

County Mediation Matters

A Publication of the Administrative Office of the Court

Volume 9, No. 9
October 2003

The time for extracting a lesson from history is ever at hand for those who are wise.

*Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.)
Orator and Statesman*

Courthouse Tour

Based upon the high level of interest indicated at the September CME luncheon, we have scheduled a special tour of the new Alachua County Courthouse Criminal Justice Center for volunteer mediators. The tour will begin at 1:00 p.m. on October 31st immediately following the CME Luncheon. The tour should take about one hour. It's suggested that you wear comfortable walking shoes that day.

September Stats

Volunteers mediated 59 cases in Alachua County in September and settled 62 percent. The outcome is pending in six cases. Six cases were mediated in the neighboring counties, with agreements reached in three cases. Year-to-date, 600 cases have been mediated in the circuit with an overall settlement rate of 63 percent. During the same period last year, the program mediated 609 cases throughout the circuit and had an overall settlement rate of 63 percent.

Reminders

- Never, ever, leave court files unattended. In order to maintain the integrity of the files, they must be kept with you at all times.

- Don't forget to fill in the default final judgment amount on the Results of Mediation form. This is a very important part of the total agreement and cannot be ignored. (The amount may be the same or different from the settlement amount.)

- Parties can agree to settle a case by the entry of a final judgment. It is sufficient to simply state "Mr. Jones agrees to the entry of a final judgment in the amount of \$1,200."

- Neither Judge McDonald nor Judge Kotey will enter judgments in *small claims* cases where the *principal* amount exceeds \$5,000. Five thousand dollars is the maximum jurisdiction for small claims cases. Therefore, if the total default or agreed to final judgment exceeds \$5,000 due to the addition of interest, costs, and attorney fees, you must provide a breakdown of the judgment amount.

- For efficiency's sake, parties with multiple cases who have both stipulations to write and mediations to attend will generally write the stipulations prior to mediation.

- Include correct addresses on the Results of Mediation form. If the parties do not object, it is also helpful to include phone numbers.

County Cases At Pre-Trial

We will from time to time be mediating county court cases that have been placed on the small claims pre-trial docket. These will generally be either eviction cases where the remaining issues in dispute involve monetary damages that do not exceed \$5,000, or county court cases in which one or both of the parties have objected to mediation based upon the inability to

pay a private mediator. You can distinguish between a small claims case and a county case by the case number. A county case will have a "cc" instead of an "sc." Also, the principal amount in dispute in a county case can be up to \$15,000, and default judgment amounts and agreed to judgment amounts may include principal up to \$15,000.

Important Dates

October 6 - Court Holiday

October 31 - CME Luncheon

October 15-18 - DRC/ACR Joint Conference, Coronado Springs Resort, Orlando

November 21 - CME Luncheon

December 16 - Holiday Appreciation Luncheon

How to reach us:

Robin Davis, ADR Director
Administrative Office of the Court
Phone: 352-491-4417
Fax: 352-491-4667
E-Mail: rkdc@circu8.org

Janet Hearn, Program-to-date Manager
Administrative Office of the Court
Phone: 352-491-4645
Fax: 352-491-4667
E-Mail: jkh@circu8.org

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in county mediation proceedings you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the Court Administrator's Office by phone at (352) 337-6237 or in person or in writing at 201 E. University Ave, Gainesville FL 32601 within 2 working days of your receipt of this newsletter; if you are hearing impaired, call (800) 955-8771; if you are voice impaired, call (800) 955-8770.



Eighth Judicial Circuit County Mediation Program Results

September 2003

County	Cases Mediated	Written Agreements Reached	Percent Written Agreements	Continued Cases Pending	Continued Cases Defaulted
Alachua	59	33	62%	6	0
Baker	1	1	100%	0	0
Bradford	0	0	NA	0	0
Gilchrist	1	1	100%	0	0
Levy	4	1	25%	0	0
Union	0	0	NA	0	0
Total	65	36	61%	6	0

2003 Year-To-Date

January through September

County	Cases Mediated	Written Agreements Reached	Percent Written Agreements	Continued Cases Pending	Continued Cases Defaulted
Alachua	518	314	63%	19	6
Baker	11	7	78%	2	0
Bradford	22	14	64%	0	0
Gilchrist	6	4	67%	0	0
Levy	36	18	50%	0	0
Union	7	6	86%	0	0
Total	600	363	63%	21	6

Note: Percent written agreements does not include continued cases that are pending.