



Independent Assessment Conference



Mission: A safe and just community



What is the Independent Assessment Conference?

- It is an alternative form of dispute resolution (outside of traditional criminal justice procedure) used with the goal of facilitating a plea agreement
- It is a formalized criminal mediation process
- It is a **tool** used to resolve difficult and serious cases short of trial (e.g., cases where the defendant is on PTR, but faces prison time)
- It allows for inclusion of views, perspectives, and input of not only direct victims, but also indirect victims, family members, law enforcement, and others
- It is a voluntary process
- It is a confidential process; information shared in the IAC process is inadmissible in court



Why use the Independent Assessment Conference?

- It involves a independent and neutral trauma-informed trained facilitator
- It allows for a holistic approach to assessing a case
- It promotes active engagement of victims and allows for their voice to be heard without a strict direct examination/x exam approach
- It promotes and allows for offender accountability in a confidential setting
- It is process that can be invoked by either the state or the defense
- It may help to protect vulnerable victims from ever testifying in court with a resolution that the victim has been able to participate in



When does the Independent Assessment Conference occur?

- It is typically triggered after the defendant has been charged with a felony crime(s) and the case has been set for a status hearing with the court
- If the case is put on the IAC calendar, the court process is stayed
- It is a monthly docket organized by the DA's office
- Mediation meetings with parties, victims and others are held in person or via zoom
- IAC facilitator provides recommendation about resolution of case
- In most instances, a plea agreement is reached and the case goes back to the judge for entering of the plea with sentencing recommendations
- If a resolution does not come about, the case is put on the court's trial calendar



Examples:

- First Degree murder case – family of defendant was involved in mediation
- Rape cases
- Jessica's Law cases – getting the defendant “on the grid”



Douglas County District Attorney's Office