

**LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR) PROGRAMS**

CRC 201.9(c)
Information about Alternative Dispute Resolution

The plaintiff shall serve a copy of the ADR Information package on each defendant along with the complaint.

ADR PROGRAMS

“Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)” is the term used to describe all the other options available for settling a dispute which once had to be settled in court. ADR processes such as arbitration, mediation and settlement conferences are less formal than court and provide opportunities for litigants to reach an agreement using a problem-solving approach rather than the more adversarial approach of litigation.

MEDIATION A neutral third party called a “mediator” helps participants in the dispute create their own resolution. The mediator helps facilitate a discussion in which the parties reach a mutually agreed upon settlement. Therefore, mediation allows for more creative resolutions to disputes than other ADR processes.

The Court Mediation Program is governed by Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) 1775-1775.15, California Rules of Court (CRC) 1620-1622 and 1630-1639, Evidence Code 1115-1128, and Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC) Rules Chapter 12.

ARBITRATION A neutral third party called an “arbitrator” listens to each side in the dispute present its case. The arbitrator, who is an attorney, issues a decision based on the evidence. Although evidence is presented, arbitration is a less formal process than litigation. The decision is non-binding unless the parties agree in writing to binding arbitration.

The Court Arbitration Program is governed by Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) 1141.10-1141.31, California Rules of Court (CRC) 1600-1618, and Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC) Rules Chapter 12.

SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE A neutral third party called a settlement officer, who is also a retired judge, assists the parties in negotiating their own settlement and may evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the case.

JURISDICTIONAL LIMITATIONS

MEDIATION & ARBITRATION Any case in which the amount in dispute is between \$25,000-\$50,000 per plaintiff, and was not previously referred to the Court ADR Program, can be sent to the Court ADR Program for mediation or arbitration by stipulation, election by plaintiff or order of the court.

Parties may *voluntarily* request or initiate a mediation or arbitration proceeding, regardless of the amount in dispute.

SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE Any case, regardless of the amount in dispute, may be ordered to a settlement conference. There is no monetary limit.

REFERRAL INFORMATION

After the Court determines the suitability of a case for ADR, the Court directs the parties to the ADR Department to initiate the ADR process. Once the parties have completed the ADR intake forms, a Neutral may be selected.

NEUTRAL SELECTION

Parties may select a mediator or arbitrator from the Court Party Pay Panel or Pro Bono Panel or may hire someone privately, at their discretion. Parties are assigned to a settlement officer by court staff.

PARTY PAY PANEL The Party Pay Panel consists of mediators and arbitrators who have achieved a specified level of experience in court-connected cases. The parties (collectively) may be charged \$150.00 per hour for the first three hours of hearing time. Thereafter, the parties may be charged for additional hearing time on an hourly basis at rates established by the mediator or arbitrator if the parties consent in writing.

PRO BONO PANEL The Pro Bono Panel consists of trained mediators and arbitrators who have not yet gained the experience to qualify for the Party Pay Panel and experienced mediators and arbitrators who make themselves available pro bono. Mediators and arbitrators donate their time to the courts as a way of supporting the judicial system. It is the policy of the Court that all pro bono volunteer mediators and arbitrators provide three hours hearing time per case. Thereafter, the parties may be charged for additional hearing time on an hourly basis at rates established by the mediator or arbitrator if the parties consent in writing.

PRIVATE NEUTRAL The market rate for private neutrals can range from \$200-\$1,000 per hour.

For additional information, visit the Court ADR web application at **www.lasuperiorcourt.org** (click on ADR).

Partially Funded by the Los Angeles County Dispute Resolution Program