

# **PIEDMONT DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER, INC.**

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## **MEDIATION MENTORING PROGRAM POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniformity with respect to mentoring at the Piedmont Dispute Resolution Center. The following was developed by PDRC's Mediation Services Director and Executive Director and based on the Center's existing protocol, input from other jurisdictions (most notably the Prince William Office of Dispute Resolution), and the Supreme Court of Virginia's Division of Dispute Resolution Services directives.

### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

- A. This policy guides all categories of mentoring which lead to mediator certification with the Supreme Court of Virginia, including general district court, juvenile and domestic relations district court, circuit court family and circuit court civil. This policy does not cover other ADR services offered to the community such as Neutral Case Evaluation and Restorative Justice Conferencing.
- B. Mediation mentoring is offered to persons who have successfully completed a Supreme Court of Virginia certified training course relevant to the type of mentoring being sought, i.e., if the mentee is seeking general district mediation certification, s/he must have successfully completed a certified basic mediation training course.
- C. Mentoring builds skills and confidence and provides opportunities to satisfy the observation/co-mediation requirements of the Supreme Court of Virginia. It also provides opportunities to transfer knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom into a court-annexed mediation, community mediation center environment.

## **II. ENTRY INTO THE MENTORING PROGRAM**

- A. A person with previous mentoring experience may wish to affiliate with PDRC, i.e., s/he may have observed cases elsewhere, but wishes to satisfy the co-mediation requirement with the Center. The entry level with which a mentee associates with PDRC will be determined by and is at the discretion of the Services Director, through an interview with the prospective mentee, and consistent with the rules promulgated by the Supreme Court of Virginia Office of Executive Secretary, Division of Dispute Resolution Services
- B. The factors that will be considered in the entry level determination include:
  - 1. Training
  - 2. Knowledge of the court system
  - 3. Skill level
  - 4. Previous and current experience in mediation/negotiation/facilitation
- C. Mentees who have completed their observation requirement through attendance in a role-play training may be asked to observe an actual mediation case before beginning his/her co-mediations.
- D. Mentees must bring any completed observation/co-mediation forms with them to be reviewed by the mentor prior to observation/co-mediation. No mentoring services will be provided without such forms.

### **III. ASSIGNMENT OF CASES/PARTICIPATION**

- A. PDRC strives to assign cases fairly and equitably.
- B. Mentees must be paired with different mentors to experience a broad range of mediation styles.
- C. The length of time it takes to complete observation and/or mentoring depends on the number of mentees in the program, the availability of cases, and the mentee's own commitment. For general district court and juvenile court mentees, most actively involved mentees should complete the process within three to six months.
- D. PDRC mentors are senior Center mediators who have been specially selected by the Executive Director and Services Director and who have mentor certification status with the Supreme Court of Virginia. They have extensive mediation experience, advanced course work, and are active volunteer community mediators at PDRC.
- E. Mentees must have a thorough knowledge of and abide by the Virginia Supreme Court's certification requirements relevant to observation and mentoring.
- F. Specific tasks must be made by the mentor and mentee prior to a mediation and based on skill/knowledge level and the Supreme Court of Virginia requirements.

### **IV. FEE POLICY**

- A. PDRC will charge a \$75 per case observation and \$150 per case co-mediation fee, to be paid when services are rendered.
- B. Evaluations are based on the mentor's candid assessment of the trainee's skill and performance in accordance with the Supreme Court of Virginia requirements.

- C. PDRC mentors will conform to all mentor responsibilities and the *Standards of Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Certified Mediators* promulgated by the Judicial Council of Virginia.

**V. MENTEE FORMS AND MEDIATOR APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION**

- A. PDRC will provide to the mentee the *original* copy of the appropriate observation/co-mediation forms. PDRC may also maintain a file of the mentee's forms and include copies of any original documents which originated at the Center. However, PDRC is not responsible for maintaining or providing duplicate copies to a mentee.
- B. The mentee is responsible for any original copies s/he receives from the Center and is responsible for application for mediator status with the Supreme Court of Virginia.
- C. Questions regarding the certification process should be directed to the Division of Dispute Resolution Services of the Supreme Court of Virginia.

**VI. QUESTIONS/CONCERNS**

- A. Questions and concerns regarding this policy or its application should be addressed to the Services Director or the Executive Director.
- B. Concerns regarding mentor performance should be brought to the Executive Director's attention.