

The Courthouse Steps

A NEWSLETTER FOR NEUTRALS WHO SERVE THE NEW HAMPSHIRE JUDICIAL BRANCH

January 2, 2024

Tuesday



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Happy New Year!

Happy New Year, Mediators and Neutrals! Some highlights from 2023 include:

The fee for divorce/parenting mediation increased from \$300 to \$450. The repayment requirement for the ADR Fund with Children was removed from RSA 461-A:7, and the ADR Fund eligibility for divorce/parenting mediation expanded from under 200% FPL to under 250% FPL. The ADR Office also received additional AV Grant funding which we used to create brochures, translate forms, and subtitle videos, and create new videos. And for divorce/parenting cases, the ADR Office increased the number of Neutral Case Evaluations through contracting with Judge Gordon to provide NCE services.

For the Voluntarily Mediated Agreements program, the ADR Office invited students from Harvard's Dispute System Design Clinic to interview stakeholders, evaluate the VMA process and provide recommendations to improve the quality of VMAs. Their project led to the creation of a new VMA Mediation Summary Form and a combined form for DCYF and birth parents to request VMA mediation.

The ADR Office converted the landlord-tenant program in Concord District Court from asynchronous remote mediation to in-person same-day mediation, in partnership with the court and 603 Legal Aid. Resolution Systems Institute conducted a process and outcome evaluation on the pre-filing Eviction Diversion Program, which concluded that even after rental assistance was no longer available, the percentage of mediations that resulted in agreement did not change. Additionally, the ADR Office transitioned from ERA funding to HUD CPF Grant funding to be able to continue our landlord-tenant programs.

And lastly, we are bringing in Audrey Lee and David Hoffman to provide a long-awaited training for NH Mediators, with a focus on skills applicable to Rule 32 and District Court mediation.

It is an honor to be able to support you all and the amazing work that you do. Thank you for serving the people of NH. Thank you for your empathy, professionalism, and creativity.

Margaret Huang
ADR Coordinator

NH Mediator Training – RSVP!

Audrey Lee and David Hoffman from the Boston Law Collaborative will provide a six hour in-person Advanced Mediation Skills training with two hours of pre-work at the Federal Courthouse on **January 30, 2024 from 9am-3pm.**

Audrey is the lead faculty member for the week-long Harvard Mediation Intensive and specializes in mediating employment, workplace, organization and harassment disputes. David is the John H. Watson Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School and has taught a mediation course since 2008. He specializes in mediating disputes ranging from business, construction, and intellectual property to divorce and other family related matters.

This training is now free and open to all NH Mediators. Please RSVP by January 10th here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QKPL5FZ>

Rule 32 Continuing Education Report Deadline Extended

The Rule 32 Refresher training deadline has been extended until February 29, 2024 through Administrative Order 2023-04. Rule 32 mediators can fill out the confirmation of the requirements using the attached form.

LT Mediation – Update – Data Collection – Finalizing Forms

We have received a fully executed agreement from HUD regarding the CPF Grant and an approved action plan! We are in the process of creating a new form for the post-filing landlord-tenant mediation program. **Please join me on January 9 at 12pm for a quick refresher on the process** with a projected start date of January 15th to start the data collection process.

Form Changes

Form changes effective now:

Form Number	Description	What's Changed
NHJB-2542	Notice of Intent to Mediate (VMA)	Combined form for DCYF and birth parents to request mediation.
NHJB-3220	Mediation Summary for Voluntarily Mediated Adoption (VMA)	New form for DCYF to complete and submit to mediator prior to mediation.
NHJB-3230	Landlord-Tenant Mediation Grant Data Collection Form (HUD)	Replaces the previous LT Data Collection Form to fulfill requirements from the HUD CPF Grant.
NHJB-3231	Agreement to Mediate - Eviction Diversion Program	New Agreement to Mediate form for the Eviction Diversion Program.

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