Choosing State Agency ADR Coordinators

Executive Order 02-87

Agency DR Coordinator Functions

“….Each executive agency Secretary shall designate an agency ADR Coordinator to assist the Secretary in accomplishing the directives set forth above. The ADR Coordinator shall:

a. acquire and maintain general knowledge of ADR processes and the dispute resolution processes employed by the agency;
b. determine where and how ADR might be applied in the agency to increase efficiency in resolving disputes, decrease the costs of resolving disputes, and increase public and agency satisfaction with the process and results of agency dispute resolution activities;
c. provide leadership and encouragement for integrating ADR in agency practices, including: engaging key agency staff in crafting ADR policies and programs; addressing barriers to ADR use and identifying incentives to overcome them; and serving as a resource to build understanding and capacity through education and training; and
d. submit any proposed agency policies and/or procedures regarding use of ADR to the Governor's general counsel's office for review to ensure consistency and compliance with the Uniform Rules of Administrative Procedure…”

What will be the Agency ADR Coordinator Position Description and Functions?

Agency DR Coordinators will perform a complex range of functions and duties, from providing leadership and obtaining agency support to assessing needs, from addressing barriers to assisting in developing new programs. There is perhaps no single "model" position description or ideal background for DR Coordinators. However, in order to carry out their various functions set forth in E.O 02-87, an ADR Coordinator should have some knowledge of and experience with dispute resolution. In addition, other characteristics such as leadership, communication skills and knowledge of the agency will prove to be very important. Some of the ADR coordinator functions may include:

♦ Providing leadership and encouragement for integrating conflict resolution into agency practices;
♦ Engaging key agency people in crafting DR policies and programs;
♦ Assessing agency needs for conflict management and dispute resolution;
♦ Screening cases for their appropriateness for DR processes
♦ Referring cases to a state office or to private dispute resolution providers, etc.
♦ Planning, developing and implementing DR systems or processes;
♦ Acquiring or assisting in locating resources for DR, including third-party neutrals and operating funds;
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♦ Serving as a resource to build understanding and capacity throughout government and among citizens through education and training,
♦ Addressing barriers to the use of DR and identifying incentives;
♦ Assisting with the design of dispute resolution training curricula and procurement of qualified trainers;
♦ Evaluating dispute resolution processes and producing progress reports; and
♦ Participating with other ADR agency coordinators in identifying strategies, looking for cost-sharing and savings opportunities and coordinating efforts.

What to Look For in an ADR Coordinator?

To date, other state and federal experience suggests the selection of an ADR coordinator is critical to the ultimate success of the agency’s effort. That experience also suggest the following characteristics as important to consider in selecting an ADR Coordinator include:

1. Good communication and leadership skills;
2. Thorough knowledge of the agency, its programs, policies and organizational culture and dynamics;
3. Enthusiasm for carrying out this role
4. Time to carry out the DR Coordinator's responsibilities.
5. Access to and support of the agency director or key leaders.

In addition to thinking about the person best suited to fill the role of DR Coordinator, it will be important to think about where to locate that person within the agency. If the DR Coordinator is expected to take responsibility for bringing meaningful change to an agency, s/he needs to be situated in a place within the agency that will provide support for this person in carrying out designated functions.

When Does the ADR Coordinator Need to Be Appointed?

There are some key tasks and deadlines in Executive Order 02-87 which an ADR Coordinator will need to oversee and comply with. The first key deadline is the delivery of an ADR agency plan by September 1, 2002. This should be preceded and informed by an agency-wide ADR assessment. It will be important to appoint the ADR coordinator as early as possible in this process.

For more guidance information on state agency ADR, conducting assessments, visit the Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium’s website at http://consensus.fsu.edu/ADR/index.html or email at flacrc@mailer.fsu.edu or call at 850-644-630