



**RESOLUTION
WASHINGTON**

Accessing Mediation and Facilitation Services through Resolution Washington

Department of Enterprise Services Approved Vendor
Master Mediation Contract #04215 &
Master Facilitation Contract #05814

WHAT IS A DRC?

DRC stands for Dispute Resolution Center. Washington State has 21 DRCs providing services in counties where more than 90% of the state's population live. Most DRCs are not-for-profit agencies, which provide mediation and facilitation services and training to community members. The 21 DRCs operate independently and work closely together through a statewide association – Resolution Washington (www.ResolutionWA.org) – to standardize services throughout the state.

The Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County serves as the administrative agent for public agencies and employees seeking mediation or facilitation through Resolution Washington under the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Master Contracts #04215 (mediation) and #05814 (facilitation).

FOUR WAYS MEDIATION CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION SUCCEED

1. If you want an *easier work life* and higher job satisfaction, try mediation — mediation reduces the stress you experience from conflict and puts today's conflict behind you.
2. If you want to have *more control*, try mediation — mediation balances power and lets you craft the solutions yourself instead of having them imposed by someone else.
3. If you want *respect in the workplace*, try mediation — mediation promotes positive communication and acknowledges that everyone's voice matters, and that everyone participates in crafting the solution.
4. If you want *efficiency and effectiveness*, try mediation — mediation gets to a solution faster than fighting, and mediated solutions last longer because they are jointly created.

MEDIATION AND FACILITATION BASICS

DRC mediators serve as trained neutral facilitators. Their role is to hold a safe and productive space where parties can identify common ground, keep the conversation moving forward, and arrive at mutually beneficial agreements. We find that when both parties are able to follow the mediation/facilitation process and make a good faith effort, 80% of DRC clients reach a full or partial agreement of their own making – not imposed by attorneys or judges – and 90% of those clients have been able to stick with those agreements over time when asked six months later.

1. What are interest-based mediation and facilitation?

Interest-based mediation and facilitation are processes to help people work through conflicts, miscommunication, and disagreements with a goal towards finding solutions that all involved can support and carry out. Both processes are most often successful when parties work together with the mediators to identify common values, needs, and interests. DRC mediations are quite different than the positional, separate room shuttle negotiations you may have seen in labor relations mediations provided by the Public Employment

Relations Commission (PERC). DRC mediators help the parties to see beyond their emotions and find what values, needs, and interests underlie their emotions. From this awareness come win-win solutions and successful agreements.

2. What is the goal of mediation or facilitation?

Mediation and facilitation empower parties to work together to arrive at mutually acceptable agreements of their own making. The role of the mediators/facilitators is to facilitate a productive dialogue that allows both parties to safely express their needs and values and help them come to a satisfying resolution.

3. How long does a mediation or facilitation session generally last?

The length of sessions varies depending on the DRC. Most last about two to three hours. If additional time is needed, the parties may choose to schedule an additional mediation session with the same or new mediators/facilitators.

4. How can I determine if mediation or facilitation is the appropriate processes to address a particular conflict?

When you call the Thurston County DRC, the person who answers the telephone – called a conciliator – will answer questions about the mediation or facilitation process and help you determine whether mediation or facilitation is appropriate for the dispute in question. Conciliators talk to all parties who will be engaged in the process to learn more about the conflict and the parties' willingness to participate before scheduling a face-to-face session.

CONFIDENTIALITY/LEGAL CONCERNS

1. Can the parties be assured that the information they share will be confidential?

DRCs have policies and procedures to ensure confidentiality for the parties. After a mediation or facilitation is completed, all notes are destroyed and only required documents are retained. The Washington State Uniform Mediation Act (Chapter 7.07 RCW) includes provisions that prevent the courts from requiring mediators or staff to testify about a case. There are a few exceptions to the confidentiality of sessions that relate to reporting abuse and other topics as outlined in the Uniform Mediation Act.

2. What information can a supervisor, human resources staff, or other non-participant obtain about a mediation or facilitation session?

DRCs can tell supervisors, administrators, or human resource staff if a session took place and who attended. Otherwise, everything else that occurs in the session is confidential because DRCs don't make determinations or file reports. If supervisors or human resources staff request that a copy of any written agreements be shared by the parties with them, this is to be determined in advance of the initiation of the mediation process.

SCHEDULING A MEDIATION OR FACILITATION SESSION

1. How does one set up a workplace mediation session with Resolution Washington under the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Master Mediation Contract # 04215 or Master Facilitation Contract #05814?

The Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County is the administrative agent for all DRCs offering mediation services through DES Master Contract #04215 and facilitation services through DES Master Contract #05814.

Call (360) 956-1155 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, or email info@mediatethurston.org and one of the conciliators will walk you through the process.

2. How quickly can a workplace mediation or facilitation session be scheduled?

Most sessions occur no later than two to three weeks from the time all parties agree to participate or from the date the DRC determines the conflict is appropriate for mediation or facilitation. Prior to sessions, DRC conciliators also confer with the parties to the mediation or facilitation, which will have a bearing on when the session will be held.

3. What assurance can you provide that the mediators/facilitators are competent and well-trained?

DRC mediators undertake an intensive educational path to become a certified mediator with a DRC. After taking the 40-hour mediation training through their local DRC, they complete an extensive practicum and go on to participate in advanced training to tackle more complex cases. Many mediators also participate in ongoing professional development opportunities through their local DRC.

4. Where are mediation or facilitation sessions held?

Sessions can be held at a space within your facility, but the DRCs recommend that a neutral location the DRCs provide is a better choice than the employees' workplace. Providing private and safe places for all parties for mediation and facilitation sessions is very important.

5. How much does a workplace mediation session cost?

The cost is not to exceed \$500 per hour, and is negotiable if that amount poses a burden. DRCs may charge only for time spent at the mediation table.

6. How much does a workplace facilitation session cost?

The cost is not to exceed \$225 per hour, and is negotiable if that amount poses a burden. DRCs may charge for all time spent, including work preparing parties, conducting interviews, facilitation time, and doing follow up work. This generally works out to approximately \$500 per hour of actual facilitation time.

OTHER DRC SERVICES

1. Can the DRCs train some of our employees to be mediators?

Yes. Training is one of the services provided by DRCs. Call your local DRC for more information. Training services are not covered under DES Master Contracts # 04215 or #05814.

2. Can the DRCs provide speakers to explain its programs and services?

Yes, gladly. Please visit www.ResolutionWA.org for contact information about your local DRC to schedule a speaker.

3. How do we obtain any of the above services or get more information about them?

Visit www.ResolutionWA.org for information about services across the state.