



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
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Release: Immediately
Date: 3/13/09

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San Diego Superior Court Spotlights Mediation Week *March 15–21, 2009*

The Judicial Council of California has designated the third week in March as Mediation Week, and the Superior Court of San Diego County is joining associate courts and other organizations around the state to increase public awareness of the availability and benefits of court mediation programs.

Mediation is a form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in which a neutral third person helps the parties reach a voluntary resolution of a dispute. Mediation is less formal than traditional court proceedings and helps people resolve civil, family, juvenile matters, and other matters in a less adversarial setting. Studies have shown that court mediation programs save the parties time and money, improve satisfaction with the courts' services, and reduce future disputes and offenses.

California Superior Courts increasingly encourage and offer mediation for a broad range of issues and case types. The San Diego Superior Court formerly participated in a mandatory pilot mediation program. It currently offers a voluntary civil mediation program and facilitates a small claims mediation program, in addition to providing mediation services for child custody and visitation disputes.

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Earlier this year, the newly-renovated San Diego Superior Court's ADR webpage went "live" and includes short video vignettes, FAQ's, and separate subpages for the different types of ADR offered. In addition, the mediator selection process for civil cases has been fully automated – parties and attorneys simply click on the "Select a Mediator" button to review mediator lists and individual mediator profiles, and can then e-mail the on-line Mediator Selection Form to the Court's ADR mailbox. You can visit the ADR webpage at <http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/pls/portal/url/page/sdcourt/civil2/adr2>.

On Monday, March 16, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., Mediation Week informational tables will be set up outside the jury lounge at the San Diego Superior Court in North County (325 South Melrose Drive in Vista, CA). Information regarding the following mediation services will be available:

- Civil mediation;
- Small claims and civil harassment mediation;
- Child custody and visitation mediation; and
- DRPA (Dispute Resolution Programs Act) community mediation services.

In addition, a video monitor linked to the court's website will enable people to view a short mediation video in either English or Spanish. Milica Novakovic, the Court's Mediation Program Coordinator; Karen Thompson of North County Lifeline; and court staff will be present to answer questions and to further inform the public about the mediation process and the various mediation services offered.

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On Tuesday, March 17, Mediation Week informational tables will be set up from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. in the lobby of the Hall of Justice in downtown San Diego (330 W. Broadway). Milica Novakovic, the Court's Mediation Program Coordinator; Robin Seigle of the National Conflict Resolution Center; and court staff will be present to answer questions.

For more information about San Diego Superior Court's mediation programs, please visit the Court's ADR webpage at <http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/pls/portal/url/page/sdcourt/civil/adr> or contact the Mediation Program Coordinator at Milica.Novakovic@sdcourt.ca.gov. For more information about Mediation Week, please visit the California Courts website at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/adr/events.htm.

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