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Region 6

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Division of Diversity & Civil Rights



This publication will be made available in alternative format upon request. Please call Civil Rights Branch at 703/358 1724 or 1 800/828 1120 (State Relay Number).

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

EEO-PLUS Partners Listening, Understanding, and Solving

Alternative Dispute Resolution Program



Alternative Dispute Resolution

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Program is a voluntary program that uses mediation to resolve disputes quickly at the earliest possible stage.

ADR offers the following:

- An opportunity to be heard.
- An opportunity to develop new ways of dealing with a dispute.
- Confidentiality of discussions.
- An opportunity to jointly create your own solution.

The Service utilizes mediation as its primary technique, but does not replace other systems already in place to resolve conflict. It does offer an alternative for enhancing those processes.

How Does Mediation Work?

A mediator, trained in conflict resolution—specifically, the mediation process—serves as an impartial party. He or she does not take sides or make a decision in the dispute. The mediator begins the mediation process with an introduction and presentation of ground rules for the session. Each involved person then tells about the situation from his or her personal perspective.

After each party has had the opportunity to speak, the mediator may ask questions to clarify a point or elaborate on the matter discussed. This is done in a joint session with the parties present.

Then, the mediator may hold a private meeting, called a caucus, with each party. During a caucus, each party has a chance to suggest possible solutions to the conflict. These are explored and refined until a mutually acceptable agreement is reached.

Confidentiality

Conversations held during mediation and materials produced remain confidential, in accordance with Section 574 of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act and the Freedom of Information Act. The Mediator will not disclose anything that occurred during mediation without the parties permission.

Not Litigation

The mediator does not determine who is right or wrong. All points of view are valid and the parties work together to create a solution. Mediators do not provide legal advice. Each party may have a representative present during the mediation session.

A Focus on the Positive

The mediation process acknowledges the emotional issues in a conflict, focuses on finding a workable solution to the dispute rather than on assigning blame and provides constructive assistance.

Resolution—A Written Agreement

Mediation saves the parties time, expense, and the emotional distress of facing unresolved conflict in the workplace. Mediation makes possible a renewed, positive working relationship between the parties and allows the work of the agency to move forward without prolonged disruption.

Because it does not favor either party, mediation facilitates resolution of a dispute in a manner satisfactory to all involved. When the parties agree to an acceptable solution, it is recorded in writing by the mediator. Once the agreement is approved, and all parties sign, it is binding on all parties.

Who Can Ask for Mediation?

Any employee, supervisor, or manager may request mediation if they face an issue or concern that needs to be resolved.

