

Mediation: Helping Parties Settle Their Disputes Peacefully

The Atlantic Judicial Circuit Alternative Dispute Resolution Program is dedicated to helping parties involved in civil litigation settle their disputes in a more peaceful and less expensive manner. Anyone who has been involved in litigation knows how expensive and stressful it can be to navigate through the court system. Mediation can be a fast and cost-effective alternative to litigation.

What is mediation?

Mediation is a process whereby a neutral third party (called a mediator) assists people in resolving their disputes. It enables people to settle their disputes without adversarial litigation in court and in an efficient, economical and consensual manner. The mediator works with the parties to consider options for an agreement that is fair, manageable, and one that is reached by the parties themselves. If an agreement is not reached, the case proceeds through normal court litigation.

What kinds of problems can be settled by mediation?

Both general civil cases and domestic relation cases can be referred to mediation through the circuit's program. The judge to whom a case is assigned must order the case to be mediated through the program after a review to determine appropriateness of referral, which can be initiated by request of one of the parties involved or by the judge. All a party or party's attorney needs to do to request referral of a case to mediation is to contact the ADR Program staff. The ADR Program staff will consequently review the case and work with the judge to whom the case is assigned to determine whether or not it is appropriate to refer the case to mediation through the program.

How much does mediation cost?

The cost of mediation varies depending on the mediator chosen and the time spent on the mediation session. Fifty percent of all fees by each party unless otherwise ordered by the Court or agreed to by the parties. The program offers financial assistance in some cases. An application for this purpose must be submitted to ADR staff for consideration.

For more information please contact ADR Director Paula Hendrix at (912) 368-5111 or Assistant ADR Director Kelly Little at (912) 876-7101.