

- A. Mediation is a method of dispute resolution in which a neutral third party assists disputing parties in communicating and developing mutually agreeable solutions to an identified conflict. The goal of mediation is to resolve conflicts. No determination will be made on the merits of the dispute.
- B. The Director of Human Resources shall be responsible for the operation of the mediation program.
- C. Mediation may be used to resolve any work-related dispute concerning misinterpretation, misapplication, or unequal enforcement of the Merit System Rules, Personnel Policies, Administrative Procedures, and/or department procedures. Pursuant to Merit System Rule 13, employees must attempt mediation prior to filing a formal grievance, except for grievances pertaining to Letters of Reprimand or allegations of sexual harassment or workplace harassment. Contacting the Human Resources Department and either proceeding with mediation or receiving notification that mediation is inappropriate constitutes an attempt.
 - 1. Any County employee may initiate the mediation process by contacting Human Resources. An initial appointment shall be scheduled by Human Resources within ten (10) business days from the date of first contact with the employee. At the initial appointment, the employee will inform Human Resources of the issue(s) in dispute. Human Resources shall then determine if mediation is appropriate.
 - 2. If a determination is made to mediate, the mediation session shall commence within ten (10) business days of the initial appointment, unless the time is extended for good cause.
 - 3. Employees participating in mediation are entitled to be assisted by a person of the employee's choosing who may participate in the discussions during mediation. If the employee requesting mediation decides to bring an assistant, the other party will be given the opportunity to do so as well. Both participating employees shall receive notice of a scheduled mediation at least three (3) full work days from the date of written notification. If either party has not obtained an assistant in the timeframe established, the mediation will proceed as scheduled.
 - 4. Human Resources may determine that the mediation would more appropriately be conducted in separate sessions for each disputing party.
 - 5. Human Resources shall establish and provide to each disputing party the Ground Rules for Mediation. Prior to the start of the mediation session, each party shall sign a confidentiality agreement. Violation of the confidentiality agreement may result in disciplinary action.

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 - 6. If the mediation is successful, a written agreement will be drafted and signed by the disputing parties. Human Resources will give a copy of the agreement to each of the disputing parties.
 - 7. If mediation is not successful, or if it is determined that mediation is inappropriate, Human Resources shall provide written notification to the disputing parties.
- D. Human Resources shall maintain the following information pursuant to State law:
 - 1. The confidentiality agreement;
 - 2. The written agreement or notification that mediation was not successful;
 - 3. Mediation notes.