

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM APPLICATION
AND RE-APPLICATION**

1. **Eligibility.** A court-connected referral for dispute resolution services can be made only to a program approved by the Chief Justice of the Trial Court Department in which the referral is made. A “program” is defined in Rule 2 of the Uniform Rules on Dispute Resolution as: “An organization with which neutrals are affiliated, through membership on a roster or a similar relationship, which administers, provides and monitors dispute resolution services. A program may be operated by a court employee or by an organization independent of the court, including a corporation or a governmental agency . . .” The commentary to Rule 2 makes clear that a program must consist of a group of people.

2. **Approval of Programs.** All programs currently approved to provide court-connected alternative dispute resolution services in the Trial Court must reapply, and any new programs seeking approval to provide court-connected dispute resolution services must apply for approval. There are two versions of the program application, one for existing programs and for new programs.
 - A. **Existing Programs.** An “existing program” is a program that was approved in the previous application process (**January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015**) and remains in good standing to receive referrals in the Trial Court Department(s) in which it was approved to provide services. The application for existing programs is streamlined to allow programs to update information supplied in the previous application process. **If you are re-applying for approval, you must provide a copy of your Dispute Resolution Program Report for the period of July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 for each court division served.**

 - B. **New Programs.** A “new program” is:
 - (i) A program seeking approval for the first time; or

 - (ii) A program previously approved in one department and seeking to provide services in another department; or

 - (iii) A program previously approved in a department and seeking to provide a different ADR process to be used in that department.

District Court. If the District Court Department specifically requests that a program approved to provide mediation services expand to provide conciliation services within a court division, it is not considered a new program. Such programs are required to update its roster of qualified neutrals and submit the list of new conciliators with the application or within 30 days following the approval to provide conciliation services.

3. **Application Dates.**

- A. All programs seeking approval shall, no later than Friday, **November 6, 2015**, submit the Program Application form to the Trial Court Department or Departments in which the program seeks to receive referrals.
- B. The Departmental Chief Justices will make approval decisions by **December 31, 2015**.
- C. An approved program will be eligible to provide court-connected dispute resolution services commencing on **January 2, 2016**.
- D. Once approved, a program in good standing retains its approval for a period of three years ending on **December 31, 2018**.
- E. **Re-application Process.** Except for cases of demonstrated court need, the next application process will be for the period from **January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2021**.

Demonstrated court need, is defined as a court division or department without a program to serve a particular type of case, a vacancy due to the removal of a program from the current approved list, or, a need for additional services. **Note:** If any **interim approvals** were made pursuant to the “demonstrated court need” criterion since the last approval process, they will **expire on December 31, 2015, requiring re-application in accordance with the uniform application process, as an existing program.**

4. **Completing the Application.**

- A. Please type or print all answers.
- B. An Application will be approved or disapproved based on its contents alone. All applicants should, therefore, answer the questions as completely and descriptively as possible.
- C. The application has the following parts:

The Cover Sheet, which includes the Certification
Extension of Services for Existing Programs, if applicable
Fifteen Narrative Questions
List of Neutrals who satisfy the qualification standards in the Uniform Rules on Dispute Resolution (Forms 1 & 2)

- D. A program **may** append letters of support to its application.

5. **Departmental Requirements:**

- A. **District Court:** The District Court Department is not approving programs that charge fees for dispute resolution services for court referred cases. If you are NOT currently approved and are seeking approval to provide services in one or more District Court divisions, you must obtain and include with your application a letter from the first justice of each court division reflecting his or her intention to utilize the type of dispute resolution services you intend to provide.
- B. **Housing Court:** The Housing Court Department is taking applications for court-connected dispute resolution services. The Housing Court Department will continue to offer mediation and dispute intervention services in all types of cases through its “in-house” Housing Specialist Department. However, the Housing Court Department will also consider applications from other programs that have subject matter expertise in the areas of personal injury, including lead paint, mold and asbestos, zoning litigation, foreclosure litigation and environmental litigation in determining the need for court-connected dispute resolution options.
- C. **Juvenile Court:** When determining program approval, the Juvenile Court Department will consider relevant subject matter expertise including, but not limited to, education and training in the areas of child and family welfare, permanency mediation and parent-child mediation.
- D. **Land Court:** The Land Court will be seeking programs with mediators who by reason of their past experience in private practice or practice with public agencies, or as jurists have particular skills relative to real estate law, including but not limited to title issues, environmental and land use permitting and/or disputes concerning the same, and who otherwise comply with S.J.C. Rule 1:18, Uniform Rules on Dispute Resolution.
- E. **Probate and Family Court:** When determining program approval, the Probate and Family Court Department will consider relevant subject matter expertise including but not limited to training specifically in the areas of: family law; family dynamics; child development issues; non-traditional families; complex financial issues (e.g., business evaluation, retirement benefits, financial consequences of divorce); permanency mediation; guardianship; and estate, probate and related laws under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code and the Massachusetts Uniform Trust Code. Please indicate which neutrals on your roster have such subject matter expertise, and the dates and providers of the relevant specialized training.

6. **Decision-making process.** The decision of the Chief Justice of the appropriate Department of the Trial Court is final as to whether or not a program is approved in that department.
7. **Submission of Applications.**
 - A. All applications must be submitted in hard copy.
 - B. Please be advised that all Departments require that all applications be hand delivered or sent by mail. **No e-mail submissions will be accepted or allowed by the Trial Court Departments.**
 - C. **E-mail copy to Office of Court Management.** In addition to sending a “hard copy” of the application to each applicable Court Department, one copy of the application must be e-mailed to the Office of Court Management for the Trial Court, at ADR@jud.state.ma.us.
 - D. The completed Application must be **received** on or before **Friday, November 6, 2015** by the Chief Justice of the Department or Departments in which the program seeks eligibility to receive referrals. The names and addresses for the Chief Justices of each Department are:

Hon. Roberto Ronquillo, Jr.
 Boston Municipal Court Department
 Edward Brooke Courthouse, 6th Floor
 24 New Chardon Street
 Boston, MA 02114-4703

Hon. Judith C. Cutler
 Land Court Department
 Suffolk County Courthouse, 5th Floor
 Three Pemberton Square
 Boston, MA 02108

Hon. Paul C. Dawley
 District Court Department
 Administrative Office of the District Court
 24 New Chardon Street
 Boston, MA 02114-4703

Hon. Angela M. Ordoñez
 Probate and Family Court Department
 John Adams Courthouse, Mezzanine Level
 One Pemberton Square
 Boston, MA 02108

Hon. Amy L. Nechtem
 Juvenile Court Department
 3 Center Plaza, 7th Floor
 Boston, MA 02108

Hon. Judith Fabricant
 Superior Court Department
 Suffolk County Courthouse, 13th Floor
 3 Pemberton Square
 Boston, MA 02108

Hon. Steven D. Pierce
 Housing Court Department
 Edward Brooke Courthouse, 6th Floor
 24 New Chardon Street
 Boston, MA 02114-4703

8. **Qualifications Standards for Neutrals.** All neutrals must satisfy the qualification standards found in Rule 8 of the Uniform Rules on Dispute Resolution in order to perform court-connected alternative dispute resolution services. Rule 8 of the Uniform Rules of Dispute Resolution took effect January 1, 2005. The rule establishes requirements for training, evaluation, mentoring, continuing education and evaluation for the following seven categories of neutrals: mediators, arbitrators, case evaluators, conciliators, mini-trial neutrals, summary jury trial neutrals and dispute intervenors. In addition, Rule 8 provides an alternative method for meeting these requirements.
9. **List of Neutrals.**
 - A. **Standard Training Requirement or the Alternative Method.** A program seeking approval or re-approval must complete and submit with its application a list of its neutrals who meet the standard training requirement, or the alternative method. Please see **Form 1** found in the Program Application.
 - B. **Limited Exemption.** In addition to the list of neutrals who meet the standard training requirement or the alternative method, some neutrals in **existing programs** remain qualified under the limited exemption. The Limited Exemption was created as a one time exemption for mediators, arbitrators, case evaluators and conciliators from the training, mentoring and evaluation requirements of Rule 8. This exception is based on certain experience-based criteria found in Rule 8(k)(iii). **This exemption has now expired for all new programs.** However, a program that previously qualified its neutrals pursuant to Rule 8(k)(iii) is still required to list those neutrals on **Form 2** found in the Program Re-application.
 - C. **Roster.** In addition to submission with your re-application, you must submit annually to the Chief Justice in the department you serve your list of neutrals in the applicable categories above. Please calendar that obligation for the next 3 years.
10. **Certification.** A program seeking to be approved must certify in the application that its neutrals meet the requirements of Rule 8 and the accompanying Guidelines promulgated by the Chief Justice for Administration and Management. A summary of the requirements of Rule 8 and the Guidelines are enclosed with the Program Application. Rule 8 of the Uniform Rules of Dispute Resolution and the Guidelines can be found on the Internet at [www.mass.gov/courts/programs/adr/alternative-dispute-resolution.html.]