



## Catholic Charities Dispute Resolution Center

### **Welcome to Mediation - the following outline will help you understand the process, how to prepare and what to expect:**

**Mediation** - is an **informal** and **voluntary** conflict resolution process, using a **neutral third party** mediator or mediation team, who will assist you and the other parties involved in resolving your disputed issues. Mediations are conducted at neutral sites, at times mutually convenient to all, are **confidential** - no information presented or discussed during mediation is available to anyone outside the mediation process [except where your mediation is recommended by court] and provided at no cost [as we are only partly state funded, donations are very much appreciated].

**Your Mediator[s]** - have completed an extensive training and apprenticeship program as required by the New York State Unified Court, thus assuring you of the highest level of professional service. Mediators use their expertise to guide the process, allowing you to fully explain, define and resolve the issues and then write an agreement or legally binding contract that reflects **your** resolution efforts. Mediators are neutral, objective and will **not** take sides or influence you to make decisions you do not wish to make. The process allows mediators to ask questions, but not provide legal advice.

**Resolution** - the purpose of mediation is to help you work out a lasting solution to your conflict and can be in the form of a verbal agreement or written agreement. The agreement represents the disputants intentions and meets the needs of the court if applicable. Agreements are written during your mediation, so that the parties can review, approve and receive a copy.

**Preparation** - you have the right to have legal counsel or witnesses present (usually not necessary). Be sure to list and **define the issues** you wish to mediate and bring any materials to mediation that you feel are important and helpful to the process.

**NOTES:** (1) Mediation is a voluntary process. You or any of the other parties involved, including the mediators, have the right to withdraw at any time.  
(2) Confidentiality does NOT apply where child abuse is involved, mediators are asked to inform the Mediation Center accordingly. The Center will then decide what other agencies, if any, need to be advised.