



Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR) INFORMATION PACKAGE

THE PLAINTIFF MUST SERVE THIS ADR INFORMATION PACKAGE ON EACH PARTY WITH THE COMPLAINT.
CROSS-COMPLAINANTS MUST SERVE THIS ADR INFORMATION PACKAGE ON ANY NEW PARTIES NAMED TO THE ACTION WITH THE CROSS-COMPLAINT.

WHAT IS ADR?

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) helps people find solutions to their legal disputes without going to trial. The Court offers a variety of ADR resources and programs for various case types.

TYPES OF ADR

- **Negotiation.** Parties may talk with each other about resolving their case at any time. If the parties have attorneys, they will negotiate for their clients.
- **Mediation.** Mediation may be appropriate for parties who want to work out a solution but need help from a neutral third party. A mediator can help the parties reach a mutually acceptable resolution. Mediation may be appropriate when the parties have communication problems and/or strong emotions that interfere with resolution. Mediation may not be appropriate when the parties want a public trial, lack equal bargaining power, or have a history of physical or emotional abuse.
- **Arbitration.** Less formal than a trial, parties present evidence and arguments to an arbitrator who decides the outcome. In "binding" arbitration, the arbitrator's decision is final; there is no right to trial. In "nonbinding" arbitration, any party can request a trial after the arbitrator's decision.
- **Settlement Conferences.** A judge or qualified settlement officer assists the parties in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the case and in negotiating a settlement. Mandatory settlement conferences may be ordered by a judicial officer. In some cases, voluntary settlement conferences may be requested by the parties.

ADVANTAGES OF ADR

- **Save time and money.** Utilizing ADR methods is often faster than going to trial and parties can save on court costs, attorney's fees, and other charges.
- **Reduce stress and protect privacy.** ADR is conducted outside of a courtroom setting and does not involve a public trial.
- **Help parties maintain control.** For many types of ADR, parties may choose their ADR process and provider.

DISADVANTAGES OF ADR

- **Costs.** If the parties do not resolve their dispute, they may have to pay for ADR, litigation, and trial.
- **No Public Trial.** ADR does not provide a public trial or decision by a judge or jury.

WEBSITE RESOURCES FOR ADR

- **Los Angeles Superior Court ADR website:** www.lacourt.org/ADR
- **California Courts ADR website:** www.courts.ca.gov/programs-adr.htm

Los Angeles Superior Court ADR Programs for Unlimited Civil (cases valued over \$35,000)

Litigants should closely review the requirements for each program and the types of cases served.

- **Civil Mediation Vendor Resource List.** Litigants in unlimited civil cases may use the Civil Mediation Vendor Resource List to arrange voluntary mediations without Court referral or involvement. The Resource List includes organizations that have been selected through a formal process that have agreed to provide a limited number of low-cost or no-cost mediation sessions with attorney mediators or retired judges. Organizations may accept or decline cases at their discretion. Mediations are scheduled directly with these organizations and are most often conducted through videoconferencing. The organizations on the Resource List target active civil cases valued between \$50,000-\$250,000, though cases outside this range may be considered. *For more information and to view the list of vendors and their contact information, download the Resource List Flyer and FAQ Sheet at www.lacourt.org/ADR/programs.html.*

RESOURCE LIST DISCLAIMER: The Court provides this list as a public service. The Court does not endorse, recommend, or make any warranty as to the qualifications or competency of any provider on this list. Inclusion on this list is based on the representations of the provider. The Court assumes no responsibility or liability of any kind for any act or omission of any provider on this list.

- **Mediation Volunteer Panel (MVP).** Unlimited civil cases referred by judicial officers to the Court's Mediation Volunteer Panel (MVP) are eligible for three hours of virtual mediation at no cost with a qualified mediator from the MVP. Through this program, mediators volunteer preparation time and three hours of mediation at no charge. If the parties agree to continue the mediation after three hours, the mediator may charge their market hourly rate. When a case is referred to the MVP, the Court's ADR Office will provide information and instructions to the parties. The Notice directs parties to meet and confer to select a mediator from the MVP or they may request that the ADR Office assign them a mediator. The assigned MVP mediator will coordinate the mediation with the parties. *For more information or to view MVP mediator profiles, visit the Court's ADR webpage at www.lacourt.org/ADR or email ADRCivil@lacourt.org.*
- **Mediation Center of Los Angeles (MCLA) Referral Program.** The Court may refer unlimited civil cases to mediation through a formal contract with the Mediation Center of Los Angeles (MCLA), a nonprofit organization that manages a panel of highly qualified mediators. Cases must be referred by a judicial officer or the Court's ADR Office. The Court's ADR Office will provide the parties with information for submitting the case intake form for this program. MCLA will assign a mediator based on the type of case presented and the availability of the mediator to complete the mediation in an appropriate time frame. MCLA has a designated fee schedule for this program. *For more information, contact the Court's ADR Office at ADRCivil@lacourt.org.*
- **Resolve Law LA (RLLA) Virtual Mandatory Settlement Conferences (MSC).** Resolve Law LA provides three-hour virtual Mandatory Settlement Conferences at no cost for personal injury and non-complex employment cases. Cases must be ordered into the program by a judge pursuant to applicable Standing Orders issued by the Court and must complete the program's online registration process. The program leverages the talent of attorney mediators with at least 10 years of litigation experience who volunteer as settlement officers. Each MSC includes two settlement officers, one each from the plaintiff and defense bars. Resolve Law LA is a joint effort of the Court, Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles County (CAALA), Association of Southern California Defense Counsel (ASCDC), Los Angeles Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (LA-ABOTA), Beverly Hills Bar Foundation (BHBF), California Employment Lawyers Association (CELA), and Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA). *For more information, visit <https://resolvelawla.com>.*

- **Judicial Mandatory Settlement Conferences (MSCs).** Judicial MSCs are ordered by the Court for unlimited civil cases and may be held close to the trial date or on the day of trial. The parties and their attorneys meet with a judicial officer who does not make a decision, but who instead assists the parties in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the case and in negotiating a settlement. For more information, visit <https://www.lacourt.org/division/civil/CI0047.aspx>.

Los Angeles Superior Court ADR Programs for Limited Civil (cases valued below \$35,000)

Litigants should closely review the requirements for each program and the types of cases served.

- **Online Dispute Resolution (ODR).** Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) is a free online service provided by the Court to help small claims and unlawful detainer litigants explore settlement options before the hearing date without having to come to court. ODR guides parties through a step-by-step program. After both sides register for ODR, they may request assistance from trained mediators to help them reach a customized agreement. The program creates settlement agreements in the proper form and sends them to the Court for processing. Parties in small claims and unlawful detainer cases must carefully review the notices and other information they receive about ODR requirements that may apply to their case. *For more information, visit <https://my.lacourt.org/odr>.*
- **Dispute Resolution Program Act (DRPA) Day-of-Hearing Mediation.** Through the Dispute Resolution Program Act (DRPA), the Court works with county-funded agencies, including the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer & Business Affairs (DCBA) and the Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR), to provide voluntary day-of-hearing mediation services for small claims, unlawful detainer, limited civil, and civil harassment matters. DCBA and CCR staff and trained volunteers serve as mediators, primarily for self-represented litigants. There is no charge to litigants. *For more information, visit <https://dcba.lacounty.gov/countywidedrp>.*
- **Temporary Judge Unlawful Detainer Mandatory Settlement Conference Pilot Program.** Temporary judges who have been trained as settlement officers are deployed by the Court to designated unlawful detainer court locations one day each week to facilitate settlement of unlawful detainer cases on the day of trial. For this program, cases may be ordered to participate in a Mandatory Settlement Conference (MSC) by judicial officers at Stanley Mosk, Long Beach, Compton, or Santa Monica. Settlement rooms and forms are available for use on the designated day at each courthouse location. There is no charge to litigants for the MSC. *For more information, contact the Court's ADR Office at ADRCivil@lacourt.org.*