conducted for their county, they can register for another date subject to space limitations. The webinars will also be recorded for those unable to attend the live event.

Dates and Designated Counties:

- **February 12, 2021** (Friday): Upstate Counties
- **March 12, 2021** (Friday): Midlands Counties
- **April 16, 2021** (Friday): Pee Dee Counties
- **May 14, 2021** (Friday): Low Country Counties

Times: Recommended time to log on: 8:30 am
Webinar training time: 8:50 am - 1:00 pm

Location: This webinar will be held on the GoToTraining online platform. You will need the capability to log on to this platform from a desktop, laptop, tablet, or cellular device.

Continuing Education Credits: 3.75 MCLE credit hours have been approved for attorneys attending one of the live webinars. Also, Continuing Education Units (CEUs) will be available for other DSS or GAL staff who attend the live training. Neither CLE credits nor CEUs will be available for those who watch the recorded webinar.

Fee: There is no charge for this training.

For more information: Contact Emma Belcher at ebelcher@mailbox.sc.edu about the training or Charlestina Butler at bankscln@mailbox.sc.edu with registration questions.

To Register: Go to the Children's Law Center registration system at <https://sc.edu/clc/public/index.php>.