



How to Expand Options for Better Mediation

CHECKLIST

Improve your Option Building and achieve a successful outcome in mediation.

- ✓ Commit to participating in GOOD FAITH.
- ✓ Understand what is important to you (YOUR INTERESTS) and what could satisfy your interests beyond what you think should happen (YOUR POSITIONS).
- ✓ Generate as many IDEAS as possible without prejudging or limiting your options.

Here is a checklist for preparing for the option-building stage of the mediation process.

- Create a list of Positions and Interests**
 - o Start by listing what is most important to you and the possible outcomes.
 - o Create a list of what is important to the other party and the possible outcomes.
- Do a “what if,” exercise.** Ask yourself, “What if I could agree to what the other party wants? What conditions would need to be met?”
- When brainstorming, stay open to ideas.** Allow yourself to think creatively and stay focused on interests, not positions.
- Think about what might create barriers to participating in brainstorming such as:**
 - o Unrealistic ideas;
 - o Concerns that the other person will not follow-through on what is important to you;
 - o Limits to your negotiating authority; or
 - o Offering an idea that will create expectations among other employees.
- Discuss with the mediator in advance any concerns you have about brainstorming and how to address them.** You can raise what might be a risky idea with your mediator in a private session. The mediator can help you figure out how and when to raise it in a joint session.
- Read more about interest-based problem solving** in the Chapter: “Interest-Based Problem Solving,” pp. 32-55 from the [How to Manage and Mediate Workforce Disputes: Air Force Mediation Compendium](#).