

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



OFFICE OF RESOLUTION
MANAGEMENT (ORM)



Neutrals Certification Program (NCP)

Supporting VA's ADR Practitioners

ADVANCE
TRANSFORMING POTENTIAL INTO PERFORMANCE

Types of Certification



What is a neutral?

A neutral is an independent third party to a dispute who functions to assist the parties in seeking resolution without having any authority to decide the dispute or any stake or interest in its outcome.

How do I become a Certified Neutral?

VA employees can become certified as neutrals in several types of ADR processes by submitting the appropriate application to the Deputy Dispute Resolution Specialist. The requirements for each type of certification are listed below.

Every certification lasts for two years as long as the neutral remains in good standing.

MEDIATION

An ADR process in which the neutral(s) assist parties to a dispute to find a voluntary, mutually acceptable solution.

Requirements for certification

- ▶ Complete 32 hours of Basic Mediation Skills training.
- ▶ Co-mediate or mediate 4 workplace disputes and receive positive evaluations. At least 2 cases must have been EEO cases, and all should be co-mediated with a Certified Neutral.

Requirements for recertification

- ▶ Complete 20 hours of mediator or related skills training.
- ▶ Co-mediate or mediate 4 workplace disputes and receive positive evaluations. At least 2 cases must have been EEO cases, and all should be co-mediated with a Certified Neutral.

FACILITATION

An informal ADR process in which the neutral(s) assist parties to resolve issues through more effective communication, including sharing information, exchanging questions and answers, and discussing decision making.

Requirements for certification

- ▶ Complete 24 hours of Basic Facilitation Skills training.
- ▶ Facilitate or co-facilitate 8 workplace disputes and receive positive evaluations. At least 4 cases must have been EEO cases, and all should be co-facilitated with a Certified Neutral.

Requirements for recertification

- ▶ Complete 16 hours of training in facilitation skills or related topics.
- ▶ Facilitate or co-facilitate 8 workplace disputes and receive positive evaluations. At least 4 cases must have been EEO cases, and all should be co-facilitated with a Certified Neutral.



Types of Certification

GROUP FACILITATION

An informal ADR process in which the neutral(s) assist one or more groups of people having similar interests to resolve issues through more effective communication, including sharing information, exchanging questions and answers, and discussing decision making.

Requirements for certification

- ▶ Complete 32 hours of Group Facilitation Skills training.
- ▶ Facilitate or co-facilitate 3 workplace group facilitations and receive positive evaluations. At least 1 case must have been an EEO-related case, and all should be co-facilitated with a Certified Neutral.

Requirements for recertification

- ▶ Complete 16 hours of training in group facilitation skills or related topics.
- ▶ Facilitate or co-facilitate 3 workplace group facilitations and receive positive evaluations. At least 1 case must have been an EEO related case, and all should be co-facilitated with a Certified Neutral.

ADR MENTOR

An ADR Mentor is a Certified Neutral who provides support and guidance to neutrals who are developing their skills.

Requirements for certification

- ▶ Obtain and maintain certification as a VA Mediator, Facilitator or Group Facilitator.
- ▶ Complete 16 hours of mentoring training.
- ▶ Mediate or facilitate at least 12 workplace disputes and receive positive evaluations. At least 6 cases must be EEO cases.

Requirements for recertification

- ▶ Maintain certification as a Certified Neutral.
- ▶ Complete 16 hours of mentoring and/or ADR skills training.

Why join the NCP?

VA needs Certified Neutrals!

Certification is a formal recognition by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Resolution Management (ORM) that a VA employee has the training and experience to serve as a neutral in specific Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes.

ADR Program Managers across the country request VA neutrals for mediations and facilitations at various locations, including hospitals, medical centers, regional offices, canteens, and National Cemetery locations. When these requests are processed, Certified Neutrals are the first to be selected and called upon to serve their fellow employees in this way.

And certification has its privileges, including:

- ▶ Name and contact information included on a nationwide roster of VA Certified Neutrals on the Workplace ADR website.
- ▶ Interagency mediation opportunities through the Federal Executive Board Shared Neutrals Program.
- ▶ Continuing education opportunities for building ADR skills, including quarterly teleseminars and access to interagency events.
- ▶ Access to a dedicated section of the ADR Tracker system exclusively for Certified Neutrals.

Learn more about Certification!

The procedures for the NCP are established by VA Directive 5978.2: Alternative Dispute Resolution Neutrals Certification Handbook.

The Handbook and the application forms for the NCP are on the NCP webpage:

- <http://www.va.gov/adr/NCP.asp> (internet)
- <http://vaww.va.gov/adr/NCP.asp> (intranet)

For more information about available training to fulfill the NCP application requirements, go to

- <http://www.va.gov/adr/Training.asp> (internet)
- <http://vaww.va.gov/adr/Training.asp> (intranet)

For all other information please contact NCP.Coordinator@va.gov.

To find out about the ADR program in your area, please contact your local ADR Program Manager.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

ADR Program Manager

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Facility Location

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Phone

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Fax

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Email

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