

# Volunteer Coordination

## Best Practices

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## Volunteer Management Best Practices

Preamble:

Volunteers are the foundation of a community mediation center (CMC). Volunteers are essential to the vitality, vibrancy, and effectiveness of community mediation centers. It is important that centers invest in their volunteers to ensure quality of the service they bring to the community. Centers put an enormous amount of investment into the initial training of volunteers and the retention of volunteers is paramount for sustainable center growth. Likewise, volunteers need to know that they are valued and that they matter to the organization. The following document looks at volunteer management and how specific best practices can be used to increase volunteer retention. This goal of volunteer retention is intertwined through the best practices presented. To support volunteer growth and the quality of mediation conducted by volunteers and staff, centers should follow the CMM Quality Assurance Best Practices which are attached to this document in Appendix H.

The document is structured by first identifying volunteer management goals in the left column and is followed by specific ideas of how centers can meet these goals in the right column. Many of the ideas suggested in this document are currently in place at community mediation centers throughout the state and are meant to be a resource for centers to enhance their volunteer management. There are several appendices that show sample wording, documents, and processes. The goals suggested relate to three major components of effective volunteer management: volunteer recruitment, volunteer engagement, and volunteer communication.

#	Volunteer Management Goals	Volunteer Management Best Practice Ideas
1	CMCs recruit volunteers that meet their current and future needs, and that reflect the diversity of the community.	1.1 CMCs recruit volunteers from a variety of venues and organizations including where the center currently mediates such as: faith based organizations, community centers, libraries, senior centers, schools, etc. 1.2 CMCs distribute and post fliers in areas where the center has had an influx of mediation requests including: schools, neighborhood or community groups, government agencies, and others. 1.3 CMCs connect with other volunteer based organizations and public entities: including local volunteer centers and other organizations that recruit volunteers. 1.4 CMCs promote volunteer training opportunities at all outreach events. 1.5 CMCs include information about volunteer recruitment and training in center publicity, including: newspapers, radio stations, and local university publications. 1.6 CMC's include clear information on the center's website about becoming a volunteer 1.7 CMC's recruit at all events where they promote the use of mediation. 1.8 CMC's inform mediation participants about the opportunity to serve as mediators at the end of the

		<p>mediation.</p> <p>1.9 CMCs consider having potential volunteers do outreach, office work, or other non-mediation volunteer activities before taking the mediation training. This can help centers adequately assess a volunteer's commitment to the organization and mission, as well as potential as a mediator. This also allows the potential volunteer to determine if the position is a good fit.</p> <p>1.10 CMC's keep a database of interested volunteers throughout the year and contact these individuals when there are training opportunities, rather than waiting until a training to do recruiting.</p>
2	CMC's recruit to ensure a mediator corps that is diverse in a variety of ways.	<p>2.1 CMC's review the demographic chart comparing their mediators to the demographics of the community on an annual basis to consider which demographic areas they need to focus on recruiting.</p> <p>2.2 CMC's develop strategies to recruit individuals with specific demographics needed to ensure that the centers' mediators reflect the demographics of the community.</p> <p>2.3 CMC's review structural boundaries that may make it difficult for certain individuals to volunteer (e.g. transportation for teen-agers, child care for low income participants) and develop plans to overcome these boundaries.</p> <p>2.4 CMC's conduct more intense recruitment among those who are often disenfranchised, such as youth or individuals under supervision.</p>
<p><b>The section below provides guidance for volunteer management for volunteers who will be trained as and likely serve as mediators.</b></p>		
1	CMCs hold a comprehensive orientation that helps potential volunteer mediators to understand and grasp the mediation training and concept of community mediation	<p>1.1 CMCs require potential volunteer mediators to attend an Orientation or Information Session and an interview prior to being guaranteed a spot in the BMT.</p> <p>1.2 CMCs ensure Orientation or Information Sessions review the entire training and apprenticeship process for potential volunteers. This may last two hours or more. (See Appendix A)</p>
2	CMCs have an effective screening process that allows them to select the best possible volunteer mediators	<p>2.1 CMCs screen potential volunteer mediators before putting them in basic training, regardless of whether that center is hosting the training or whether they may be placed in a training that another center is hosting.</p> <p>2.2 CMCs screen volunteers with a variety of interview questions that allow the interviewer to find out if the volunteer has an understanding of the process and can make a realistic commitment to the training and center. (See Appendix B)</p> <p>2.3 CMCs have all potential volunteers read over information about the center and community mediation prior to being interviewed.</p> <p>2.4 CMCs find out a potential volunteer's availability, both hours and location, to ensure these meet the center's goals.</p> <p>2.5 CMCs consider having multiple people (staff,</p>

		<p>experienced volunteers, or board members) present during interviews or orientations to help get multiple perspectives on the interviewee.</p> <p>2.6 CMCs include a written application as part of the screening process (See Appendix C)</p>
3	CMCs ensure that volunteer mediators sign a training and apprenticeship contract that commits the volunteer to the center	<p>3.1 CMCs explain the apprenticeship process and contract in the interview and orientation.</p> <p>3.2 CMCs have all newly selected volunteer mediators sign the apprenticeship contract prior to beginning the Basic Mediation Training (See Appendix C).</p> <p>3.3 CMCs can require that volunteer mediators fulfill their apprenticeship contract or be required to pay back the value of the training on a prorated basis. The basic mediation training can be valued at between \$1000 to \$2500 per trainee.</p>
4	CMCs have an effective post-training orientation that orients new mediators to the center	<p>4.1 CMCs hold a post-training orientation that ensures all new volunteers are knowledgeable about pre and post mediation procedures specific to each CMC.</p> <p>4.2 CMCs create a post-training orientation guide to ensure mediators know where to turn for questions. (See Appendix D)</p>
5	CMCs obtain and maintain current contact information for volunteers	<p>5.1 CMCs touch base (in person, email, or phone call) with each person on their roster at least once every six-months to be sure their contact information is correct.</p> <p>5.2 CMCs have at least one (1) designated staff member in charge of volunteer management to ensure mediator growth and quality assurance.</p>
6	CMCs hold in-services and continuing education events that engage volunteer mediators and encourage mediator growth	<p>6.1 CMCs provide opportunities that are free of charge to volunteers for continuing education at least four (4) times per year (See Appendix F)</p> <p>6.2 CMC's host in-services provided by CMM trainers</p> <p>6.3 Multiple CMCs can partner to give each other support in developing continuing education workshops. For example, the presenter from one center can repeat the workshop at another, or the CMCs can combine workshops.</p> <p>6.4 CMC's announce and promote CMM's monthly in-services to their volunteers.</p> <p>6.5 CMCs communicate in-service trainings with other regional CMCs to allow volunteer mediators to have more options in choosing in-service trainings.</p> <p>6.6 CMCs ensure that volunteer mediators are aware of continuing education opportunities.</p> <p>6.7 CMCs offer training opportunities that satisfy the requirements for membership to the MPME.</p>
7	CMCs keep volunteers current with changes to forms, mediation model, other procedures	<p>7.1 CMCs offer a refresher training when there are significant changes to the mediation model, center forms, or the CMCs policies. These refresher trainings should allow mediators to engage with the material and fully understand the changes</p>

		presented. 7.2 CMCs provide regular updates through email or in mediation packets that educate mediators on the smaller changes to model, forms, or policies.
8	CMCs maintain quality communication with mediators throughout and after each mediation case	8.1. CMCs thank mediators for each case they sign up for, whether or not the mediation occurs. 8.2 CMCs communicate with volunteers after each mediation session to ensure that the center supports the volunteers throughout the life of the mediation. 8.3 CMCs make time to discuss mediation cases with mediators, either formally or informally, to ensure volunteers experience maximum growth from each case 8.4 CMCs ensure volunteer mediators have contact information for a staff member in case they need support on a break during a mediation. This information can be provided in the mediation packet.
9	CMCs effectively, track communicate, and strategize with volunteer mediators about growth and progress	9.1 CMCs include feedback and follow-up forms with each mediation packet that enable mediators to report feedback and the results of the mediation session. 9.2 CMCs respond to mediator feedback about the session, co-mediator, and skills in mediation that need attention. 9.3 CMCs can create a mediator newsletter, listserv, or similar means of keeping volunteers in the loop and making them feel valued. 9.4 CMCs get in touch with volunteer “dropouts” to determine issues, problems, etc that caused dropout (See Appendix G for more information). 9.5 CMCs create a mechanism to track mediator time, growth, and progress. CMCs should make this accessible to the volunteers, either by periodic updates or direct access to the information. 9.6 CMCs ensure all mediations are co-mediated to support quality assurance, mediator growth, and mediator comfort.
10	CMCs effectively recognize volunteers for their time and commitment	10.1 CMCs have a plan for volunteer recognition 10.2 CMCs acknowledge mediators’ time when they sign up for a mediation even when participants do not show via a thank you email, phone call, etc. to show volunteers that CMCs value their time and commitment 10.3 CMCs keep volunteers informed on what is going on in the CMC (e.g. staff changes, policy changes, etc.) 10.4 CMCs treat volunteers as the foundation of the center and value them as members of the “team” who are valued for the services they perform
11	CMCs make the logistics of volunteering for a mediation as smooth as possible	11.1 CMCs make every effort to confirm each mediation with participants within 24 hours of the mediation to avoid no shows 11.2 CMCs can inform volunteer mediators when their upcoming mediations were last confirmed. 11.3 CMCs provide logistical support for off-site mediations, such as a travel kit with forms, markers, and flip chart paper

		<p>and/or easels, and contact numbers for mediation site.</p> <p>11.4 CMCs provide information in the mediation packet to support mediators in the case of an emergency, e.g. how to access the centers voicemail, who a staff contact person is, and contact information for co-mediator.</p> <p>11.5 CMCs check-in regularly with mediators to determine whether the format of announcing and accepting mediations is convenient for them.</p> <p>11.6 CMCs provide clear direction and support, through forms and clearly described process, for after-mediation action and next steps.</p>
12	CMCs use the most effective form of communication when communicating with volunteers for mediations and events	<p>12.1 CMCs can learn the preferences for communication for individual mediators, and record and utilize that preferred mode of communication.</p> <p>12.2 CMCs consider use of creative forms of communication, and multiple forms of communication, such as website and social media in addition to mail, email and phone.</p> <p>12.2 CMCs check in with volunteers regularly about availability to easily match participant's needs with the capacity of the center to provide mediators</p>
13	CMCs create a relationship with volunteers that allows for volunteers to be connected to the center in multiple ways	<p>13.1 CMCs can create a buddy system to connect new mediators with experienced mediators. This can be a connection between a new and experienced mediator even if they do not mediate together in a mentoring relationship. The experienced mediator can provide moral support and logistical guidance for the new mediator through phone, e-mail, or in person meetings.</p> <p>13.2 CMCs ensure the staff members that interact with volunteers (e.g. center directors or volunteer coordinators) to get to know volunteers and their interests and talents.</p> <p>13.3 CMCs offer volunteer opportunities in addition to mediation, such as outreach, helping with office work, participating in CMM events, becoming a member of the Board of Directors, or becoming AmeriCorps members.</p> <p>13.4 CMCs can offer opportunities for volunteers to connect with each other and with the community.</p> <p>13.5 CMCs offer social events for mediators and volunteers to connect with each other at least twice per year.</p> <p>13.6 CMCs provide in-service trainings for volunteers interested in outreach education.</p> <p>13.7 CMCs encourage volunteers to donate money to the center</p>
14	CMCs connect volunteers to the statewide community mediation movement	<p>14.1 CMCs encourage volunteers to become more connected to the statewide movement</p> <p>14.2 CMCs communicate statewide events to volunteers and encourage them to attend, including the Maryland Mediators Convention, CMM Gala, CMM Membership Meetings, MPME Events, and other relevant statewide events.</p> <p>14.3 CMCs send a staff member or veteran volunteer to statewide community mediation events to help newer</p>

		volunteers become more comfortable attending events
15	CMCs effectively engage volunteers who have not mediated in several months or who need support after the Basic Mediation Training	<p>15.1 CMCs provide and create a plan for mediators who need additional support after the Basic Mediation Training, who become disengaged with volunteering, or who have not mediated in several months (See Appendix G).</p> <p>15.2 CMCs receive feedback from trainers on mediators' skills and abilities after training to provide guidance on developing mediator support.</p> <p>15.3 CMCs develop a system so that volunteers who may not be right for mediation can support the center in other ways, e.g. outreach, special projects, office work, data entry, board membership, etc.</p>
16	CMCs ensure the majority of mediation sessions are conducted by volunteer mediators	<p>16.1 CMCs have volunteer mediators conduct the mediation sessions as much as possible</p> <p>16.2 CMCs have staff mediate only as a last resort or to help the growth of newer mediators</p> <p>16.3 CMCs work to help mediators that are interested in advanced trainings get the experience needed take those trainings</p> <p>16.4 CMCs remind volunteer mediators of their commitment to the center to try and work with volunteers to fulfill it</p>
<b>The section below provides guidance for volunteer management for volunteers who will not serve as mediators.</b>		
1	CMC's develop clear position descriptions for volunteers to assist in areas other than mediation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CMC's identify tasks and roles for volunteers, such as outreach, committee service, office work, data entry, follow up evaluation calls, and grant-writing.</li> <li>2. CMC's develop position descriptions and requirements for volunteers serving in these roles.</li> <li>3. Intake should not be a role for someone not trained as a mediator</li> </ol>
2	CMC's communicate expectations with potential volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CMC's recruit volunteers with the position descriptions</li> <li>2. CMC's interview potential volunteers</li> <li>3. CMC's request a commitment from the volunteer to ensure a return on the investment the CMC is making in training the volunteer.</li> <li>4. CMC's conduct orientation and training appropriate for the tasks the volunteers will provide</li> <li>5. CMC's regularly evaluate the work of volunteers, provide feedback and recognition.</li> </ol>

# Appendix A

## SAMPLE PRE-TRAINING ORIENTATION AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions

Gathering: Name + “One reason I am interested in helping resolve conflict in my community is...”

Choose One Experiential Exercise

- Minefield
- People to People
- Houses

About the Center

- What is Community Mediation?
- Services Offered
- What Training Allows Mediators to Do
- 10 Points
- Relationship to CMM

Training Overview

- Role Plays
- Experiential
- 3 Skills- Strategic Listening, Open Ended Questions, Using the Process
- Prepares Mediators for Variety of Situations (Bad Language, Hot Topics, etc.)
- Logistics- attend whole training, locations, hours, carpool?

Inclusive Mediation Overview

- Analytical, Facilitative, Inclusive, Transformative
- 5 Step Process
- Participants Control Content
- Resolving Whole Dispute
- No Ground Rules

Apprenticeship Process

- Hours of Service
- Length of Commitment
- 2 Observations- 2 Mediators with a Lead

Role Play (Optional) OR Strategic Listening Practice (Optional)

Next Steps:

- Go over dates
- Collect applications and schedule interviews

Closing

## Appendix B

### SAMPLE VOLUNTEER MEDIATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Training Class:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Tell us a little about yourself and your interest in mediation.

What do you know about the Community Mediation Center?

What skills do you have which you think would make you a good mediator? Can you give me a specific example of how you have used these skills?

What personal values and goals brought you to be interested in mediation?

Our process is based on self determination. What does "self-determination" mean to you?

What experience do you have with volunteering?

How do you see yourself contributing service to the center in addition to being a volunteer mediator?

What obstacles do you see to fulfilling your volunteer commitment? How would you overcome them?

Mediation sessions normally take about 4 hours each including travel, co-mediator coordination and debriefing. Please look at your calendar for next week and the week after. When would you be available to mediate in those two weeks? What areas of the county could you serve in?

**RATE THE INTERVIEWEE:**

	<u>GREAT</u>	<u>GOOD</u>	<u>FAIR</u>	<u>POOR</u>
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
LISTENING SKILLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY	_____	_____	_____	_____
OPEN MINDED (SELF-AWARE)	_____	_____	_____	_____
COMMITMENT TO PROGRAM	_____	_____	_____	_____
COMPOSURE	_____	_____	_____	_____

RECOMMEND TO TAKE THE TRAINING (Circle): YES NO

## Appendix C VOLUNTEER MEDIATOR APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Eve Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I preferred to be contacted at: \_\_\_\_\_ Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you check regularly? \_\_\_\_\_ How did you hear about CMC? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you speak any languages other than English? YES / NO

If yes, what languages do you speak fluently? \_\_\_\_\_

Availability (check all that apply): Daytime \_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_ Weekends \_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in volunteering in another capacity with the center? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Why do you want to become a volunteer mediator?**

**What skills do you have that would make you a good mediator?**

**What experience do you have with volunteering?**

**Please describe the time you would be able to commit to the center**

**Demographic Information (Optional). We are required to provide demographic information about our mediators to grant funders so that our mediators reflect the diversity of the community.**

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Highest Level of Education \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Household Income \_\_\_\_\_ Military Experience (circle): None Past Current

Type of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer mediator. Feel free to contact the CMC for more information.

## Appendix D

# TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ am willing to commit to a minimum of two (2) years to the Community Mediation Center ("CMC".)

Mediators are required to attend and complete the initial 50-hours of FREE mediation training. After completing the initial training, trainees will enter an apprenticeship that consists of observing two (2) mediations and mediating with a lead mediator a minimum of (2) times as well as an evaluation/strategy session. Five (5) additional hours of training will be scheduled.\* The mediation training is valued at \$2500 per trainee.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend 50 hours of training.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will attend the 5 hour follow up training to complete my training (to be scheduled)

\_\_\_\_\_ If an emergency arises and I miss more than one (1) hour of training, I understand that I will not receive a Community Mediation Maryland training certificate.

\_\_\_\_\_ If an emergency arises and I miss more than two (2) hours of training, I understand that I will be asked to no longer participate in the training

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that completing the training is not a guarantee that I will be invited to mediate with CMC. Even if I am not invited to mediate, I will complete my volunteer service.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to provide forty-eight (48) hours of volunteer service each year to include mediations (if I am invited to mediate), special projects, committee membership, helping with intake or office help.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to abide by the policies set forth by the CMC Board of Directors and the CMC Staff

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to become a member of the Maryland Program for Mediator Excellence (MPME) and follow the guidelines set out by MPME

The Community Mediation Center Agrees to:

- Provide 50-hours of mediator training
- Provide each new trainee with a mediation manual
- Provide all necessary mediation materials
- Provide FREE continuing education opportunities
- Provide skill building opportunities

Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\* A full 50-hours of training must be completed to receive a Community Mediation Maryland certificate.*

# Appendix E

## SAMPLE POST TRAINING ORIENTATION GUIDE

### AACRC Post-Training Orientation Guide

Welcome to AACRC!!!! The following guide outlines what you need to know mediate with us. Here is what is included:

- Contact Information
- Email Decoder
- Signing Up For a Mediation
- Apprenticeship Process
- Continuing Education
- MPME

### AACRC Basic and Contact Information

AACRC- 410-266-9033  
AACRC- 2666 Riva Rd. Suite 130, Annapolis, MD 21401  
All Staff- mediateaacrc@gmail.com

Linda Deming- Executive Director- deming.linda776@gmail.com

Linda makes the decisions, communicates with the board, writes the grants, and keeps us on track financially. Linda is the person contact about our fundraisers, interest in becoming a board member or finding our more about what the board does, grant opportunities, or center operations.

Tyler Keyworth- Deputy Executive Director- tqkeyworth@gmail.com

Tyler manages the volunteers, conducts the continuing education, works on special projects and partnership development, and provides workshops and training for the general public. Tyler is the person to ask about advanced trainings, support for mediation, and presentations or outreach. If you need help with anything and no one is available at AACRC, Tyler's Cell is: 401-575-6415 and do not hesitate to call.

Leslie Overholser- Circuit Court Mediation Director- les.overholser@gmail.com

Leslie manages our Circuit Court Mediation Program and Partnership. These are the majority of mediations that get scheduled and where is our most need for support. Leslie is the person to ask about anything related to Circuit Court cases, which you will mediate once you take the Parenting Plan Training.

Ellie Gibbs- Community Mediation Director- ergibbs@gmail.com

Ellie manages our cases referred from the community. She sets up the cases, assigns mediators and observers, and manages everything throughout the life of a community case. These also include parenting plans not referred from the Circuit Court and any cases from the

District Court. Ellie is the person to ask anything related to community or parenting plan cases or information about observations.

Brandon Haight- Americorps Member Veterans Mediation Project- blshaight@gmail.com

Brandon works on getting veterans returning from war to use community mediation as a way to resolve or prevent conflicts the family members. Brandon is the person to talk to regarding anything relating to veterans mediation.

### **Email Decoder**

When you receive an email about an observation or mediation some shorthand will be used in providing the information about the cases. All the information about case logistics is included in the subject line. The body of the email contains information about what type of case it is Here is an example of a subject line:

**Mediation: C-2013-034 Monday, April 8, 2013 2pm AACRC/Annapolis**

**Mediation:** The first part lets you know whether it is a request for an observation or mediation. You should only receive emails about observations until you have done two observations, but the person sending the request may forget to edit the subject for observers. So respond to either type of request.

**C:** This field lets you know what type of case it is. Without advanced training you can mediate community and district court cases. Here are all of the abbreviations anyway.

C- Community

DC- District Court

AM- Attendance Mediation (at least one mediator must have received the advanced training)

PP- Parenting Plan (requires advanced training)

CC- Circuit Court (requires advanced training)

RE- Prison Re-Entry (requires advanced training)

IEP- IEP Meeting Facilitation (requires advanced training)

PO- Peace Order Mediation (requires advanced training)

**2013-034:** This lets you know the case number. Each case receives a unique case number that allows us and you to track the case. Each case is sent out in a unique email chain and all responses for the case should be responded to in that email chain. If you are referring to a case in another forum, the case number allows us to know what you are talking about!!!

**Monday, April 8, 2013 2pm:** This is the date of the mediation. Remember you have to arrive 30 mins before the start of the session and stay for 30 mins after to do feed back, thus making the total for each case 3 hours. Signing up for this specific case would actually involve a time commitment from 1:30pm to 4:30pm. Cases do not always go the full two hours but you should plan committing to the full time. Occasionally mediations will be sent out our for a range of time.

For example, **Monday, April 8, 2013 Afternoon**. This means the participants are flexible on time and you should respond with your availability for this timeframe.

**AACRC/Annapolis:** This refers to the location of the mediation. We try and hold mediation in a location that is convenient for participants. We use libraries and other public institutions but here is the legend for and address of our most frequently used locations.

AACRC/CRC: Anne Arundel Conflict Resolution Center- 2666 Riva Rd. Suite 130, Annapolis, MD 21401

ARTS: Arts Council for Anne Arundel County- 2666 Riva Rd. Suite 150, Annapolis, MD 21401

EMM: Emmaus Center- 407 S. Crain Hwy, Glen Burnie, MD 21061

MSYSA: Maryland State Youth Soccer Association- 221 5th Ave SE, Glen Burnie, MD

OBI: Opportunity Builders Incorporated- 8855 Veterans Hwy, Millersville, MD 21108

### **Signing Up for a Mediation**

Several factors go into how we assign cases to mediators. The most important factor of these is who is available. When we send out a case, mediators should respond if they are available for the case. If you are not available, please do not respond. The only exception to this is when you would be available if the case was moved an hour earlier or an hour later. Sometimes, there is some room for adjustment with schedules, so let us know if you could almost make it and we will see if some adjustment might be the right course of action.

Once you respond to a request that you can do the mediation, only assume that you have been assigned to the case if we confirm that you are assigned to the mediation. We often have several responses for efficiency purposes we sometimes only respond to those who the case is assigned to. If you have not received a confirmation that the case was assigned to you within two days of responding, assume that you have not been assigned the case. From our end we will try and let you that you did not get the case in a timely manner, but occasionally this is missed from our process. So please only show up for cases that you have received confirmation of being assigned to.

When it is an off-site mediation (not at AACRC or the Arts Council), some coordination of who will bring the bag is necessary. If your co-mediator is a staff member, it is safe to assume that they will bring the bag unless you receive an email otherwise. If your co is not a staff member, an email should go out a few days before coordinating who will pick up the bag. If this has not happened, please contact us and we can help you figure it out. As an observer you are not responsible for the bag.

A few days before the mediator we confirm again with the participants. After these calls have been made we send a confirmation email to the mediators letting them know who we were able to confirm for the mediation. DO NOT assume the mediation is cancelled unless you receive a CANCELLATION email.

As an observer in the mediation you are expected to both fill out the observation packet included in the mediation bag and give feedback to mediators after the mediation. This may be uncomfortable since you have just been trained and may not have much experience, but your observations are very valuable in help our mediators grow.

As a mediator you are expected to do feedback with your co-mediator after the session and record your feedback on the sheets provided in the manila folder. These sheets help us track your progress and give you credit for the mediation. We keep the forms and use them to track the number of mediations each volunteer has done each year. If you would ever like the chance to look at the feedback forms you submitted just ask the office.

### **Apprenticeship Process**

It is important for mediators to continue to learn once they have finished the basic training. Part of that learning is incorporating what they have learned in training into real world experiences. The apprenticeship process allows the learning to mesh with the experience in a gradual way.

At Least 2 Observations of Entire Cases not Sessions  
At Least 2 Mediations With a Lead Mediator  
5 Hour Follow Up Training

After the observations and mediations with a lead mediator the center and new mediators should discuss their progress and make sure they are ready to be put on our roster as a full-blown mediator

### **Continuing Education**

Another key piece of mediation training is continuing education. AACRC provides continuing education workshops for our mediators at least 8 times a year. These workshops help broaden, sharpen, and support the skills needed to be a mediator. When agreeing to go through the training, mediators agreed to commit to 8 hours of continuing education this year. Attending at least four continuing education workshops would satisfy this requirement. Mediators can also attend continuing education provided by Community Mediation Maryland, Maryland Program for Mediator Excellence, or other pertinent trainings. Advanced trainings also satisfy this requirement.

AACRC will send out emails about continuing education opportunities as they become available.

### **MPME**

AACRC requires that all mediators are members in good standing with MPME. Information about how to join MPME and the requirements are on the website.

[www.mpmeonline.org](http://www.mpmeonline.org)

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Sample Schedule of Continuing Education Workshops**

#### January- Role Play Night- 3 Hours

Hold an informal role-play night to help sharpen mediators skills and comfort with the process.

#### February- Strategic Listening Workshop- 3 Hours

Work on strategic listening from the basics to the more advanced elements of strategic listening. Everyone could use some more support and practice on strategic listening.

#### March- Article Review Workshop- 2 Hours

Choose an interesting article, send it out in advance, and facilitate a discussion on insights from the article for mediation practice.

#### April- Role Play Night- 3 Hours

Hold an informal role-play night to help sharpen mediators skills and comfort with the process.

#### May- Saturday Brainstorming Workshop- 5 Hours

Mediators often have fear or are confused with brainstorming. A review can help make sure mediators understand the entire brainstorming process.

#### June- Ethics and Best Practices Workshop- 2.5 Hours

It is essential to review ethics on a yearly basis and it is an MPME requirement for mediators. This can be done in many ways.

#### July- Inclusive Mediation Refresher- 5 Hours

This workshop is targeted for mediators who have been out a touch. Holding refreshers can help them feel to more comfortable to become re-engaged.

#### August- Open Ended Questions- 2.5 Hours

Open Ended Questions are one of our best tools and can always use sharpening. Experiential exercises are good to help mediators understand the role of open-ended questions

#### September- Conflict In Film Workshop- 2 Hours

Pick some film or Reality TV clips and use them to discuss conflict and practice reflecting.

#### October- Role Play Night- 3 Hours

Hold an informal role-play night to help sharpen mediators skills and comfort with the process.

#### November- Harnessing Intense Conflict Workshop- 2 Hours

Intense conflict is a reality in mediation. Using it right is essential. This workshop can be done through film, experiential exercises, hot seat, and role plays.

#### December- Topics Framing Workshop- 2 Hours

Mediators often struggle with identifying topics and especially framing topics. This is necessary to run a good brainstorm. Fishbowls are a great way to have the group work on this.

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Plan For Mediators Who Need Support**

Not every mediator that comes out of training is ready for mediation immediately. CMCs need to be sure the trainees are ready to intervene in real conflicts. Even with the apprenticeship process, some mediators need more support than can be provided for 2 Observations and 2 Mediations with a lead mediator. The following guide looks at how best to support volunteers that need help to maintain quality assurance. This guide would also be helpful for those volunteers who have been out of practice or less involved with the center and are looking to start (or begin) mediating again.

1. CMCs should meet with volunteer and discuss their progress and possible supports:

- Take a refresher training
- Observe more cases
- Attend in-services on skill areas that need improvement
- Volunteer at center to get more exposure with intake/explaining mediation
- Pair up with an experienced mediator to observe their cases
- Mediators should allow time to discuss case at length with volunteer after

mediation

- One on One discussions with an experienced staff member
- Provide other opportunities for volunteer to get/stay involved and their fulfill commitment to the center: outreach, office help, special projects, joining the board, committee membership, special projects, etc.

2. CMCs should meet with volunteer for a second time to discuss progress

- If volunteer has not progressed, choose additional supports from ideas above
- If volunteer has progressed and is ready to mediate, the volunteer should finish apprenticeship or be paired with a strong co-mediator for a few cases

3. If volunteer has not progressed since second meeting:

- Provide other opportunities for volunteer to stay involved and their fulfill commitment to the center: outreach, office help, special projects, joining the board, committee membership, special projects, etc. It is important to try and keep folks who are committed to the work but might not be right for mediation involved in a variety of other useful ways.

In rare cases it may be necessary to release a volunteer, here is a suggested process:

- Should be used as an absolute last resort
- Consider having more than one staff member present
- Invite the volunteer to a meeting
- Tell them that they are being released
- Be open and honest about why volunteer is being released
- Focus on negative impact volunteer could have on quality assurance
- Offer mediation if conflict persists

## **Appendix H**

### **CMM Quality Assurance Best Practices**

To support CMM's efforts to establish and maintain state-level partnerships, member Centers are strongly encouraged to align their Mediators' attributes and Center processes with the following Quality Assurance "Best Practices", which will be communicated to our state-level partners, as part of our dialogue about Community Mediation and the Ten-Point Model.

In particular, a Center's documentation needs to be consistent with the mediation model(s) provided by the Center, including clear articulation of which Mediator activities are acceptable and which are unacceptable. This articulation guides the following documents mentioned in these Best Practices: (a) Strategy Session / Evaluation Forms, and (b) Mediator Logs. Items involving these documents and/or the model(s) used at the Center are marked with an asterisk (\*).

#### ***Mediator Training***

1. Mediators receive, at a minimum, a 40-hour Basic Mediation Training course from an experienced trainer.
- \* 2. Mediators complete an apprenticeship that includes two (2) observations, two (2) co-mediations with an experienced Mediator, and their first Strategy Session, or an equivalent evaluation process.
3. Potential Mediator trainees are evaluated by Centers using a screening process that, at a minimum, includes a documented application process and face-to-face contact.
- \* 4. Each Center's Mediators have been trained in accordance with training models that have been pre-approved by the Center.
5. Potential Mediator volunteers who were trained by one of the pre-approved trainings, but other than the trainings provided by a given Center,

will be evaluated by the Center using a documented screening process that, at a minimum, includes face-to-face contact.

6. All Center Mediators are members of the Maryland Program for Mediator Excellence (MPME).

\*7. Centers who use Mediators from more than one training model:

A. Provide a written description of how the Center ensures consistency between the mediation model described to potential participants during intake, and that which participants receive.

B. Provide a written description of how the Center handles conflicts that may arise when mediators have differences, and

C. Require that Mediators be able to articulate the mediation model they intend to use.

### ***Mediator Case Assignment***

8. At least one (1) Mediator in every mediation session has participated in a minimum of six (6) mediation sessions.

9. At least one (1) Mediator in every mediation session has mediated at least six (6) mediation sessions within the previous twelve (12) months.

10. For parenting plan mediations, Mediators have completed at least five (5) mediation sessions and a 20-hour advanced training in parenting plans.

11. For mediations involving marital property, Mediators have completed at least five (5) mediation sessions and a 40-hour advanced training in divorce mediation or other applicable training (e.g., marital property).

12. Centers have a written procedure for removing Mediators from active status.

13. Centers have a written procedure for restoring Mediators to active status, after having been removed.

### ***Ongoing Mediator Requirements***

14. Mediators receive a minimum of eight (8) hours of continuing education per year.

\* 15. Mediators participate in an established feedback process after each mediation, and file the resulting Mediator Logs (or copies) with their Center.

16. Mediators are evaluated by their Centers at the end of their apprenticeship, and at least once every two years, using a screening process that, at a minimum, includes face-to-face contact.

\* 17. Mediators are regularly evaluated by their Centers, using either the CMM Strategy Session system, or a system for which a written description has been submitted to the CMM Quality Assurance Committee, for feedback.