

## **Assessment and Certification Day**

*Please read the information and requirements below before applying.*

**History:** MCDR began developing a performance based assessment rating scale in 1994 to establish standards for Maryland mediators as there was concern about mediator core competency and quality assurance. In 1996, the completed set of standards were shared with mediators from the Northern Virginia Mediation Service with the request that these mediators become familiar with the rating scale and use it to assess a small group of Maryland mediators. (MCDR thought it was best to use an out of state mediation organization to provide objectivity in terms of assessing the initial group of Maryland mediators.) Subsequently, MCDR began using this rating scale to assess Maryland mediators who wished to sit for assessment and possible certification. A few years later, in 1998, MCDR discovered that Family Mediation Canada (FMC) had also recently developed a similar rating scale that possessed some subtle differences that MCDR believed would improve the rating scale. MCDR obtained permission from FMC to use its rating scale in the MCDR assessment and certification process. MCDR recently modified the rating scale in 2016.

**Today:** The MCDR process is considered to be a national assessment and certification process. MCDR is one of eight (8) Qualifying Assessment Programs in the United States recognized by the International Mediation Institute (IMI) as a prerequisite for application to IMI. Once a mediator has been certified by MCDR that mediator may apply for IMI certification. MCDR has four (4) certified mediators who are also certified IMI mediators.

**Assessment and Certification Requirements:** Mediators, who choose to become a candidate for the MCDR assessment and certification process, need to meet the following requirements:

- 1.) The candidate needs to present a certificate of completion of a Basic 40-Hour Mediation Training that adheres to the requirements as set forth by Court Rule 17 in Maryland;
- 2.) The candidate must submit a [self statement](#) which describes in the mediators' own words how he/she believes he/she practices mediation. This self statement is used by the assessors as part of the assessment – to determine if the candidate does what he/she says he/she does in mediations;
- 3.) It is recommended that all potential candidates should have mediated at least thirty cases before sitting for certification; MCDR believes this allows sufficient experience to develop a personal philosophy and skill set;

- 4.) If the candidate is a Maryland mediator, MCDR requires membership in the Maryland Program for Mediator Excellence ([MPME, it is free to join](#)); and,
- 5.) A completed application ([click here for the application](#)) with the fee.

**Assessment and Certification Process:** The Assessment and Certification Process consists of

- 1.) A 1-hour role play which is videotaped for further use by the candidate;
- 2.) Verbal feedback from both the role players and assessors, and
- 3.) Written feedback from the assessors. (Includes scored assessment tool and narrative comments about the candidates performance.)

The candidate chooses a 1- hour role play situation – business, community, family, workplace, etc.; MCDR provides volunteer role players with the fact pattern for the role play.

**The Actual Process:** The process consists of a 1-hour role play which is observed and rated by two trained MCDR assessors. These assessors use the rating scale which covers nine (9) core mediator competencies. The *Scale* is organized into 3 practice areas: how the candidate manages the process of mediation, how the candidate manages the content of the mediation and how the candidate manages the relationships of the participants.

Upon completion of the role play, the candidate is given verbal feedback, first from the role players (once the role players have given feedback they are excused) and then from the assessors.

The assessors will score the assessment scale and write a short narrative about the candidate's performance, both of which are provided to the candidate within two (2) weeks from the date of the assessment along with a copy of the video.

The entire process is videotaped for two (2) reasons: 1.) to provide the candidate with the opportunity to view his/her performance in relation to the verbal and written feedback; and, 2.) to provide the candidate the opportunity to challenge their score, if he/she disagrees with the rating/score, and request two other MCDR assessors independently review the video and provide independent scoring of the performance.

In order to be certified through MCDR, the candidate must receive passing scores from both assessors.

Once a candidate satisfies the criteria for certification (a passing score), he/she will be given a certificate from MCDR stating he/she is a MCDR Certified Mediator.

If a candidate has not satisfied the criteria for certification, the candidate will be offered a mentoring opportunity with a certified MCDR mediator and invited to participate in the assessment process again within one year at no additional cost. The candidate can only request to re-sit for the assessment free if one assessor passes him/her and one does not.

**Unsure if you are Ready?:** Mediators who are interested in discussing the assessment process are welcome to contact Committee Co-Chairs Ramona Buck at 443-418-0392 or Thom McCloud at 301-655-0349.

**Interested in Being a Role Player?:** Participating as a role player is a way to observe how the process works before becoming a candidate. If you are interested in volunteering as a role player for an assessment day or if you would like additional information, contact, Ramona Buck at 443-418-0392.

**How to Apply for the Process;** Submit a completed application along with the one-page self-statement and application fee of \$325.00 for MCDR members and \$395.00 for non-members ([click here for information on membership](#)) to: MCDR, c/o Ramona Buck, 512 Scott Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20904.