

1. **Mediation is Free:** The DOE Mediation Program is available at no cost to the parties.
2. **Mediation is Voluntary:** All participants choose whether or not to participate in mediation. No one can force a resolution on the parties - not agency management, EEO officials or the third-party neutral (mediator).
3. **Process is Neutral:** There is no requirement for any admission of guilt in the process.
4. **Mediation is Confidential:** All parties sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the mediation. Generally speaking, discussions during mediation are confidential and the terms of any settlement agreement are also confidential.
5. **Mediation Helps to Avoid Litigation:** Resolution through mediation avoids the uncertainty of a judicial outcome which could take years to obtain and comes at a higher cost. Accordingly, resolution of concerns through mediation saves time and money.
6. **Mediation May Improve Communication:** Mediation provides a neutral and confidential setting in which the parties can openly discuss their views on the underlying dispute. Enhanced communication can lead to mutually satisfactory resolutions. Parties may share information which can lead to a better understanding of issues affecting the workplace. Mediation can improve the office morale and productivity by helping to repair the parties' relationship and avoiding the tension caused by an investigative and litigious process.
7. **Mediation Allows You to Design Your Own Solution:** A neutral third party (mediator) assists the parties in reaching a voluntary, mutually beneficial resolution. Parties maintain control over the ADR process and decide their own outcome, which tends to be more durable because there is buy-in from the parties. A mediation may provide the forum to resolve all issues important to the parties and not just the underlying legal dispute.