FMCS | FEDERAL MEDIATION & CONCILIATION SERVICE

Collective Bargaining Mediation

Building Better Working Relationships

Are you prepared with the tools and techniques needed to achieve collective bargaining success in today's challenging environment?

What Is Collective Bargaining Mediation?

Collective bargaining mediation is a voluntary process occurring when a third-party neutral assists the two sides in reaching a collective bargaining agreement.

Who Can Receive FMCS Services?

FMCS services are available to all companies and the unions that represent their workforces. Federal, state and municipal agencies, and the unions representing their employees are also eligible for our services.

What Can a Mediator Add?

A mediator can improve the bargaining process by:

- **Clarifying and crystallizing issues and differences:** Mediators help the parties understand the interests that drive bargaining positions and focus on solutions.
- **Generating options for problem-solving:** Mediators help the parties focus on the interests that are the root cause of a particular problem.
- **Exploring alternatives:** Mediators facilitate discussion of the long and short term effects of proposed solutions and what might occur if no agreement is reached, leading to the parties' shared understanding.
- **Keeping talks moving:** Mediators strengthen the parties' focus and keep lines of communication open by engaging in shuttle diplomacy, information-sharing where appropriate, and rephrasing proposals so that both sides fully comprehend the issues.
- **Making suggestions:** Mediators may offer procedural or substantive recommendations.
- **Establishing realistic expectations:** Mediators offer experience and specialized knowledge.

Why Should a Mediator Be Trusted?

Federal mediators have an absolute commitment to confidentiality in collective bargaining mediation. Confidentiality of the process has been upheld in the courts, and mediators will not testify at any proceeding regarding any issue discussed during the mediation process.

When Does a Mediator Become Involved?

A mediator is involved from the time FMCS receives a notification from either party that a contract will expire. The mediator contacts the parties after receipt of this notice to offer his or her assistance immediately. The mediator will be as active as the parties desire. If desired, the mediator can provide pre-negotiation training for bargaining teams.

FMCS mediators work out of more than 60 field offices around the United States, and the address of the field office closest to you can be found on our website at www.fmcs.gov.

Mediation and Technology

FMCS offers a unique process called TAGS (Technology Assisted Group Solutions), which allows the parties to use the latest technological innovations to brainstorm and generate ideas anonymously. The TAGS system helps participants to engage more openly and honestly, to share knowledge and opinions constructively and to think more creatively. It is designed to minimize the impact of geographic separation, but is equally helpful during face-to-face meetings. We have found TAGS to be an effective tool during collective bargaining negotiations and we encourage its use. Ask your local mediator about TAGS.

For More Information

For more information about FMCS and its programs, please contact the FMCS National Office at 202-606-8100 or visit our website at www.fmcs.gov.

"Federal mediators have an absolute commitment to confidentiality in collective bargaining mediation. Mediators offer their experience and specialized knowledge and can assist the parties by crystallizing issues, exploring alternatives, and maintaining open lines of communication."