

The Courthouse Steps

A NEWSLETTER FOR NEUTRALS WHO SERVE THE NEW HAMPSHIRE JUDICIAL BRANCH

December 5, 2023

Tuesday



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Rule 32, Circuit Court District Mediator Training – RSVP!

We are finalizing a contract with Audrey Lee and David Hoffman from the Boston Law Collaborative to 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**.

If you are a Superior Court Rule 32 mediators or Circuit Court Small Claims/Civil/LT mediator **please RSVP by December 15th!** The training is free for mediators. If there is additional space, we will expand registration to other mediators.

Please RSVP here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QKPL5FZ>

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

First Appearance Video – Divorce/Parenting Mediation

The First Appearance Video, which is required by all parents going through the divorce or parenting process to watch, now has subtitles available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Arabic. The video explains how the divorce/parenting process works, including what mediation is. Subtitles for the video can be accessed by going to this webpage <https://www.courts.nh.gov/our-courts/circuit-court/family-division/divorceparenting> and clicking "Youtube."

Reminders

Two gentle reminders of general best practices and policies:

1. **Third party participants:** With limited exceptions, third party participants (meaning people who are not parties to the case or their attorneys) are *not allowed at mediation* unless agreed upon by both parties and the mediator.

2. **Communication and ADR Reports:** Please maintain a healthy communication channel with the courts that have referred cases to you. Among their many tasks, court staff are also charged with stewarding cases through the court process. As such, confirmations of emails, updates on the status of the mediation, and responding to emails in a timely manner can make a world of difference in terms of their workload and stress. *Please file ADR reports within 7 days of a mediation.*

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. **Data collection using the new process is likely to start January 1, 2024.** Please stay tuned.

Feedback Requested – Mediation Questionnaires

Mediators should be providing parties with Mediation Questionnaires at the end of each mediation. The ADR Office is considering implementing a text messaging system to send mediation questionnaires to parties through text after the mediation occurs. If you have any feedback on this idea, please email me at mhuang@courts.state.nh.us. Depending on the feedback received, the goal would be to pilot this program with Divorce/Parenting Mediation sometime in late spring/summer of 2024.

Rescheduling Working Group – Divorce/Parenting Mediation

The ADR Office has put together a working group to discuss the issue of excessive rescheduling in divorce/parenting cases. The group consists of two mediators, two attorneys, two case managers, a judge and a clerk. Our first meeting will be held in December.

Form Changes

Form changes under consideration and/or waiting approval: (DRAFT)

Number	Description	What's Changing
NHJB – 2542	Notice of Intent to Mediate (VMA)	Based on feedback from the HNMCP evaluation, the judicial branch is considering consolidating the two forms needed to request VMA into one form
NHJB-3220	Mediation Summary for Voluntarily Mediated Adoption (VMA)	Based on feedback from the HNMCP evaluation, the judicial branch is considering creating a mediation summary form for VMAs to assist mediators in obtaining a pre-mediation summary from the parties.
NHJB-3230	Landlord-Tenant Mediation Grant Data Collection Form	This form was created to track demographics for the HUD grant awarded to Office of Mediation & Arbitration. Form is completed by the parties and filed by mediators after each Landlord/Tenant case.

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

Non-Judicial Branch Training

Using Technology in Mediation

December 12, 4-5:30pm via Zoom

Free

We are all looking for innovative ideas to streamline our practice and offer the most relevant and accessible resources for our clients. Forrest Collins, Attorney, Mediator and founder of ParentingPlanBuilder.com has graciously agreed to talk with mediators and attorneys about current technology for use in our practices including, document automation, practice tools (parenting Apps, remote alcohol monitoring), Artificial Intelligence, Password managers, encryption software, Virtual Private Networks and eSigning. This training will be submitted for approval of CEUs to the Family Mediation Certification Board. This training is free and will be submitted for CEU approval through the Family Mediation Certification Board.

To register, email mary@marysargentmediation.com

Facilitating Strong Emotions – NH Listens Lunchbox Session

December 6, 12pm-12:45pm

Join NH Listens for a 45-minute informative and interactive session aimed at sharing bite-sized tips and resources from our toolbox for community engagement and facilitation. This session is Facilitating Strong Emotions; understanding emotions in ourselves and others is critical to being an effective facilitator, especially when called to be brave.

To register, visit this website:

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ejxa97jmc7a04a89&lr=4pj54lcab>