

Frequently Asked Questions about the Wyoming Agriculture & Natural Resources Mediation Program

Q: I think I want to request mediation, what do I do first?

A: To request mediation, contact Lucy Pauley, the coordinator for the Wyoming Agriculture and Natural Resource Mediation Program. Lucy can be reached at (307) 777-8788 or 1-888-WYO-9278. Lucy will ask you for a short letter or email stating the nature of the conflict, along with the name and contact information for the other party. If mediation is being requested based on an adverse decision by one of the USDA programs (NRCS, FSA, or Rural Housing), the request must be made within a certain time frame. This information is outlined in the adverse determination letter you receive from USDA. If you have questions about this process, you can contact your local USDA office (find their phone number here: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=wy&agency=fsa>) or the Mediation Program.

Q: What types of conflicts can be mediated?

A: Mediation can be successful when both parties are willing to work together to find a solution to their conflict. Agricultural mediation can be used for farm debt and credit disputes, grazing permit reduction or suspension, USDA program issues such as disaster payments, crop insurance, CRP contracts and more. Mediators are also available to help agricultural producers with estate planning conflicts, agricultural business disputes and split estate issues. If you have involved in a conflict and unsure of whether or not you can use mediation, contact us to find out more information.

Q: Who arranges the mediation session?

A: After we receive the request for mediation, the coordinator will contact the other party(s) to determine if they are willing to enter into mediation. Once this has been established, we will send a letter to all parties to set up a time and place for the mediation. Usually, the mediation is held in a centrally located, neutral location. Both parties will be sent a list of available mediators, with information about their fees and their background, if requested. The parties can choose the mediator or work with the program to have one appointed. Most mediation sessions can be scheduled within a couple of weeks of receiving the request.

Q: What happens during a mediation session?

A: The mediation process is simple. The mediator will start by laying out the ground rules that will help keep the process productive. The mediator will also answer any questions the parties might have. Next, both parties will be given the opportunity to talk about the situation as they see it. After everyone has had a chance to talk, the mediator will begin to identify the main issues that need to be discussed and help both parties to start exploring some options for resolving the conflict. As the options are discussed, the mediator will ensure that any solutions developed are agreed upon by both parties.

Q: Is mediation confidential?

A: The mediation process allows the parties the opportunity to speak openly about the conflict in a confidential manner. In Wyoming, the only information from the mediation that is not confidential is the final agreement. By signing the "Agreement to Mediate" the parties agree not to subpoena the mediator or any information obtained as the result of the mediation.

Q: What happens if an agreement is not reached?

A: If the parties are not able to come to a final agreement, the mediator will end the session. All parties are free to pursue other avenues to resolve the conflict