



Superior Court of California  
County of Orange

***NEWS FLASH***

Media and Community Relations Office  
Contact: Carole Levitzky (714) 834-7623  
clevitzky@occourts.org

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**Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Pilot Programs**

To help litigants resolve their cases quickly and with less expense, the Superior Court of Orange County has added two pilot programs, Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE) and Civil Mediation, to its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program.

The programs are optional for litigating parties to help them determine if they can resolve their case before scheduling a trial date. Depending on the issues of the dispute, the parties may choose to participate in either the Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE) or Mediation program to help them settle their case. Both parties must first agree to enter one of the programs, and each is required to pay an initial \$150 fee directly to the evaluator or mediator for the first session. The initial fee will cover up to two hours for mediation and up to three hours for ENE.

The ENE program allows each party to present its case to a neutral person called an "evaluator." The evaluator gives an opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of each party's evidence and arguments, and provides suggestions of how the dispute can be resolved. The evaluator is often a subject matter expert on the issues of the dispute. Although the evaluator's opinion is not binding, the parties typically use it as a basis for trying to negotiate a settlement.

The Mediation program helps the parties try to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the dispute. The mediator does not decide the dispute but helps the parties communicate so they can try to settle the dispute themselves. Mediation leaves control of the outcome with the parties.

For additional information about the Court's ADR programs contact Al Glover at (714) 834-5309 or [aglover@occourts.org](mailto:aglover@occourts.org).