

How Do I Request Mediation?

To access MCRG services, please call 1-800-860-8347 or email MCRG@fsis.usda.gov. An ADR Specialist will get back to you promptly and confidentially.

MCRG can be contacted 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Every call is important and will be returned as soon as possible.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is committed to equality of opportunity in employment. USDA prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital, parental or familial status, political beliefs, protected genetic information, equal pay, or protected EEO activity.

Employees with concerns about unlawful discrimination should first contact the Civil Rights Staff (CRS) at 1-800-269-6912. The caller will receive an offer of mediation through CRS's Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Process.

What Are Other Sources of Help?

Employee Assistance Program:
1-800-222-0364
1-888-262-7848 (TDD)

Workplace Violence Prevention & Response
Program Hotline:
1-877-987-3747

Employee Organizations/Associations:
National Joint Council of Food
Inspection Locals, AFGE (NJC)

National Association of Federal
Veterinarians (NAFV)

Association of Technical and
Supervisory Professionals (ATSP)

MCRG Contact Information

CRS Director	800-269-6912
ADR Team Leader	800-860-8347

Mediators	
Washington, DC	202-205-4172
Minneapolis, MN	612-214-1076
Raleigh, NC	919-401-5897
	919-208-9521

Customer Comments...

- *"Good experience in collaboration and effective discussions!"*
- *"We were finally able to talk!! I was very pleased with the results."*
- *"Allowed for a successful resolution foregoing the painful EEO process."*
- *"Thank you very much for the opportunity to express myself!"*
- *"I applaud the Agency's willingness to bring parties together in an attempt to resolve differences at the lowest possible level."*
- *"I felt I was able to sit down and speak openly in a professional manner without thinking of reprisal or retaliation."*



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

MCRG

Mediation & Conflict
Resolution Group



Alternative Dispute Resolution Program



United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Office of the Administrator
Civil Rights Staff

MCRG: Serving Employees One Person at a Time!

(2013)

Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Conflict prevention and resolution programs are administered by the Mediation & Conflict Resolution Group (MCRG) and are designed to help all FSIS employees prevent and resolve workplace conflicts. The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program is an informal, fast and confidential process to help employees resolve problems. ADR makes available a number of conflict resolution alternatives to assist employees, supervisors and managers in resolving disputes. The MCRG provides prompt intervention services to all individuals along with an opportunity to enhance communication and improve workplace conditions.

MCRG Services

EEO Mediation: ADR services may be offered in the EEO pre-complaint and formal complaint process. If an individual accepts the offer of ADR, management must participate in good faith. Mediation involves a neutral mediator and at least two participants in dispute with each other, as well as a resolving official. Meetings occur in person or by telephone.

Early Intervention (EI) Mediation: An EI includes at least one mediator and at least two participants in dispute with each other. Meetings occur in-person or by telephone. Management is required to participate when EI is requested and appropriate. EI is an informal, voluntary and confidential process (usually non-EEO related issues) that uses mediation to help two or more parties come to a mutually agreeable resolution.

Team Conflict Resolution (TCR): TCR involves at least one mediator or facilitator and two or more participants. Attendance may be required but participation in the process is voluntary. Some of the outcomes of a TCR include assisting the group to address and prioritize key issues, set goals, make decisions, manage conflict and build team cohesiveness.

Conflict Management Training: Group training using a mixture of lectures, discussions, exercises and role plays to effectively help groups and teams manage conflict.

Conflict Coaching/Consultation: A partnership with employees on a one-on-one basis to help develop competencies to manage conflict. The relationship can be established based on the need for assistance with a current conflict or as a proactive measure for the future.

Facilitation: A technique to help guide and direct discussions, meetings and decision-making processes, which allows groups to work more cooperatively and effectively.

Conciliation: A technique that involves an impartial third party who shuttles back and forth between disputing parties and attempts to achieve a settlement of the dispute; typically, the participants do not meet face-to-face.

Leadership Transition: A useful and proactive approach to help new leaders succeed in workplace transitions and become well synchronized and high performing teams.

Is Mediation Right For Me?

Conflict is a normal part of life. However, it's often an uncomfortable and difficult experience. Involving a neutral mediator helps employees explore new options for resolving their disputes. Mediation has advantages for everyone:

- It's fast! Focusing on problem solving, not blame.
- It's confidential; the mediator keeps all information private.
- It allows participants an opportunity to resolve their own problems.

When Should Mediation Be Used?

Mediation is most effective when:

- Time is an important consideration.
- The people involved are interested in resolving the problem and want to have a voice in shaping the agreement.
- There is a need to work together.
- The issues do not involve serious misconduct or criminal activity.

Do I Lose Any Rights By Using Mediation?

No. Employees do not give up any rights by electing mediation. If an employee is not satisfied with the mediation outcome, the employee can continue to pursue the matter as a grievance, discrimination complaint, or other appropriate process. The timeframes for doing so are explained to the parties.

Who Are the Mediators?

FSIS mediators are skilled professionals with years of experience assisting people in resolving workplace disputes. Mediators help employees talk openly and frankly to each other in order to identify issues and reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

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