



## 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?**

ADR helps people find solutions to their legal disputes without going to trial. The main types of ADR are negotiation, mediation, arbitration and settlement conferences. When ADR is done by phone or computer, it may be called Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). These “alternatives” to litigation and trial are described below.

#### **Advantages of ADR**

- **Saves Time:** ADR is faster than going to trial.
- **Saves Money:** Parties can save on court costs, attorney’s fees and witness fees.
- **Keeps Control** with the parties: Parties choose their ADR process and provider for voluntary ADR.
- **Reduces stress/protects privacy:** ADR is done outside the courtroom, in private offices, by phone or online.

#### **Disadvantages of ADR**

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

#### **Main Types of ADR:**

1. **Negotiation:** Parties often talk with each other in person, or by phone or online about resolving their case with a settlement agreement instead of a trial. If the parties have lawyers, they will negotiate for their clients.
2. **Mediation:** In mediation, a neutral “mediator” listens to each person’s concerns, helps them evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their case, and works with them to try to create a settlement agreement that is acceptable to all. Mediators do not decide the outcome. Parties may go to trial if they decide not to settle.

#### **Mediation may be appropriate when the parties**

- want to work out a solution but need help from a neutral person.
- have communication problems or strong emotions that interfere with resolution.

#### **Mediation may not be appropriate when the parties**

- want a public trial and want a judge or jury to decide the outcome.
- lack equal bargaining power or have a history of physical/emotional abuse.

### How to arrange mediation in Los Angeles County

Mediation for civil cases is voluntary and parties may select any mediator they wish. Options include:

**a. The Civil Mediation Vendor Resource List**

Parties may contact these organizations to request a “Resource List Mediation” for reduced-cost or free (for selected cases) mediation in person or with ODR (by phone or online).

- JAMS, Inc.: Case Manager (213) 253-9776 [mdawson@jamsadr.com](mailto:mdawson@jamsadr.com)
- Mediation Center of Los Angeles: Case Manager: (833) 476-9145 [info@mediationLA.org](mailto:info@mediationLA.org)

**These organizations cannot accept every case and they may decline cases at their discretion.**

Visit [www.lacourt.org/ADR.Res.List](http://www.lacourt.org/ADR.Res.List) for important information and FAQs before contacting them.

NOTE: This service is not available for family law, probate or small claims.

**b. Los Angeles County Dispute Resolution Programs**

<https://wdacs.lacounty.gov/programs/drp/>

- Free, day- of- trial mediations at the courthouse for small claims, unlawful detainers (evictions) and, at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse, limited civil. No appointment needed.
- Free or low-cost mediations before the day of trial for these and other case types.
- For ODR by phone or computer for small claims or unlawful detainer (eviction) cases before the day of trial, visit <http://www.lacourt.org/division/smallclaims/pdf/OnlineDisputeResolutionFlyer-EngSpan.pdf>

**c. Mediators and ADR and Bar organizations** that provide mediation may be found on the internet.

3. **Arbitration:** Arbitration is less formal than trial, but like trial, the parties present evidence and arguments to the person 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. For more information about arbitration, visit <http://www.courts.ca.gov/programs-adr.htm>
4. **Mandatory Settlement Conferences (MSC):** MSCs are ordered by the Court and are often held close to the trial date. The parties and their attorneys meet with a judge or settlement officer who does not make a decision but assists the parties in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the case and in negotiating a settlement. For information about the Court’s MSC programs for civil cases, visit: [www.lacourt.org/division/civil/msc](http://www.lacourt.org/division/civil/msc)

Los Angeles Superior Court ADR website: [www.lacourt.org/division/civil/settlement](http://www.lacourt.org/division/civil/settlement)

For general information and videos about ADR, visit <http://www.courts.ca.gov/programs-adr.htm>