

State of Arkansas Grievance Mediation Program

What is Mediation and the State of Arkansas Grievance Mediation Program?

Mediation is an avenue to resolve disputes between conflicting parties. In mediation, a neutral person called a Mediator helps the parties explore ways to resolve their differences and reach an agreement that best addresses their interests. The parties must be willing to work out the problems between them. Mediation does not focus on who is right or wrong, and the Mediator has no authority to make the decision for the parties. A Mediator facilitates the mediation session and guides the parties to become their own decision-makers by understanding and listening to each other.

The State of Arkansas Grievance Mediation Program supports the resolution of differences between supervisors and employees in state government. It is a commitment to a positive approach and joint ownership of concerns and solutions. An eligible employee can request mediation through the grievance program only for a termination or suspension.

Why should I use the Mediation Program?

Mediation is generally faster and less formal in both time and resources for all parties involved. The goal of mediation is that the parties choose to work together to create solutions. Remember the Mediator is a neutral individual who is trained in conflict resolution techniques and who facilitates the conversation.

How does the Grievance Mediation Program work?

The mediation process is initiated when an employee contacts their department's Grievance Officer to request that their termination or suspension be resolved using the grievance process. The employee will submit the Grievance Form to the Grievance Officer and indicate whether they want mediation as their first step. The Grievance Officer will determine whether the complaint is eligible to be reviewed as part of the grievance program.

If the department agrees to mediation, the Grievance Officer will contact all participants to sign the Agreement to Mediate form and to determine a date, time and location that is agreed to by the parties. The Grievance Officer will then contact the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) who assigns a Mediator. Both parties may have a representative or attorney present at the mediation but witnesses are not permitted. The mediation session is confidential. At the conclusion of the mediation, a Settlement Agreement or a Non-settlement Decision is signed by all parties including the Mediator. The results of the mediation are forwarded to OPM. Any discussion or notes from the mediation is kept confidential.

How can further information about the Grievance Mediation Program be obtained?

For more information, contact the Grievance Coordinator at OPM.Disputeresolution@dfa.arkansas.gov or visit <https://www.transform.ar.gov/personnel/dispute-resolution/>.