

## **Nomination Criteria and Additional Information for Secretary's Award for Excellence in Workplace Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

This award recognizes demonstrated exemplary accomplishment by those VA organizations that provide innovative and effective Workplace ADR programs. It also recognizes and highlights individual achievements made by VA employees in furthering VA's goals in the area of ADR. In addition, it serves to encourage the establishment and improvement of highly effective ADR programs throughout VA and publicize exemplary ADR programs so they may serve as models for other VA organizations.

### **SCOPE OF AWARD PROGRAM**

Traditional dispute resolution through formal administrative procedures and court litigation often imposes a "solution" handed down by a third party, typically after significant expenditures of time and resources. The use of ADR in disputes increases the parties' opportunities to resolve these disputes prior to formal administrative procedures and litigation. ADR is often less costly and time consuming and can provide long-term solutions to workplace disputes.

Outstanding ADR programs are designed to satisfy an organization's needs and are administered in such a way as to optimize use of resources and to encourage use of ADR as a primary means for resolving disputes. They provide meaningful ADR awareness and skills training for personnel. They improve the morale of the organization as well as employee satisfaction and productivity. Not only do such programs achieve significant positive results in terms of fair and expeditious dispute resolution, but they also include appropriate means for measuring and evaluating program effectiveness and success.

ADR Awards are designed to inspire healthy competition and innovation individually and among programs throughout the organization.

### **AWARD CATEGORIES**

- A. Individual ADR effort by an employee
- B. Individual ADR effort by a manager
- C. Workplace ADR program recognition

### **NOMINATION ELIGIBILITY**

Any individual or program within the VA meeting the nomination criteria may be nominated. Self-nominations will also be accepted.

## **NOMINATION CRITERIA**

Each nomination must include a brief narrative that summarizes the nominee's ADR accomplishments. The narrative summary should address the nominee's contributions in one or more of the following areas:

1. How the individual or program effectively managed conflict, thereby preventing disputes from arising and saving time and resources;
2. How the individual or program contributed to the fair, efficient, and effective resolution of disputes;
3. How the individual or program furthered the Department's mission and goals by promoting and utilizing ADR; and
4. How the individual or program encouraged others to use ADR and/or developed creative and innovative ideas and solutions.

## **DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESSING**

An ADR Award Nomination Form, including a narrative, will be submitted providing information specific to the nominator and nominee.

The nomination form and narrative should be submitted through the nominee's office, organization, or administration before being submitted to the Workplace ADR Program for consideration.

1. Veterans Health Administration (VHA): For employees of VHA, nominations must first be endorsed by the Medical Center Director then submitted to the VISN Director before submitting to the Management Support Office/EEO Affirmative Employment Team (10A2E).
2. Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA): For employees of VBA, submit nominations to the VBA Office of Diversity Management and EEO (20M2).
3. National Cemetery Administration (NCA): For employees of NCA, submit nominations through the Office of Diversity Management and EEO (41).
4. For VACO and all other organizations and employees, submit nominations through the appropriate organizational head.

## **NUMBER AND TYPE OF AWARDS**

- A. Up to three (3) awards will be made annually irrespective of the administration or size of an organization.

- B. Awards may consist of a \$2,500 cash award, certificates, plaques, and other items as permitted by law and consistent with VA policy.

Awards will be presented by the Secretary during an annual awards ceremony beginning in Fiscal Year 2009.

## **SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS**

Administrations and organizations must submit all nominations in hardcopy format with one original and three copies along with completed VA Form 0235 and mail to:

Deputy Dispute Resolution Specialist for Workplace ADR  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Resolution Management (08)  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Questions about the nomination process or the awards themselves may be directed to the Workplace ADR Program at 202- 501-2800 or by e-mail at [WorkplaceADR@va.gov](mailto:WorkplaceADR@va.gov).

## **NOMINATIONS DUE DATE**

Nominations must be received in the Workplace ADR Program Office by December 31 of each year, beginning in 2008, for recognition of outstanding ADR programs for the preceding fiscal year. Deadline may be extended if no nominations are received by the original due date. Nomination will be based on prior fiscal year ADR accomplishments.

## **SELECTION OF AWARD WINNERS**

A panel of individuals including representation from the Administrations, staff offices, and unions including those with backgrounds in ADR will assist by reviewing the nominations and recommending award winners to the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (HR&A). These individuals will include staff from the Workplace ADR Program, ADR Coordinators, Union officials, etc. The Assistant Secretary for HR&A will review recommendations and make final selections for the awards. Equal consideration will be given to all nominees.

This award program is established pursuant to VA Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards, Part IV, Honor and Non-Monetary Awards. The program was developed by the VA's Alternative Dispute Resolution Council in accordance with the Executive in Charge of the Office of Human Resources and Administration's memorandum dated April 18, 2007, recommending the establishment of the Secretary's Annual ADR Awards Program, which was approved on April 20, 2007.