



DRS DIALOGUE

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DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA

ADR

IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

WE NEED TO TALK

DAN WASSINK, DRS
MANAGER

It's been several years since our office has had a way to regularly communicate with dispute resolution professionals around the Commonwealth (anyone remember Resolutions??) Since filling this position in February 2022, one of my goals has been to find a new way to do that. We think DRS Dialogue might be the answer.

Our plans for DRS Dialogue may morph a bit over time. But for now, we plan to issue the e-bulletin electronically on a quarterly basis. We'll tell you what DRS has been up to lately, talk about current issues that may impact you or be of general interest, highlight upcoming training opportunities, and maybe even share some interesting personal tidbits about ourselves (or one of you)!

The bottom line is that we want to stay in touch, and to be as informative and transparent as possible.

But as any good dispute resolution professional knows, effective communication is a two-way street and requires careful listening. So, we also want to hear from you. Each issue of DRS Dialogue will contain our contact information in case you want to share a concern or ask a question. And if you have a great idea for an article, be sure to let us know. We'd love to save space in this e-publication for you to share your thoughts, tips or general words of wisdom with your colleagues in Virginia.

So, let's get talking!



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ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS FOR COURT-REFERRED CASES

JON LAMP,
ADR PROGRAMS SPECIALIST

Attention mediators!

DRS is excited to announce a big change to how vouchers will be submitted for court-referred cases. Many of you might already be familiar with the Electronic Voucher Payment System (EVPS) that allows attorneys to submit DC-40 vouchers electronically. For more than a year, DRS has been working closely with our colleagues in the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) to expand the EVPS system to include mediators submitting DC-40s for custody, visitation, and support cases; as well as GDC mediators submitting requests through the ADR-MSPI form. We are hopeful that the first release of the program will be Summer of 2023, if not sooner!



The EVPS system has a lot of great features that we think you'll like, but there's a few that we want to highlight for you:

- Track the status of your invoices as they travel through the court system - from the court's approval to OES's
- See a record of the cases that you've submitted already
- Attach digital copies of the forms that you would give to the court when submitting a paper invoice, like the DC-604, the DC-400, and signed agreements

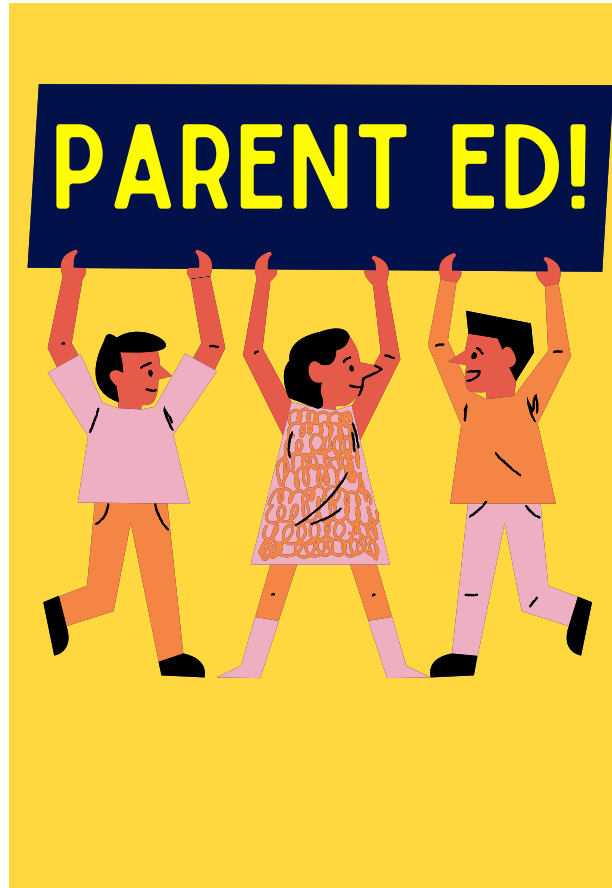
Along with these payment-related features, we're happy to announce that the EVPS system will be collecting mediation-related information that will help our office to better support you all in the field. Cases entered into the EVPS system will not need to be later entered into MIS, meaning you can do everything through the new EVPS system. This is part of a broader push by our office to improve how we use and collect mediation data for court-referred mediation programs. We believe these changes will reduce some of the work involved in reporting for mediators and program administrators, while helping us to better support mediation programs throughout Virginia. Keep an eye out for more information from our office about these changes!

PARENT EDUCATION PROVIDERS NEEDED

ANN WARSHAUER,
PARENT ED. COORDINATOR

Since 2001, Virginia Code sections 16.1-278.15 and 20-103 have required parties in contested custody, visitation and support cases to attend a 4-Hour parenting seminar. The seminar covers The Effects of Separation or Divorce on Children, Parenting Responsibilities, Financial Responsibilities and Options for Conflict Resolution. (vacourts.gov)

Seminar providers must have a location within the jurisdiction of the court where they wish to be listed. If you are a certified family mediator, licensed professional counselor, licensed clinical social worker, parenting coordinator, parent educator or family law attorney and are interested in being trained to conduct the seminars, contact Ann Warshauer, Parent Education Coordinator at awarshauer@vacourts.gov or call 703-941-2424



COORDINATORS ARE ROCK STARS!

DAN WASSINK,
DRS MANAGER

One of the best things I did shortly after coming to DRS was to meet with our Mediation Coordinators. Along with several weeks of “mentoring” by my predecessor, Sally Campbell, it was the best learning experience I could have hoped for.

Our Coordinators, essentially liaisons between the GDC and J&DR courts and certified mediators, are privy to all sorts of inside information and were graciously willing to share it with me and the rest of the DRS staff. Among many other things, those meetings taught me what an important, and too-often-difficult, role Coordinators play.

That is why I made sure to reprise those meetings in March of this year. First, we met with the GDC Coordinators and discussed topics including revisions to their contracts and the funding formula, electronic voucher submission, the plan to more fully incorporate role plays into the mediator certification process, and ways to boost court referrals to mediation.

A few days later, we covered those same issues with the J&DR Coordinators, along with the quality of child support calculations and the impact of a new Parent Education law. Once again, I was amazed at the breadth of knowledge and expertise shared during our March meetings. And I’m already looking forward to doing it all again next year!

DRS IN THE FIELD

MICHAEL BARR,
ADR ANALYST

On the ides of March, DRS gave a talk at the orientation for new circuit court clerks in Virginia. The two-day orientation, organized by the Circuit Court Services staff, was held in Ashland, VA. Dan and I had a half hour slot and utilized the opportunity (the first since 2009) to pitch the incoming circuit clerks on the benefits of alternatives to litigated disputes. We discussed the areas that we manage most relevant to their concerns: Mediation and the Judicial Settlement Conference. Since mediations at the circuit level are not paid for by the state and JSC is free to the parties and yields better data at the circuit level, we gave these areas equal time. Our discussion focused on the goals of the legislative statutes that authorize alternatives to litigated disputes, and the benefits of integrating such processes into their civil case flow management.

Namely, we noted how ADR enhances the quality of the court process, provides for faster resolution of cases, utilizes court resources more efficiently, and improves public satisfaction and perception of the court. An area that I found most illuminating to explore, and relevant to readers of this Dialogue, are the general differences between mediation and the JSC, summarized in Table A.

Overall, we hope the new clerks gained insights on what access to justice can mean for all residents of the Commonwealth and how their practice can support these important goals.

mediation	judicial settlement conference
Parties control discussion	Attorneys control discussion
Centers on needs and interests of parties	Centers on legal and trial issues of case
Facilitates discussion by active listening, identifying points of agreement	Facilitates negotiation through questioning legal positions and trial strategies
Certified Mediator	Trained retired judge
Focus on the parties	Focus on the case

THANK YOU

for all you do!

CONTACT US

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SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

Have an idea for a future article? Submit your ideas to disputeresolution@vacourts.gov.
As always, thank you for all you do for ADR in Virginia.

Dispute Resolution Services
