

# The Courthouse Steps

A NEWSLETTER FOR NEUTRALS WHO SERVE THE NEW HAMPSHIRE JUDICIAL BRANCH

October 6, 2021

Wednesday



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### **Divorce/Parenting Mediators: Grant Contracts and Insurance**

Thank you to those who were able to attend the case manager/mediator summit at the end of September. As I eluded to during the meeting, recently, the ADR Office signed a new contract with the Department of Health and Human Services to receive grant funding for divorce/parenting mediation for an additional 5 years. Because we received a number of questions about the new general liability insurance requirement, I have contacted DHHS with your questions to try to get clarification. **Please wait to return the signed contracts until DHHS clarifies the insurance requirements.**

### **Eviction Diversion Specialist**

The Office received a grant from GOFERR to start a pre-filing eviction diversion program. By targeting parties upstream of the court process, the Office hopes to provide a free mediation resource to landlords and tenants to help them settle their dispute and avoid litigation all together. Landlords and tenants will be able to contact the ADR Office to request mediation and the ADR Office will facilitate obtaining consent from the people involved. We are looking for an eviction diversion specialist to help manage the program and mediate the cases. The application is located here: <https://www.courts.nh.gov/resources/mediation/adr-professionals> If you are interested, please fill out the application and submit it by **Friday 10/8/2021.**

### **Small Claims Update**

We anticipate that small claims case processing will be back up to normal levels starting January 1, 2022. Small claims cases transitioned from central processing to the local courts back in May 2021. While some local courts had (and continue to have) the resources to process small claims cases and hold pre-trial conferences, a number of courts have been unable to find either the judge time or staff time to do so. However, with the influx of new judges and the creation of the 2022 judicial calendar, we anticipate that small claims cases will resume fully by January 2022.

### **District Division Mediation Pay**

For over the past half-year, I have been working on increasing the pay for district mediators after hearing requests to do so. And so, any small claims or landlord-tenant case mediated on October 1 or later can be billed for \$80 per case. This is a 33% increase from the old rate of \$60 per case. Civil mediation pay will stay the same. The updated Statement for Payment form is here: <https://www.courts.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt471/files/documents/2021-04/nhjb-2630-dfp.pdf>

### **Feedback for the Office**

As we approach the one and a half year mark for when I started this position as ADR Coordinator, I want to hear from you about what the Office is doing well, what we could do better, and what we should work on for 2022. Please take five minutes to fill out this quick feedback survey by October 31, 2021. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q3Q5WQG>

Thank you!

Margaret and Patty

*To preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the US and NH Constitutions, the Court will provide accessible, prompt, and efficient forums for the fair and independent administration of justice, with respect for the dignity of all we serve*