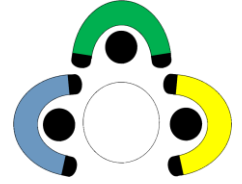




County of Los Angeles  
Department of Consumer and Business Affairs  
**Dispute Resolution Program**  
Information Statement



## How Mediation Works

### The Goal

The goal of mediation is to help you resolve a dispute. We will help you and the other person reach an agreement or understanding that works for both of you.

### Voluntary Participation

Participation is voluntary. For mediation to begin, both parties must agree to participate.

### How it works

Mediation is informal. A specially trained mediator will talk with you and the other party to help you better understand each other's views. Your discussion with the mediator can occur at a face-to-face meeting with all parties present, or during separate meetings or telephone conversations.

### Online Dispute Resolution

Your mediation can be conducted through live online conferencing with you, the mediator and the other party. Real time messaging is also available, with the mediator and both parties communicating online with instant messaging. Back-and-forth style mediation is also available. One party leaves a comment or offer on our online system, and the other party responds at their convenience.

### Neutral

Mediators are neutral third parties. They do not decide the outcome of a dispute. You and the other party will decide how to resolve your dispute. The mediator does not represent either party and does not make decisions, judgments or take sides. Their job is to help both parties reach an agreement they feel is fair.

### Legal Advice

The mediator does not give legal advice or opinions and does not make a legal ruling.

### Lawyers

You can have a lawyer with you at a face-to-face mediation if you choose to.

### Agreements

If you resolve your dispute through mediation, you may put your agreement in writing. The agreement can only be enforced or used as evidence in court, if you decide to make that part of the agreement.

### Cost

There is no cost. Our services are provided at no charge.

### Confidentiality

Anything said during mediation is private and cannot be used later or in court. The only exception is a future criminal proceeding. For more information, ask us for California Evidence Code Section 1119.

If you have questions or a complaint about our services, contact our Dispute Resolution Program Manager, Maritza Gutierrez, at 213-974-0826. Good faith efforts will be made to accommodate requests for services on evenings and weekends. These Services Are Made Possible Through Major Support From the Los Angeles County Department of Community and Senior Services and the California Dispute Resolution Program Act.