

Mediator

Sit between two sides of a fight and help them settle it themselves, without a judge and without a verdict.

TYPICAL PAY

\$75,530

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$47k to \$155k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 10 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Courthouses, government agencies, law firms, private practi...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Debate, student government, anything that makes you comfortable in a room where people disagree.
- 2 A degree, usually** 4 years
Law, psychology, social work, human resources or business. Courts and agencies almost always want one, even where the rules do not demand it.
- 3 Basic mediation training** 1 week
Virginia, for example, runs a 20 hour basic mediation training plus a separate 20 hour family training and additional circuit court courses.
- 4 Observations and co-mediations** Months
You watch certified mediators work, then run cases with one beside you before you are signed off.
- 5 Certification and a court roster** 1 to 2 years in
Apply to your state's court certification program in a specific category, then take referred cases.

Pros and cons

- + Training is short and cheap compared with law school
- + You can enter at almost any age from almost any background
- + Real settlements, reached in hours instead of years in court
- Very hard to make a full living from it early on
- Early work is volunteer or low paid, often for years
- Certification rules differ in every state

Optional boosts

Commercial and construction. Family and divorce. Workplace and discrimination. Labor relations.

Good to know

The federal discrimination agency mediates for free

When a discrimination charge is filed, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission may offer both sides mediation at no cost. Sessions usually run three to four hours and charges settle in under t...

Private dispute resolution is enormous

The American Arbitration Association reported 580,000 cases filed in 2025, covering about \$29 billion in business claims, handled by a panel of more than 4,900 arbitrators and mediators.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Arbitrators, Mediators and Conciliators (23-1022.00)
Virginia Judicial System: mediation and dispute resolution services
American Arbitration Association
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: mediation program

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/mediator>



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