



# e-NEWSLETTER

*Information on workplace rights, safety and health, and accessibility in the legislative branch*



## Mediation: An Effective Tool to Resolve Workplace Claims

The Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) administers the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA). The CAA applies 14 workplace laws to the legislative branch, and establishes an administrative dispute resolution (ADR) process to resolve claims of violation under the CAA. Covered staff of the legislative branch who believe that their CAA rights have been violated may file a claim with the OCWR within 180 days of the date of the alleged violation. The OCWR's ADR process provides for a review and hearing on claims, and any decision of a hearing officer may be appealed to the OCWR's Board of Directors.

The ADR process also enables the parties involved in a claim to engage in mediation for the purpose of resolving the claim without the need for protracted litigation. Mediation is a highly effective process that encourages the parties to recognize and understand their differing perspectives. Upon agreement by the parties to mediate, certain deadlines are suspended and the OCWR assigns an experienced mediator to work with the parties to seek a mutually agreeable solution to the issue or issues that formed the basis of the claim.

Mediation is voluntary, may be requested by either the claimant or the employing office, and may proceed only if the non-requesting party also agrees. After a claim is filed, the OCWR notifies the parties of the mediation process and the relevant deadlines. Applicable time periods for mediation include:

- Once a claim is filed, either the claimant or the employing office may request mediation up until either the hearing officer issues a decision on the merits of the claim or a complaint is filed in federal court by the claimant.
- The period for mediation is 30 days, beginning on the day the non-requesting party agrees to mediate, and may be extended an additional 30 days.
- Claim processing deadlines that have not passed by the first day of mediation are stayed during mediation.

For more information on the OCWR mediation process or the ADR process in general, contact the office at (202) 724-9250 or [ocwradr@ocwr.gov](mailto:ocwradr@ocwr.gov).

## TRAINING CORNER

The OCWR will be hosting a monthly pop-up training series on the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA).

This webinar will explain the role of the OCWR in administering and enforcing the CAA, review the rights and responsibilities of covered legislative branch employees under the CAA, and outline the OCWR's ADR process for resolving claims. All times listed are based in Eastern Time. Register below.

[May 26, 2022 at 1 pm](#) | [June 30, 2022 at 1 pm](#) | [July 28, 2022 at 1 pm](#)

