

Mediation Program



WHATEVER YOUR DISPUTE WE CAN HELP

Do you feel your boss treats you unfairly? Does a fellow employee's behavior, general harassment, or bad attitude cause you stress? Do you constantly disagree with your employee over policy, how things should be done, or who should do what? Is your work style and personality incompatible with those of your co-workers? Do you feel unappreciated or undermined by the people you work with? Is there an unrealistic expectation of what your job really is? Are you involved in any conflict that you just cannot resolve on your own?

Maybe you should consider mediation!

What is mediation?

Mediation is the process in which two neutral mediators facilitate communication between disputants to assist them in reaching a resolution. Mediation is voluntary.

Mediation is free

What happens in mediation?

Mediators explain the mediation process and answer any questions. Each participant tells his/her side. The mediators then help the participants to discuss the problem openly, to identify lasting solutions, and to reach an agreement that satisfies all participants. As a final step, mediators help the participants write a resolution agreement.

What does a mediator do?

Mediators try to bring mediation to an issue by:

- Listening to both sides
- Remaining impartial
- Assisting in defining issues
- Aiding the parties in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution

Who are the mediators?

They are DHR volunteers/employees with extensive training in the mediation process. They represent the diversity of the department in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, position, and educational background.

Mediation sessions are usually scheduled within one or two weeks of the request and most disputes require one session.

What is a mediation agreement?

It is a written agreement between both parties that reflects the detailed resolution of the dispute.

Where are mediation sessions held and how long do they take?

Sessions are held at all Local Departments of Social Services and DHR Central.

The length of time varies. Most mediation sessions last approximately three to four hours with follow-up sessions if needed.

Participants only mediate if they choose and they have the option to stop at any time.

Sessions are scheduled in the morning or afternoon at a location that is convenient to the participants.

What if an agreement is not reached?

If the participants cannot reach a mutually-acceptable solution, they retain their right to file a complaint, grievance, go to court, or resolve their issue in some other way.

Issues we resolve:

- General harassment
- Disputes with co-workers
- Conflict with supervisors/managers
- Conflict with direct reports
- Conflict between departments
- Personality clashes
- Boundary disputes
- Communication problems
- And many other issues

Mediation is confidential. sessions are held in private.

Mediators are not allowed to disclose what is said in a mediation session. The only record maintained is the resolution reached by the participants.

Mediation is non-binding.

The goal is to fashion a solution satisfactory to all.

Why choose mediation?

In mediation, the participants make their own decisions about what is best. Even if the participants cannot negotiate an acceptable solution, they may benefit from narrowing and better defining the issues to be resolved.

Mediation is respectful.

Mediation fosters respect for differences in beliefs and backgrounds. Mediation helps people develop and maintain ongoing working relationships.



Mediation works

Even if you have already tried to resolve your dispute and have been unsuccessful, try mediation. It has helped many in resolving their disputes.

To request a mediation session, or to learn how to become a mediator, contact the Office of Employment and Program Equity at **410-767-7655** or **410-767-7861**. It usually takes about a week to set up a mediation session.

Office of Employment and Program Equity

311 W. Saratoga Street, Room 178
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3521

(410) 767-7861

Fax (410) 333-1728

TTY (800) 925-4434

<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/oepe/>

