

Request for Applicants: IDEA Mediators

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), Office of Special Programs (OSP), is soliciting applicants from individuals interested in serving as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 Mediators. The IDEA and WV Policy 2419 require mediation be offered to parents and school districts as an option for resolving disagreements regarding an eligible exceptional student's identification, evaluation, educational placement or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

IDEA Mediators are individuals from a variety of disciplines including institutions of higher education, retired educators, attorneys, counselors and psychologists who may be effective mediators. Applicants must have a commitment to the process of mediation, knowledge of special education requirements and services, experience in resolving conflicts with parents and others and excellent interpersonal skills. Mediators must have flexible schedules to allow a mediation session to occur within two weeks of being assigned to a case. Employees of school districts, advocates and attorneys who have represented either parents or school districts in special education disputes within the past year may not be mediators. A mediator may not be a person having a personal or professional conflict of interest.

All IDEA Mediators are required to attend an orientation training when selected to serve as a mediator and are required to attend annual training. Failure to attend training will result in ineligibility to serve during that school year.

Required Qualifications:

1. Knowledge of special education federal and West Virginia laws, regulations, policies, case law and services.
2. Training and/or experience in dispute or conflict resolution.
3. Experience working with parents.
4. Effective problem-solving and facilitation skills.
5. Ability to articulate an interest in and communication in Mediation.

Desired Interpersonal Skills:

1. Ability to express oneself verbally and in writing in a cordial, open and tactful manner.
2. Ability to respond calmly and appropriately in situations involving conflict.
3. Effective listening skills.
4. Ability to build trust and confidence.
5. Positive attitude.

Applicants for the position of IDEA Mediators will adhere to a background check.

The OSP will pay Mediators \$100.00 per hour for preparation, mediation and agreement writing, and will pay half-rate for travel time to and from the mediation. Travel expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with state travel regulations.

Please submit letter of interest along with a resume on or before June 1, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. to:

Ghaski Browning, Assistant Director
West Virginia Department of Education
Office of Special Programs
Building 6, Room 304
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305-0330