

# Volunteer Mediator

Working under the supervision of the Executive Director and in accordance with the policies and procedures set forth by DRC, a volunteer mediator is responsible for facilitating resolution of various types of interpersonal disputes.

## Duties and Responsibilities

- Preserve the confidentiality of all aspects of any case you are assigned to mediate
- Maintain a neutral posture toward a dispute and the individuals involved.
- Remain neutral and non-judgmental during sessions, and in the content of the discussions through the mediation process
- Be sensitive to any conflicts of interest, value concerns, limits, or triggers. If necessary, withdraw from a case when effectiveness might be compromised for such concerns
- Support the individual's efforts to interact, encourage constructive behavior, and orient the parties towards a concrete solution of their differences
- Maximize each individual's opportunity for self-expression during the mediation session
- Learn how to use DRC scheduling calendar
- Write all agreements in a clear, concise, and neutral manner, in accordance with the guidelines as outlined by DRC staff and during training provided by DRC
- Participate in ongoing trainings, as outlined below
- Meet all yearly requirements set forth by UCS and DRC to maintain certification to mediate (6 hours of CE; mediate a minimum of 3 sessions per year; participate in annual evaluation)

## Qualifications

- Open-minded, objective, good listener.
- Recognition and self-awareness of limits, boundaries, and triggers, and ability to remain outwardly neutral and respectful to all parties involved in a case.
- Ability to work within established guidelines and take direction.
- Ability to keep information confidential.
- Skilled in verbal and written communication.
- Excellent interpersonal skills. Ability to respect and relate to individuals from various backgrounds and cultures in a caring and sensitive manner.
- Proficiently use a computer, including email, Zoom, Word processor, etc.
- Ability to commit to 2 years of service on DRC Mediator Panel

## Training Requirements

- Complete and submit volunteer application
- Attend a 30-hour approved Basic Mediation Training
- Be accepted into Apprenticeship Program, which includes:
  - Observe a minimum of 3 mediation sessions in small claims courts in the DRC geographical region
  - Co-mediate a minimum of 5 sessions with at least three different mediators
  - Debrief and receive feedback from senior mediators after co-mediation sessions
  - Participate in a Process Evaluation with DRC Director, and complete a final self-evaluation

## Time Commitment

- Make a 2-year commitment to volunteer for DRC
- Be available for two mediation sessions per month, plus time for a short debrief with staff after each session
- Complete 6 hours of Continuing Education per fiscal year (trainings offered by DRC throughout the year)
- Attend at least two of four in-services per year (counts towards CE requirements)
- Occasionally mentor an apprentice mediator before/after co-mediation
- Schedule available slots on DRC scheduling calendar

**VOLUNTEER MEDIATOR TRAINING APPLICATION FORM**

If you are interested in becoming a professionally trained mediator to provide service in our local courts, as well as at the Center, please complete this form.

Please print:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last, First M.I.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City, State Zip Code

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Available: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a citizen of the United States	YES	NO	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, please explain: _____			

**EDUCATION**

High School: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Did you graduate?  YES  NO Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Did you graduate?  YES  NO Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Did you graduate?  YES  NO Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

**REFERENCES**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT OR PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT**

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Responsibilities: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Reason for Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

**MILITARY SERVICE**

Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank at Discharge: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Discharge: \_\_\_\_\_

If other than honorable, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Briefly describe any volunteer activities you have participated in

Briefly describe why you would like to become a volunteer mediator

What languages do you speak?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any prior mediation experience?

\_\_\_\_\_

When would you be most available for mediation sessions?

\_\_\_\_\_

**DISCLAIMER AND SIGNATURE**

*I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.*

*I acknowledge that:*

- *if this application leads to becoming a volunteer, I am subject to a Background Check.*
- *once qualified as a volunteer panel member I am required to fulfill a minimum of 3 mediations per year for a period of two (2) years.*
- *I am responsible for my own transportation to and from mediation sessions.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The information contained on this page is used for statistical purposes about who serves our communities with mediation in our service area. When the statistical data you provide is sorted it is not associated with your name, mailing address, email or phone number and will not be used for commercial distribution.

**Primary language:**  English  Spanish Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Sex:**  Male  Female  Other

**Date of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_

**Race:**

African American  Asian  Caucasian/White  Hispanic/Latino  
 Pacific Islander/Hawaiian  Native American  Multicultural  Other

**Educational Attainment:**

No schooling completed  Some schooling (no diploma)  High School or  
Equivalent  Some college (no degree)  Associate's or technical degree  Bachelor's  
degree  Graduate or Professional degree

**Occupation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Professional Licenses:** \_\_\_\_\_



## DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER, INC.

### VOLUNTEER UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT

#### CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Your volunteering (YOU) with Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) assumes an obligation to maintain confidentiality, even after you no longer volunteer. Any violation of confidentiality seriously injures the DRC's reputation and effectiveness.

Volunteers are not permitted to remove or make copies of any DRC files, records, case information, agreements or anything of a written nature and all records acquired during a case/mediation/arbitration not taking place in a DRC office must be, within 24 hours, either mailed or hand delivered to a DRC office staff member, or turned in to the court clerk. For cases which are mediated virtually, all information about the case must be deleted from a mediator's computer after the mediation session has ended.

It is the policy of the DRC that all volunteers for DRC make the respect for client confidentiality a high priority. It is expected that a volunteer shall not violate the client's right to privacy in any manner. This policy is to include confidentiality with regard to DRC committee members, appointed advocates, staff members, mediation volunteers and any other person or stake holder involved with DRC.

#### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Every volunteer must avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest in the performance of their duties as a volunteer.

Volunteers not actually doing business themselves but who are in a position to influence or affect the DRC's business relationships with other business organizations may not seek to influence the DRC's decision to enter into, continue, or terminate a business relationship with any business or organization in which they, or any member of their immediate family, have a direct or indirect material financial interest.

Volunteers in a position to influence or affect the DRC's business relationships with any business organization that does business or seeks to do business with the DRC must disclose to the Executive Director any direct or indirect, real or potential, material financial interest that they, or any member of their immediate family, have or acquire with such business organization.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- "Immediate family" members mean a spouse, parents, children, siblings and mothers and fathers-in-law, sons and daughter-in-law's, brothers or sisters-in-law, as well as persons (other than household employees) who permanently reside in a person's home.
- A "material financial interest" means any remunerated relationship or arrangement (e.g., as an agent, representative, employee, promoter, consultant, or "finder") with a business organization or independently, or any ownership (of stock, partnership interest, etc.) in excess of five percent (5%) in a publicly traded entity; or, in the case of a non-public entity,

having a fair market value in excess of \$500, unless such interest is demonstrably not material.

#### VOLUNTEER UNDERSTANDING

I understand that as a volunteer for DRC I will perform all duties specified in the volunteer policy for the program I am volunteering for, in addition to the following:

- complete six (6) hours of continuing education each fiscal year, which is April 1-March 31;
- attend at least two (2) DRC in-service programs annually
- be observed in mediation and evaluated by the Executive Director/ADR Regional Coordinator at least once per year.

I further understand that my position as a volunteer can be terminated at any time by either myself or the DRC.

By your signature below YOU acknowledge that YOU have read and understand the foregoing Agreement, that YOU agree to comply with all of the terms of the Agreement, and that YOU have received a copy of the Agreement.

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Volunteer Signature

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Executive Director

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Date

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Date

## Volunteer Mediator Panel Policy

I understand that in order to become part of the Dispute Resolution Center's mediator panel, I must meet the following requirements.

- Successful completion of a 30-hour approved Basic Mediation Training program.
- Successful completion of DRC's Apprenticeship Program, or that of another CDR Center with the approval of DRC. This Apprenticeship Program must include at a minimum 3 observations and 5 co-mediations.
- Participate in a Process Evaluation Co-Mediation with an experienced mediator or DRC Staff, and complete a self-evaluation.

Upon completion of the training and apprenticeship requirements, DRC staff will make one of the following recommendations:

- Apprentice will be invited to join the DRC mediator panel.
- Apprentice will be recommended to join the mediator panel as a co-mediator with an experienced mediator.
- Apprentice will be recommended to co-mediate with an experienced mediator at least twice, with an additional observation by staff before final evaluation
- Apprentice will be recommended to continue training and observing until ready to once again participate in a Process Evaluation with an experienced mediator or DRC Staff.
- Apprentice may not be a good fit to join the DRC mediator panel and may be presented with other volunteer opportunities at the DRC.

Invitation to join the DRC's mediator panel is predicated upon the following agreement:

1. Make a two-year commitment to the agency as a volunteer mediator.
2. Mediate a minimum of three cases per year to maintain active status\*, but to be available to take case assignment no less than twice a month for two years.
3. Complete the required 6 hours of continuing education per year\*
4. Attend at least two DRC in-service programs annually. (Counts towards meeting the 6-hour continuing education requirement)

\*These Requirements are set forth in compliance with the guidelines provided by the NYS Unified Court System, Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution and Court Improvement.

I understand that by being accepted to the DRC Mediator Panel, I will make a two-year volunteer commitment to the Dispute Resolution Center, to be available for a minimum of two mediations a month. This volunteer commitment will become in effect once my apprenticeship training is complete.

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DRC GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVING, CO-MEDIATING, AND DEBRIEFING**

1. Observers should arrive 15-20 minutes before the mediation begins (the same time as the mediator) to review the packet materials and set-up with the mediator.
2. Before starting the session, the mediator should introduce the observer and let the parties know the observer is also covered by confidentiality legislation.
3. The observer should not sit at or near the table and should place his/her seat so as to see the mediator and the disputants.
4. The observer should be silent during the mediation session and refrain from eye contact, head nodding, etc. with the disputants.
5. Following the session, the observer should stay to debrief with the mediator. Remember that debriefing is about procedure and approaches, not content.

### **DEBRIEFING**

It is the policy of DRC to debrief with mediators following each mediation session. This debriefing generally takes place 1-5 days following the mediation. Debriefing is a learning process whereby both participants are expected to be open and introspective regarding their performance in the mediation. The purpose of debriefing is to discuss the mediation process and mediator approach to issues relevant to each mediation session in an attempt to hone and refine mediator skills. Debriefing should not be a re-cap of the parties' issues, behavior, etc. Co-mediators will be introduced to each other prior to the scheduled case/court date to discuss the logistics of co-mediation.

Co-mediators should debrief with each other following each mediation session. This debriefing should be used to discuss the mediation in terms of process and your experience working with each other as co-mediators. Co-mediators who debrief directly following the session have the opportunity to identify personal strengths and weaknesses, learn new approaches, and develop a better understanding of the approaches of others.

Apprentices should be prepared to debrief with center staff after each mediation session. A written evaluation will be completed by the mediator about the apprentice and reviewed with the apprentice by center staff during the debrief. Additionally, the following questions are examples of what you may be asked during each debriefing:

1. How do you feel the session went?
2. What did you do that helped the parties reach a resolution/agreement?
3. What techniques or skills did you use that may have helped the parties move forward?
4. What do you think you did well, or are glad you did or said?
5. What do you wish you had said or done differently? Any new insights?
6. How was it (the experience) working with your co-mediator? Was there anything she/he did or said that you were concerned about? Pleased about?
7. How did you and your co-mediator share the role? Were you comfortable with your level of participation?
8. How were you able to get the parties unstuck and moving toward an agreement? Or, if no agreement, Why were the parties stuck and not able to move toward an agreement?