

10 Reasons to Use Alternative Dispute Resolution

1. ACCESSIBLE

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) can be requested at any time by any VA employee, manager or union official by contacting the local ADR coordinator or the Workplace ADR Program. A list of coordinators are located at <http://vaww1.va.gov/adr/page.cfm?pg=86>.

2. COST EFFECTIVE

ADR services can be provided at no cost to the organization or employee.

3. FAIR AND NEUTRAL

A facilitator or mediator is assigned to each case. These individuals have no vested interest in the dispute, can be objective, encourage active listening, promote understanding, and generate options. When opinions begin to form and emotional responses surface, the parties can benefit from a third party's skills.

4. SAVES TIME AND MONEY

On average, ADR can be requested, scheduled, and completed in 30 days. Other forums used to resolve disputes such as the grievance and EEO complaint process can take months, even years to reach an outcome.

5. STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

Ineffective communication can cause workplace disputes. Facilitation and mediation are opportunities to improve communication through structured dialogue where conversations can be more meaningful and productive.

6. INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

When lines of communication are opened or improved, all parties can gain new insights and more easily determine how to address the issues in dispute with an enhanced understanding of each other's concerns.

7. DESIGN YOUR OWN SOLUTION

ADR outcomes are crafted by the parties. Through the exchange of information and ideas, you make choices on what is in your best interest. You determine if the dispute can be resolved and if not, parties can keep things from getting worse.

8. CONFIDENTIAL

ADR typically involves the parties in dispute and their designated representatives, if any. An individual with authority to make decisions may also attend or be available to the parties if needed.

Witnesses are not called and evidence is not produced. The facilitator is bound by strict confidentiality to keep anything shared in confidence unless otherwise permitted or required to disclose.

9. BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

ADR is a professional way to deal with workplace disputes. Although disagreements will occur, how we choose to deal with them lays the foundation for our working relationships with others and how we serve our customers. Even if agreements cannot be reached, one can build a relationship of respect by trying to talk and work things out instead of avoiding or doing nothing, and allowing the matter to escalate.

10. IT WORKS!

More than half of all ADR requests end in resolution. Either a mutually acceptable settlement is reached, the scope of the issues is narrowed, or a pending action is withdrawn. In most cases, the parties leave benefiting from the process.

