



NRC NEWS

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CORNELL UNIVERSITY TO PROVIDE NEUTRAL MEDIATORS FOR NRC'S ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROGRAM

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has contracted with Cornell University's Institute on Conflict Resolution to act as the neutral administrator in the agency's alternative dispute resolution program (ADR) for addressing discrimination complaints and other allegations of wrongdoing.

The Institute will make its nationwide roster of expert mediators available to the NRC, its licensees and their employees to facilitate quick and amicable resolution of workplace disputes. The agency's ADR program, announced in August, aims to promote a safety-conscious work environment by providing a means for prompt and fair resolution of worker complaints and timely and effective resolution of enforcement issues.

The NRC program aims to use ADR in two potential scenarios: (1) before initiation of an NRC investigation (so-called "early ADR"), when those involved would be the employee and the licensee; and (2) after completion of an investigation, when the parties would be the NRC and the licensee. The aim is to reach settlement within 90 days of agreeing to mediation.

"Cornell University's participation will enhance our program for responding to disputes by reassuring both workers and licensees that their complaints or concerns will be considered by a truly neutral person if they choose the early ADR approach," said Frank Congel, director of the NRC's Office of Enforcement.

For early ADR, the mediators' fees will be paid by the NRC. For ADR after an investigation has been completed, the NRC and the licensee will share the mediator's fee. The dollar amount of NRC's contract with Cornell therefore depends on how often Cornell's services are used. While Cornell's list of mediators will be offered to parties in any dispute, the parties are not obligated to choose a neutral party from that list.

More information about the NRC's alternative dispute resolution program is available on the agency's Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement.html>.

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