

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a process in which an impartial third party assists people in conflict in finding a mutually acceptable solution to their dispute. Mediation is both voluntary and confidential.

What Happens in Mediation?

Our trained mediators can help you talk things through and reach an agreement that satisfies all participants. First, the mediators will explain the mediation process and answer your questions. Then, each participant has the opportunity to tell their side, uninterrupted. Mediators do not assign blame, judge who is right or wrong, or make decisions about what should happen. They help participants discuss the problem openly and identify lasting solutions. As a final step, the mediators will help put an agreement in writing.

Who are the Mediators?

The NVMS corps of mediators are trained and experienced in mediation skills. NVMS mediators are usually assigned in teams of two and are evaluated regularly. Our mediators are drawn from the community and often bring additional professional skills to the mediation. Some are lawyers, therapists, teachers, consultants, business people, or retired professionals. NVMS can also provide mediation in several languages.

Why Choose Mediation?

✓ **Mediation Makes Sense**

In mediation, you're in control. You make your own decisions about what is best. The solution is determined by the people who will live with the consequences. The mediators do not impose their own views or solutions.

✓ **Mediation is Voluntary**

Participants only mediate if they choose to, and have the option to stop at any time.

✓ **Mediation is Confidential**

Sessions are held in private, and mediators will not disclose what is said in a mediation session. No records are kept of the discussion except the agreement that is reached by the participants.

✓ **Mediation is Quick**

We can schedule mediations within one to two weeks, and most require only a few sessions.

✓ **Mediation is Convenient**

We can schedule mediations mornings, afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays, and at a location that is convenient for you.

✓ **Mediation is Cost-effective**

Our fees are based on your ability to pay, and we mediate many disputes for no fee.

✓ **Mediation is Non-adversarial**

In mediation, parties work together towards a solution that everyone can accept.

✓ **Mediation is Respectful**

Mediation fosters respect for differences in beliefs and backgrounds. Mediation helps people to preserve and maintain ongoing relationships.

✓ **Mediation Works!**

Even if you have already tried to resolve your dispute and have been unsuccessful, try mediation. It has helped many in resolving seemingly intractable disputes.

Will You Need an Attorney?

Parties in mediation are encouraged to obtain as much information as they need to make fully informed decisions. Consulting with a lawyer is often an important part of this process.

More About Our Organization

The **Northern Virginia Mediation Service** is an independent, nonprofit corporation affiliated with the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. Since 1988, NVMS has mediated over 4500 cases, averaging about 450 cases per year. Half of these cases come from local courts (in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church and Loudoun) where mediation is offered as an alternative to litigation. Under its mission to provide dispute resolution and public education, NVMS offers several other services, including Training & Education, Facilitation, and Program Design.

Want More Information?

To learn more about mediation or to schedule a mediation session, call:

Northern Virginia Mediation Service

Fairfax/Main Office: (703) 993-3656

Prince William: (703) 330-2476

weekdays, between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m

Also visit our web page at:

www.nvmediation.org

Which Types of Disputes Can Be Mediated?

Mediation can be used to help resolve a wide range of disputes. Following are some examples:

Community Service Cases

As a service to the community, NVMS will mediate the following disputes for no fee:

- **Neighborhood** disputes, involving noise, animals, trees, driveways, fences, etc.
- **Community & Public** disputes, involving several neighbors, communities, organizations or stakeholder groups
- **Consumer/Merchant** disputes with the amount in dispute under \$1000
- **Residential Landlord/Tenant** disputes
- **Parent/Teen** and other **Intra-family** disputes
- **Attorney Fee** disputes not involving litigation

And Other Cases...

NVMS will mediate these and other disputes for a reasonable fee, which is determined by your ability to pay:

- **Child custody and visitation** disputes
- **Child and spousal support** disputes
- **Business and Employment** disputes
- **Consumer/Merchant** disputes with the amount in dispute over \$1000
- **Commercial Landlord/Tenant** disputes
- **Loan or Debt** disputes
- **Homeowner/Contractor** disputes
- **Churches, non-profits & organizations**
- **Civil Litigation** and similar disputes

What Have Others Said About Mediation?

"Issues that we could not [have] worked out on our own were all talked about and settled very nicely thanks to the mediators. They listened and helped with solutions while remaining neutral. I was very pleased with the outcome of mediation."

- a Prince William County resident involved in a custody and visitation dispute with her spouse

"Both mediators were very helpful and courteous. The process is much quicker than a trial would have been."

- a Fairfax resident involved in a dispute with an electrician who had worked on her home

"I firmly believe that by the 21st century mediation will be the preferred and accepted way for settling disputes. Saving money and maintaining peace of mind will be the standard to follow in dispute resolution."

- Judge Richard J. Jamborsky, retired from the Fairfax Circuit Court

"Having NVMS mediators available to parties in our civil cases has been very helpful. Participants who initially said they were sure they could not reach an agreement have been able to do so. Mediation can lead to good results, and saves many cases from going to trial."

- Judge Julia Cannon, of the Loudoun County General District Court

"I am a strong supporter of mediation. When parents see their attorneys about divorce matters, I think they often become focused on winning instead of what is in the best interest of their children. Mediation helps people listen to each other and keep an open mind."

- Dennis Hottell, a Virginia attorney and a fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

"Mediation is the first step towards co-parenting."

- Beverly J. Bach, Domestic Relations Attorney



**NORTHERN VIRGINIA
MEDIATION SERVICE**

In a Conflict? Try Mediation

A non-profit affiliate of
The Institute for Conflict
Analysis and Resolution
at George Mason University

4260 Chain Bridge Road, Suite A-2
Fairfax, Virginia 22030-4297
Fairfax/Main Office: (703) 993-3656
Prince William: (703) 330-2476
Spanish Line: (703) 993-1315
Email: nvms@gmu.edu

www.nvmediation.org