

# Los Angeles Superior Court Vendor Resource List Mediations Offered by the Mediation Center of Los Angeles

## FAQ - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Mediation Center of Los Angeles (a project of the non-profit Valley Bar Mediation Center) (the “Center”) was selected by the LA Superior Court to serve on LASC Vendor Resource List as one of two organizations to provide mediations for litigated limited and unlimited civil cases by highly-qualified mediators at affordable prices. (Our name has been changed to reflect that we offer mediations throughout Los Angeles County.) Please visit our website at [www.mediationLA.org](http://www.mediationLA.org) for more information.

We offer the following FAQs to answer some of your questions:

### **WHAT IS MEDIATION AND WHY IS IT A PREFERRED WAY TO SETTLE DISPUTES?**

Mediation is the most cost-effective, time-saving, efficient way to resolve many types of disputes - between business partners, merchants and customers, brokers and clients, real estate transactions, employment disputes, landlord and tenant, disputes between husband and wife, disputes concerning management of parents’ health and financial affairs and conflicts over inheritance, just to name a few.

**Mediation is a process whereby a professionally trained neutral facilitates the negotiations between parties to help them settle a dispute they could not settle themselves.** The meetings are voluntary and held in a confidential private setting either jointly with the mediator or separately in private caucuses.

No one is bound by the negotiations unless an agreement is reached and signed by all the parties. Parties can bring their lawyers, attend by themselves, or bring a friend or family member. It is less stressful than litigation and can resolve the dispute sometimes within one day or less.

## HOW DO I SUBMIT A CASE?

1. Select a Mediator from [Our Mediator List](#)
2. [Submit Your Case](#)
3. [Pay \\$50 Administrative Fee](#) per Party
4. Get a Reduced Rate Mediation

**HOW REDUCED RATE MODERATION WORKS:** Each party to the mediation is required to pay \$50 directly to MCLA for administrative fees. Then, the initial fee of \$450 for the first 3 hours is payable directly to the mediator. Any additional fees and costs that might become due are payable directly to the mediator. The fee is usually divided equally among the parties unless they agree otherwise. If there is a charge for the use of conference rooms, the parties will be informed by the mediator.

[YOU CAN PAY YOUR CENTER FEE ONLINE HERE](#)

## WHAT IS THE LA SUPERIOR COURT VENDOR RESOURCE LIST FOR MEDIATION?

The Court has a new program, the Vendor Resource List, for litigants to access high-quality low-cost mediations by independent providers who are experienced lawyer-mediators. Information about the program is on the Court's website at <http://www.lacourt.org/division/civil/ci0109.aspx#adrreslist>

## WHY CHOOSE A MEDIATOR FROM THE CENTER'S PANEL?

All panel mediators of the Center have been carefully selected and meet the highest standards for mediating civil cases. They have at least 10 years of good standing with the State Bar of California and have practiced various specialized areas of law over long careers. All have extensive training in mediation and experience mediating litigated cases. They have committed to act with the highest ethical standards of the mediation profession and to serve as neutrals with no conflict of interest in all cases. They satisfy required continuing education for mediators. The Center's Vendor Resource List for mediations is available to civil litigants in selected cases throughout Los Angeles County.

## DOES THE CENTER CHARGE A FEE?

The Center charges a small administrative fee of \$50 per party, payable in advance of the mediation directly to the Center by credit card or check. The Center uses Headnote and PayPal for easy payment of fees. We will send each party a link by email to pay by credit card or by direct bank fund transfer.

## **HOW MUCH DO MEDIATORS ON THE CENTER'S RESOURCE LIST CHARGE FOR MEDIATION?**

*Mediators on the Center's panel have agreed to accept cases on these exclusive terms and conditions:*

\$450 for the first 3 hours, divided equally among parties or otherwise in accordance with the agreement of the parties. There is no charge for preparation and review. Any time after the initial 3 hours will be charged at a reduced rate set by the mediator, not to exceed \$390 per hour. Payments can be made by check or credit card through Headnote or PayPal when available. The mediator fee is payable directly to the mediator who will provide the parties with a mediation and confidentiality agreement and fee agreement.

## **WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF MEDIATORS TO THE CENTER**

Mediators are independent contractors; not agents or employees of the Center or the Court. They are paid by litigants, not the Center or the Court.

## **CAN I COMMENT ON HOW WELL THE MEDIATOR PERFORMED?**

Yes. The Center will provide each party with a Client Satisfaction Survey. We invite and request that you complete it at the end of the mediation for quality control assurance and to help us to continue to improve. We request that each party and counsel return the Survey will to the Center.

## **ARE MEDIATIONS VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL?**

Yes, mediations are voluntary and confidential under California law, The mediator will provide litigants with a Confidentiality Agreement and Fee Agreement to be signed by all participants before the start of the mediation.

## **HOW DO I SELECT A MEDIATOR WHO CAN MEDIATE MY CASE?**

Litigants should contact the Center by email at [info@mediationLA.org](mailto:info@mediationLA.org) or by phone at 833-476-9145 or go to the Center's website at [www.mediationLA.org](http://www.mediationLA.org) to find a Court-eligible qualified mediator whose credentials and areas of expertise are listed. Please indicate that you are an LA Superior Court resource list litigant and request the discounted fee. Also inform the mediator whether you are an attorney or an unrepresented litigant.

## **DOES THE COURT, OR DO THE TAXPAYERS OR MEDIATORS PAY FOR THE CENTER'S SERVICES?**

No. The Center receives no compensation from the Court or from mediators and, so far, from no taxpayer money. The Center depends entirely on the small administrative fees paid by litigants of \$50 per party and on private and public donations. Donations from the public are welcomed.

## **ARE FEES REDUCED OR WAIVED IF A LITIGANT CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY?**

In some circumstances, a litigant who received a fee waiver from the Court can apply for and obtain a mediation without paying their share of the fee. A litigant who does not have a fee waiver from the Court but can establish inability to pay the fee may qualify for a reduction of waiver in the discretion of the Center.

## **WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE A DONATION?**

Contact information for the Valley Bar Information Center:

Myer J. Sankary, Esq., Program Director **OR**  
Deanna Armbruster, Program Manager

[info@mediationLA.org](mailto:info@mediationLA.org)

[www.mediationLA.org](http://www.mediationLA.org)

833-476-9145

## **WHY WAS THE VALLEY BAR MEDIATION CENTER SELECTED BY THE COURT TO PROVIDE MEDIATION SERVICES TO LITIGANTS AS ONE OF THE RESOURCE LIST VENDORS?**

The Center submitted a proposal to offer mediation services in response to the Court's Request for Proposal (RFP) and after going through the review process, the Center was selected as one of two vendors for the new Civil Mediation Vendor Resource List.

## WHY WAS THE MEDIATION CENTER OF LOS ANGELES FORMED?

In response to termination of the LA Superior Court program in 2013, for budgetary reasons, the Center was established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable corporation to educate the public about the benefits of resolving disputes through mediation and provide high quality, affordable mediation services to. It is sponsored by the San Fernando Valley Bar Association and the Center's board members include past and current presidents of the SFVBA. The Center's mission is to help people with legal disputes throughout the County of Los Angeles save the expense of litigation by early resolution of cases and to help reduce court congestion and the heavy cost of litigation on the Courts. Myer Sankary, the volunteer program director, is a Harvard Law School graduate and member in good standing of the State Bar of California since 1966 with an AV rating. He has mediated hundreds of cases since becoming a mediator in 1996. He was on the ADR executive committee of the LA Superior Court for over 10 years and past president of the Southern California Mediation Association.

## INSTRUCTIONS & FORMS

The following forms will be needed for your mediation:

**Agreement to Mediate including Waiver & Release and Confidentiality** - Review prior to mediation. -

**Settlement Agreement** - After parties have reached an agreement on all or some issues, the Settlement Agreement will reflect of the areas of consensus. This document must be filed by the parties with the court in a timely fashion. -

**Evaluation Form (Client Satisfaction Survey)** - At the conclusion of the mediation, parties will evaluate the mediator and the mediation process by using this form. OR YOU CAN FILL OUT THE FORM ONLINE. The form will be filled in at the end of the mediation. -

**Briefs** - It is customary for the parties to submit their briefs to help mediators learning about the case. The optimal time for submission is 7 business days prior to mediation. The briefs should not exceed 10 pages and any additional documents and evidence should be sent by mail, attached to email, or faxed to mediator. The briefs will be deemed as confidential unless parties agree otherwise. Your selected mediator can help you prepare the brief. -

**Mediators are prepared to answer questions about any of these forms:**

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT FORM -

SETTLEMENT STIPULATION -

CONFIDENTIALITY AND MEDIATION AGREEMENT -

## FEES

The following fees are required to be paid at the time of engaging the mediator and before the start of any mediation:

Each party to the mediation is required to pay \$50 directly to MCLA for administrative fees. Click the link below to pay online either through Headnote or Paypal or send a check to:

Mediation Center of Los Angeles (MCLA) ATT:  
Deanna Armbruster  
5567 Reseda Blvd., Ste 200,  
Tarzana, CA 91356

The initial fee of \$450.00 for the initial 3 hours is payable directly to the mediator. Any additional fees and costs that might become due are payable directly to the mediator. The fee is usually divided equally among the parties unless they agree otherwise. If there is a charge for the use of conference rooms, the parties will be informed by the mediator. All parties will be required to sign a Mediation Fee Agreement with the Mediator as well as a Confidentiality Agreement prior to the commencement of the mediation.

[YOU CAN PAY YOUR CENTER FEE ONLINE HERE](#)

## HOW DO I PAY?

Payment for the mediation is made directly to the Mediator. MCLA charges a small administrative fee of \$50 per party, payable in advance of the mediation directly to the MCLA by credit card or check. MCLA uses Headnote and PayPal for easy payment of fees.

[CLICK HERE TO PAY](#)