STATE OF WASHINGTON
INTERAGENCY MEDIATION PROGRAM

Mediation Services currently available in Thurston County.

August, 2005

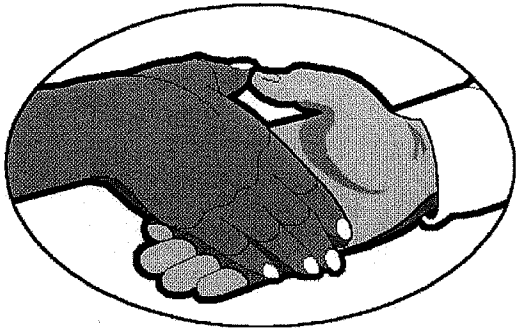
HR
WSD Personnel Washington State Employee Assistance Program

Mediation Request Line
(360) 753-3260, Ext. 104
Fax: (360) 664-0498

STATE OF WASHINGTON INTERAGENCY MEDIATION PROGRAM FOR WORKPLACE DISPUTES

Coordinated Through
The Washington State
Employee Assistance Program

MEDIATION SERVICES For Workplace Disputes



Mediation: The Alternative

What is Mediation?

Mediation is an informal, voluntary way to help people solve disagreements. Mediation has been used very successfully by courts, employees, unions, businesses, and consumer groups to resolve disputes. The State of Washington Interagency Mediation Program (IAMP), coordinated through the Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP), uses highly trained mediators who work in teams of two. Mediators are Dispute Resolution Center trained to help people communicate and solve disputes.

The mediators meet with the parties and help them talk to each other about their workplace dispute. Mediators do not take sides in a dispute. They are not advocates or judges for either side. Mediators cannot solve the problem but help people solve the problem themselves.

What workplace disagreements can be mediated?

Almost any kind of workplace disagreement can be mediated. It may be a disagreement between single individuals or between groups of individuals. (This Program offers mediation to individuals and small work groups). Types of cases that have been mediated include:

- Disagreements between co-workers about working styles or arrangements.
- Disagreements between supervisors and individuals or groups of employees about work expectations.

What workplace disputes may not be appropriate for mediation?

Some workplace disagreements should not be mediated including:

- Cases where there have been violence or the threat of violence.
- Cases involving severe harassment where one party should be disciplined if the complaint is true.
- Certain other disputes that should be handled as a management or supervisory issue.

Intake personnel (also trained mediators) will assess through an interview whether your workplace dispute is appropriate for mediation.

If I choose mediation, do I give up any other rights?

No. Mediation does not require that you waive any other rights you have to grieve, arbitrate, or litigate a dispute.

Why should I use mediation?

- Mediation works! Over 90% of the time, mediation helps the parties solve their disagreement.
- Mediation is responsive. You can get the problem dealt with quickly. A mediation session through the IAMP can generally be scheduled within 2 to 3 weeks. Most mediations take a few hours.
- Mediation is a confidential process protected under state law.

Agencies are providing this mediation service to their employees at no cost. Why? Because they believe mediation is a more cost-effective way of resolving workplace disputes. By resolving workplace disputes, agencies improve the work environment for all employees.

When and where do mediations happen?

Mediations are scheduled at a time and location mutually convenient to all parties. This may be during work hours. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request.

Who are the Mediators?

The volunteer mediators come from a wide variety of jobs within State agencies. The pool of mediators attempts to reflect the diversity of our community. Before they can mediate disputes, these employees receive extensive training and practice in mediation in order to become certified. Becoming a certified mediator is a lengthy and demanding process.

Mediators generally do not mediate disputes within their own agency under the IAMP.

How can I get more information?

All participating agencies have designated a mediator who can give more information about the IAMP. You can contact the IAMP request line at 360-753-3260 ext. 104 for more information. If you leave a message, an IAMP member will return your call.