

Welcome to the ADR Program!

ADR refers to a variety of processes used to resolve workplace disputes at the lowest level possible in a manner which avoids the cost and time of more traditional methods, such as litigation, hearings, and appeals. ADR is considered a constructive way to address and resolve differences. ORMDI offers various ADR services. **The most widely used form of ADR is mediation.**

ADR Services

Negotiation

Facilitation

Mediation

Conflict Coaching

ORMDI/ADR Staff is responsible for the oversight and coordination of the VA's ADR Program. The Staff offers guidance and support to ADR programs throughout the VA. The ADR Staff collaborates with EEO professionals in designing, implementing, and improving programs at

their facilities, regions, and networks, to include assisting with obtaining neutrals, marketing, training, and scheduling sessions.

ADR is held face-to-face and/or virtually via phone or video conference. ADR is coordinated by efficient and appropriate means, secured within established Federal Guidelines.

ADR services can be requested by contacting our office or through your local facility: EEO Program Manager, ADR Coordinator, and/or the Director's designated appointee.

For further questions or assistance, please contact us at your convenience.

*ADR determined on a case-by-case basis

10 Reasons to Use ADR

Accessible: ADR may be requested at any time by any VA employee, manager, or union official.

Cost Effective: ADR services may be provided at no cost to the organization or employee.

Fair and Neutral: The facilitator or mediator assigned to each case has no vested interest in the dispute.

Saves Time and Money: ADR may be requested, scheduled, and completed within less than 90 days.

Structured Dialogue: ADR provides opportunities to improve communication, where conversations may be more meaningful and productive.

Increased Knowledge and Awareness: Parties can gain new insights and determine how to address issues with an enhanced understanding of each other's concerns.

Design Your Own Solution: Resolutions are crafted by the parties (Directors authorizes).

Confidential: The neutral is bound by strict confidentiality to keep anything shared in confidence, unless otherwise permitted or required to disclose.

Better Relationships: Even if agreements cannot be reached, one can still build a relationship of respect by talking and trying to work things out.

It Works! More than 1/2 of all requests end in resolution. In most cases, the parties benefit from the process.

Choose ADR!



Office of Resolution Management
Diversity and Inclusion



A Solution to Workplace Disputes

ORMDI ADR Services Information:

Email: Workplaceadr@va.gov
ADRContractsRequest@va.gov

Intranet: <https://vaww.va.gov/adr/>

Internet: <https://www.va.gov/adr/>



Negotiation

Facilitation

Negotiation is a dialogue between two or more people or parties intended to reach a beneficial outcome over one or more issues where a conflict exists with respect to at least one of these issues.

Negotiation is an interaction and process between entities who compromise to agree on matters of mutual interest, while optimizing their individual utilities. This beneficial outcome can be for all the parties involved, or just for one or some of them.

ADR offers Negotiated Agreements/Settlements. The term “negotiated agreement” has two different meanings. A negotiated agreement refers to a settlement that disputing parties reach between themselves, especially with the help of their representative. However, this happens without the benefit of formal mediation. In this context, a negotiated agreement is also termed as negotiated settlement.

Facilitation is an ADR process less formal than mediation. It involves a neutral third party, referred to as a facilitator, to assist employees, managers, and groups exchange information, obtain answers to questions, discuss decision-making, and otherwise support efficient and effective communication.

Facilitation’s main goal is to open lines of communication, thereby promoting awareness and understanding and preventing/resolving disputes. It may involve a face-to-face or virtual meeting between individuals, groups, or merely involve relaying information through the facilitator.

Facilitation should be considered when individuals or groups are unable to communicate effectively, thereby adversely affecting the mission of the organization.

Mediation

Mediation is an ADR process used to resolve problems between individuals or groups. The process uses an impartial, trained and experienced conflict resolution specialist, referred to as a neutral or mediator, who helps facilitate communication, of a confidential nature, between the parties.

Mediators help the parties discuss the problem, identify the real issues, and explore options to create a voluntary, mutually acceptable solution. They assist the parties to work through strained or emotional communications, distrust, and long-standing hostility by exploring creative solutions to the problems. But with no independent decision-making authority or ability to force a decision on either side, it is the parties who agree upon a solution that is written into a document, binding both sides, called a Settlement Agreement.

Mediation may be requested at any time by a VA employee to address a workplace dispute. Mediation may be used in lieu of, prior to, or after engaging in administrative processes such as the EEO complaint process, negotiated or administrative grievance procedure, or filing an appeal with the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Mediation is recommended when:

- There is interest in resolving the dispute quickly.
- There is a need for a private setting to discuss issues.
- The parties want someone not involved in the dispute to facilitate their communication.
- The parties want to either preserve their relationship or end the relationship in the least adversarial way.
- The parties are interested in retaining control of the outcome.

Mediation is not recommended when:

- The parties want someone to determine who is right and who is wrong.
- The dispute involves waste, fraud, patient abuse, criminal activity, or allegations of sexual harassment.

Conflict Coaching

Conflict Coaching is a tool within the ADR Program and is a one-on-one process to develop an employee’s understanding, communication skills, interaction strategies and/or interaction skills. Like other ADR processes such as facilitation and mediation, conflict coaching gives participants high quality, third party support while keeping the participants in control of decisions about their conflict situation. It combines a reflective and expert-based approach that is centered on supporting individuals through conflicts they are experiencing at work.

Conflict coaching can function prior to, during, or after mediation, and may be especially appealing when one or both parties to a dispute are uninterested in pursuing mediation. Conflict coaching may also be useful for those adapting to a new organizational setting or developing as leaders.

Benefits of Conflict Coaching

The participant is in a one-on-one setting, with a Conflict Coach, to develop his/her conflict understanding, interaction strategies, and/or interaction skills.

A participant often benefits from:

- Sharing an explanation of his/her situation with a coach;
- Responding to carefully crafted questions; and
Seeing his/her situation from other perspectives.

