

**CHERYL E. DUKE MA, NCC, LPC**

**FORENSIC COUNSELING SERVICES AND FEES**

For ethical purposes it is required that fee payment is not contingent on any particular outcome or recommendation in social studies, home studies, or adoption studies. Forensic evaluators preserve neutrality in such studies by presenting fee scales in advance. All baseline fees are due prior to initial interview.

**Social Study:**

A completed contested social study evaluation is billed at a base rate of \$1500.00. Payment is due in equal parts by each party (\$750.00 each) unless otherwise stated by court order. This base price covers interviews of each parent, along with step-parent or partner, any caretakers involved, and child(ren) in question. Additionally the study includes an assessment of the home, collection of standard collateral information, review of documentation, and completion of report with professional recommendations delivered to the court and each attorney.

Should the case settle prior to completion of a report to the court refunds will be issued based on actual time worked on the case, billed at the standard hourly rate of \$100.00 per hour. Unanticipated circumstances may necessitate additional hours of service outside those estimated in the baseline rate

**Adoption Study:**

In relative adoptions there is a base rate of \$700.00, and for non-relative adoptions the fee is \$900.00. As with contested custody case, the adoption study includes interviews, home evaluation, review of material, and completion of report. Unanticipated circumstances may necessitate additional hours of service outside those estimated in the baseline rate.

**Home Study:**

Home study baseline fee is \$1000.00 with includes evaluation of the home environment, with interviews, collection of standard collateral material, documentation reviews, and completed report. Unanticipated circumstances may necessitate additional hours of service outside those estimated in the baseline rate.

**Additional Expenses:**

*Travel:* There is no additional fee for studies conducted in Comal, Guadalupe, or Hays County. If any party lives outside of these counties an additional travel fee will be charged at \$50.00 per hour, per interview. For studies requiring overnight or airline travel additional fees include \$50.00 per hour (time spent from airport arrival to hotel and back), along with full expense of airfare, hotel, and reimbursement for rental vehicle/taxi. The base rate will be calculated with expected travel time and expenses, and will be due before travel arrangements are made. Additional travel fees or reimbursements are due prior to completion of evaluation.

*Expedited Studies:* It generally takes several weeks to compile all necessary material and review documentation for an accurate report. For cases in which studies need to be expedited and completed in less than 5 weeks time, an additional \$250 will be added to base rate.

*Legal:* For any requested appearance, deposition, or participation in any type of legal conference an additional legal fee will be added to base rate: \$180 per hour, with a minimum charge of four hours. Legal fees are due at least one week prior to scheduled appearance.