

## Who Can Access Employee Mediation?

The Employee Mediation Office's services are available to all employees, managers, and supervisors employed by the D.C. Courts. Any party who has a conflict with another employee of the Courts may come to the Employee Mediation Office and ask for a neutral person to facilitate the discussion of possible resolutions of the problem.

## Benefits of Using Mediation

The process and outcome are **confidential**.  
The conflict can be resolved in a **timely** manner, without a formal complaint.  
The parties take an **active role** in resolving their own disputes.  
Fosters **open communication**.  
Provides a forum to deal with the **root of the problem**.  
**Reduces stress** in the workplace.  
Preserves **on-going relationships**

## MISSION STATEMENT

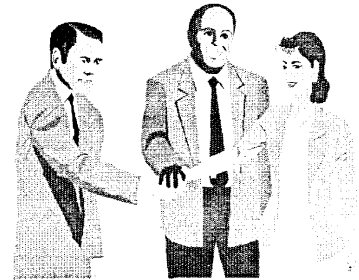
The District of Columbia Courts are committed to upholding the public's trust, while contributing to a civil and stable community. The Employee Mediation Office is dedicated to fostering a model civil community within the Courts' workforce. By providing mediation services to the Courts' personnel, the Employee Mediation Office seeks to enhance productivity in the workplace, improve working relationships, and foster diversity within the D.C. Courts.

*For more information contact:*

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# Employee Mediation Office

*Providing an Alternative Resolution to Workplace Disputes*



*Communication is the Key to Success*

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## Employee Mediation Office

Conflict is a part of the human experience. As employees of the District of Columbia Courts, we work every day with people who are divided in conflict or face crisis in their lives.

The business of the Court revolves around adversaries, advocates and judges. How do we deal with conflicts that occur in our work surroundings? When a dispute arises between employees within our ranks, our work environment is rendered unpleasant, unproductive, and ultimately ineffective. Sometimes the conflict may be the result of a simple miscommunication. Other situations involve a more serious offense which requires the formal grievance or EEO processes. Whatever the level of dispute, we believe that an internal problem between employees or supervisors does not allow us to perform at our best. The Employee Mediation Office is a new initiative within the District of Columbia Courts to help people resolve various types of disputes which may arise in the work

### What is Mediation?

Mediation is a way of solving disputes when the parties do not agree that someone might help them with their conflict. The parties meet with a neutral third party who is trained to facilitate communication and to assist the parties in reaching a mutually acceptable agreement.

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Mediation is different from other forms of dispute resolution in that the parties participate voluntarily and the mediator does not have the authority to actually make a decision. The decision-making power rests in the hands of the parties. In mediation, no settlement is reached, unless all parties agree.

### The Role of the Mediator

The Employee Mediation Office uses experienced mediators from various sources outside the Courts. The mediator meets with the parties (and their representatives, if requested) and facilitates a discussion between them. Sometimes, the mediator meets with parties individually, as well as together. The mediator is there to foster open communication, to help identify important issues, and to assist the parties in generating options for a resolution.

### What Types of Disputes are Appropriate for Mediation?

- **Interpersonal Conflict:** Employees sometimes face conflicts in their day-to-day work environment with colleagues, staff, or supervisors. Intercultural issues and diversity can be a factor. These disputes may escalate to a point where the parties involved are unable or unwilling to work it out themselves. The Employee Mediation Office provides an alternative forum for employees to air and resolve interpersonal problems.
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- **EEO Disputes:** Mediation is available and recommended for all equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints. Allowing the parties to resolve the matter amicably may alleviate the need for a formal investigation or even litigation. Participants in mediation retain their right to file a claim with the EEO counselor if the mediation does not result in a mutually agreeable resolution.
  - **Grievances:** Mediation is not a required step in the formal grievance procedure, but is available and strongly encouraged for the parties involved.

### How Does the Employee Mediation Office Work?

Participation in employee mediation is strictly voluntary. Any employee of the D.C. Courts may contact the Employee Mediation Office directly to request mediation. A short intake interview will take place to determine whether mediation is appropriate. Once both parties agree to participate, in good faith, in the mediation process, a mutually acceptable mediator will be assigned to meet with the parties to conduct the mediation.