



**Florida Office of the State Courts Administrator
Florida Dispute Resolution Center**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Mediation Week 2021 highlights benefits of
alternative dispute resolution in Florida's courts**

People come to Florida courts seeking justice and help resolving disputes. The state's judicial branch is set to highlight the role mediation can play in fulfilling this part of its mission.

Chief Justice Charles Canady has proclaimed October 17-23 as Mediation Week, marking the importance of alternative dispute resolution as an effective substitute to litigation.

Alternative dispute resolution has been used by Florida courts for more than 30 years. Mediation, like the rest of the work of Florida's courts, continued during the pandemic through sessions conducted remotely. More than 5,500 mediators are certified by the Florida Dispute Resolution Center. These professionals meet specific standards set by the Florida Supreme Court. Certifications are offered in the areas of county, family, circuit, dependency, and appellate mediation. In most cases, parties select the mediator. However, a mediator may be appointed by the court when litigants are unable to select their own. Certified mediators and those individuals who are not certified but who are appointed by the court to mediate cases are bound by the ethical standards contained in rules established by the Supreme Court.

This annual focus on alternative dispute resolution highlights how individuals, administrative agencies, and businesses can use mediation to develop efficient and customized solutions to conflicts.

The Florida Dispute Resolution Center was created to assist courts in developing alternative dispute resolution programs and to facilitate education and research on alternative dispute resolution in general. Mediators are not allowed to decide who is right or wrong or to tell participants how to resolve a dispute. In mediation, the parties control the process and are empowered to find the solutions that make sense to all involved in the dispute.

Mediation coordinators in courts around the state are marking the week with informational campaigns and other celebrations of alternative dispute resolution.

In addition to highlighting the benefits of mediation, Mediation Week is an opportunity to recruit new mediators to the certification process. People from various backgrounds, training, and professions can be mediators: mental health or business professionals; attorneys; educators; and others. To become certified by the Florida Supreme Court, a mediator must meet select standards. Information on requirements and training is available at flcourts.org. Additionally, information for mediators and for parties is available to help them better understand alternative dispute resolution and how to pursue a mediated resolution to disputes.

A copy of Chief Justice Canady's proclamation is attached to this email.

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