



Mediation Matters

SAF/GCR Newsletter

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Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Complaints Resolution Pilot Program

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Inside this Edition

CORE 2.0.....	Cover
ADR Program Lead.....	Cover
Upcoming Training.....	Pg. 2
AVATAR Training.....	Pg. 2



Workplace disputes can result in destructive conflicts that adversely impact both our people and the mission. Many of the more difficult workplace disputes facing the Air Force reside in the EEOC arena. While the underlying issues of these complaints are already contentious, delays and perceived lack of accountability exacerbate these already tense conflicts. Fortunately, the EEOC granted the Air Force permission to implement a complaints resolution pilot program, CORE 2.0, targeted at delivering a better experience for both the complainant and the Air Force.

Because ADR can be an effective way to quickly resolve disputes at the lowest organizational level, mediation is a critical element of CORE. In fact, CORE reserves the first 30 days after acceptance of a complaint exclusively to mediation if the parties choose to utilize it. Once a complainant elects to use the CORE process, the office should determine whether the complainant is interested in mediation. If so, before the request for mediation is uploaded to IRCMS or sent to the CORE Process Office in SAF/MRBA, the office should speak to the settlement authority to determine if the Agency is willing to participate.

A successful pilot program benefits all participants through reduced processing times, elimination of redundancy, and enhanced opportunities for resolution. But the parties' best opportunity to control the outcome is through successful mediation, which often depends upon the neutrality of the mediator. As we begin CORE, we are partnering with the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service's Investigations and Resolutions Directorate ("IRD") to provide disinterested mediators for the pilot program. It is important to the success of CORE that we build and maintain a good flow of information with our partners.

The ADR Managers, in coordination with the EEO Manager where these roles are not performed by the same person, will work with our IRD partners to capture the mediation data for credit and reporting. Our IRD partners will not be granted access to Entellitrak or asked to record this data on their own. Further, the Agency is counting on you to ensure that the proper review process is followed and that the settlement agreements follow the ADR Compendium.

While the EEOC complaints process is adversarial, the emphasis on mediation in CORE 2.0 represents an opportunity for the parties to come together to solve the problem, not just resolve the case. Ultimately, the parties will determine whether settlement can be achieved. But all of us working together with our IRD partners can set the conditions for success.

WELCOME KIMBERLY MLINAZ—ADR PROGRAM LEAD

SAF/GCR is delighted to have Kim on our team! Kim started her Air Force career litigating EEOC/MSPB cases at Robins AFB, Georgia and then moved to the Labor Law Field Support Center at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. She joined our team in August on a career broadening assignment and is currently the ADR Program Lead until we have a permanent director on board. Kim has already begun to work some critical ADR initiatives and will be a great asset to the ADR program!

BASIC MEDIATION TRAINING DATES

Two basic courses have been confirmed in the new year for 7-10 February and 5-8 June. The Basic Mediation Course scheduled for 6-9 December has been cancelled. The February and June courses will have 13 centrally funded seats. There will also be eight additional seats for any student who can obtain local funding to attend.

The Course Director for the Eaker Center for Professional Development, through MAJCOM Training Representatives and ADR Strategic Advisors, will be requesting nominees for the February course this month. The Director will send a recommended list of attendees to SAF/GCR and the list will then be finalized and the students will be notified.

There will potentially be an Advanced Medication Course in August; however no centrally funded seats are available. All interested students will have to obtain local funding to attend. More info to come after the new year.

AVATAR MEDIATOR REFRESHER TRAINING

In 2013, SAF/GCR launched a computer based training module: Introduction to Mediation. This interactive refresher training allows individuals to actively learn about the Air Force mediation process and prepare for a mediation session. Our office strives to deliver meaningful training opportunities that help you hone your skills as a mediator. We need your help to determine if the Avatar module need to be improved or perhaps replaced with an even better resource. Please take advantage of this training opportunity and share your valuable feedback with us.

Below are a few items to keep in mind as you prepare for training:

- 1) Please set aside 3-4 hours for each of the two disputes offered in the training. You will not be able to save and re-enter where you left off. You will benefit from having your focus on the game, as if you are in an actual mediation session.
- 2) Please ensure you have the materials you would typically have if you were actually mediating.
- 3) You must have Unity Webplayer plug-in installed on your computer (contact your base IT office for assistance).
- 4) The program is both audio and video so ensure you have access to headphones or speakers.
- 5) Close out all other programs on your computer; if the current page is refreshed at any time, all progress on a current scenario will be LOST.
- 6) A CAC is required to access the system.

The training module can be accessed at: https://www.my.af.mil/afp/netstorage/video_files/SAF_GC/Build/ClickToPlay.html

Again, we appreciate any feedback regarding this training module. Please send all comments to Ms. Leigh Bertagnolli at leigh.a.bertagnolli.civ@mail.mil.

DON'T FORGET...

...to notify us when you have a new program manager. This allows us to update our roster and distribution lists for getting out important information, training webinar dates, etc. to the field. All changes can be sent to our workflow email listed on the cover page.

Missed our previous editions of Mediation Matters?

You can find them on the ADR public website at:

<http://www.adr.af.mil/>

A BIG THANK YOU
to our ADR Program
Managers for their
continued support and
patience as we work
through our recent
unexpected personnel and
program challenges.
We look forward to a
rewarding partnership and
program in 2017!