



# NEWS RELEASE

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**  
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## San Diego Superior Court Spotlights Mediation Week

The Superior Court of San Diego County is joining courts and other organizations around the state in celebrating Mediation Week during March 16-22, 2008.

Mediation is a confidential dispute resolution process in which a trained mediator acts as a neutral person who facilitates communication between litigants and assists parties in reaching a mutually-acceptable resolution of all or part of their dispute. Resolving disputes through litigation is often an expensive and time-consuming task, and mediation offers a beneficial alternative to litigation.

The Judicial Council of California, the policy-making body for state courts, has declared the third week in March as Mediation Week in order to increase public awareness of the availability and benefits of court mediation programs and to recognize the efforts of those who make them successful.

In San Diego, the Superior Court offers a voluntary Civil Mediation Program and facilitates a Small Claims Mediation Program. In addition, the court provides mediation services for child custody and visitation disputes.

Studies show litigants who participate in court mediation programs are usually very satisfied with the mediation process. The parties have a greater opportunity to discuss their

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concerns and more control over when and how their dispute is resolved than they would in a trial. Studies have also shown that court mediation programs save the parties time and money, improve satisfaction with the courts' services, and reduce future disputes and offences. This allows courts to spend more time on cases that cannot be resolved through mediation.

The San Diego Superior Court was recently awarded two grants from the State Judicial Council to assist the court in improving and expanding its current Civil Mediation Program. One of the grants funds a new court-wide "Mediation Program Coordinator" position, while the other is dedicated to improving the mediation section of the court's Alternate Dispute Resolution webpage. The webpage improvement will provide attorneys and parties with on-line access to the court's list of approved mediators on its Civil Mediation Panel, a subject area experience/expertise listing, as well as individual mediator profiles which provide detailed information regarding individual mediator's services, training and experience, and fees.

In addition, the court is developing an on-line mediator selection form with the capability of e-mailing primary and alternate mediator selections to the court. Following the completion of this initial phase of the website improvement project, the court will explore linking the information available on the ADR webpage to information contained in CCMS, the statewide Court Case Management System.

For more information about the San Diego Superior Court's mediation programs, please contact the Mediation Program Coordinator at [Milica.Novakovic@sdcourt.ca.gov](mailto:Milica.Novakovic@sdcourt.ca.gov).