



# DRS DIALOGUE

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1 • SUMMER 2024

DISPUTE RESOLUTION SERVICES  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA

## OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINE TRAINING RESOURCE

MITCH BROUDY,  
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The Child Support Guideline Training Resource is a comprehensive guide designed to aid mediators in understanding and applying child support calculations. Developed by experts in the field, this resource includes multiple sections and interactive elements to facilitate learning and practical application.

### **The Need for Training**

Calculating child support is governed by the detailed and nuanced Virginia Code § 20-108.2. Without thorough training on how to properly apply these guidelines, the risk of errors is significant. This training ensures mediators understand the complexities involved, reducing the likelihood of mistakes, and promoting fair, accurate support calculations.

### **Key Components:**

- Navigation Bar: Provides links to highlights, hypotheticals, child support applications, support statutes, and forms.
- Training Modules: Offers detailed explanations of child support guidelines like the Income Share Model, Sole Custody, Shared Custody, and Split Custody.
- Scenarios: Includes hypothetical examples to apply learned concepts, covering a wide range of situations.
- Child Support Apps: Links to online calculators and downloadable tools, with special recognition to Danny Burke for developing the Unified Child Support Calculator.
- Support Statutes and Forms: Direct links to legal statutes and downloadable forms required for child support cases.

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### **Interactive Features:**

- Video Links: Enhance the learning experience.
- Detailed Explanations: Make complex concepts more accessible.
- Downloadable Resources: Ensure users have everything needed for practical application.

### **Contributors:**

This training resource was developed by a team of mediation coordinators and attorneys representing the Division of Child Support Enforcement, including, Brandon Bastian, Jennifer Phillips, Carol McCue, Rossi Selzer, Sara McAllister, Kelly Bruno, Scott Darnell, and Mitch Broudy.

### **Accessing the Training:**

The Child Support Guideline Training Resource is available online. To access the training, please visit <https://childsupporttraining.com>. This web-based resource is user-friendly and accessible from any device with internet connectivity.

Overall, the Child Support Guideline Training Resource serves as a thorough educational tool for mediators, combining theoretical knowledge, practical examples, and interactive elements to ensure a robust understanding of child support guidelines.

# PARENT EDUCATION TRAINING COMMITTEE

In May, DRS convened an 8-member Training Committee to examine training for parent education providers. The eight members are:

- *Walt Megonigal, Mediation Center of Charlottesville*
- *Blanton Massey, Mediation Center in Fredericksburg*
- *Aditi Dutt, Parent Educator, Newport News*
- *Lori Wymore-Kirkland, Director of Stronger Together, Fairfax J&DR court*
- *Shannon Sneary Alabanza, ChangeSpaces*
- *Sarah Foster, Intake Fairfax J&DR court*
- *Elvira De la Cruz, Latinos En Virginia*
- *Taylor Frome, Director, Mediation Center in Charlottesville*

Some committee members will review the Train the Trainer material that is used to train new applicants who are seeking approval to teach the parent education seminars for parties in contested child custody, visitation and support cases.



ANN WARSHAUER, PARENT EDUCATION COORDIANTOR

Other committee members chose to examine the parent educators symposium. The symposium was created to provide professional development and the opportunity for networking for those who teach the parent education seminars. The committee will look at where and how the symposium is conducted, as well as ways to increase attendance.

The symposium subcommittee held its first meeting July 23, 2024 and discussed:

- Creating a Community of Practice for parent education providers in several areas of the state
- Inviting judges to serve on a panel at a symposium
- Examining Best Interest of the Child statutory language and how it relates to parent education seminars, and
- Presenting current brain research showing the impact of conflict and violence and the role of neuroplasticity in healing trauma.

The next symposium is scheduled for Spring, 2025.

# DRS IN THE FIELD

*DRS staff continue to take advantage of opportunities to educate court staff as they arise. While clerks of court were the focus of our educational efforts in late Winter and Spring, lately judges have been receiving our attention.*

## **Judicial Settlement Conference (JSC) Meeting of Judges**

MICHAEL BARR, ADR ANALYST

For the second meeting with the JSC Judges, post-Covid, DRS decided to meet them on their turf, for a change. In mid-May, Dan, Jordan, and Michael traveled to Norfolk to tag a meeting with the retired, recalled judges onto their three-day Judicial Conference of Virginia. After introducing DRS to the soon-to-be retired Circuit Court judges and welcoming the new JSC judges, Michael led a discussion of program statistics, aided by a PowerPoint and data aggregated by Jon.

Conference numbers have continued to grow since the inception of the JSC program in 2004. While conferences likely impact mediation numbers at the Circuit level, they certainly appeal to parties in drawn-out legal battles for whom mediation would not be the appropriate forum. About 75% of cases reached agreement on some or all issues in FY2024 with domestic relations cases the most frequent (twice as many), followed by tort/ personal injury and commercial disputes.

In the open forum, we discussed strategies to recruit new judges, especially from underrepresented areas in the southwest. The judges feel that a (mis)perception exists among attorneys that conference equals compromise and their clients are better represented by advocacy. But the JSC, in the words of Judge Daniel Bouton, at least gives the retired judge an opportunity to show an empathy they could not from the bench, to dig into the parties' stories, and to share their years of legal knowledge and passion for public service. And, as another noted, one doesn't have to go to bed wondering if they made the right call.

2024

# JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE

MEETING OF JUDGES



# DRS IN THE FIELD *(Cont.)*

## **Pre-Bench Orientation**

DAN WASSINK, DRS MANAGER



In late June, Michael and Dan hit the road for Newport News, where new district and circuit court judges attended the Pre-Bench Orientation Program. This is a great opportunity for DRS, as it allows us to encourage judges to maximize their use of mediation before taking the bench.

Michael and Dan led three sessions, tailoring each for the specific audience. For example, Parent Education was an added feature during the J&DR court presentation; while the Judicial Settlement Conference program made its way onto the agenda for circuit court judges.

Once again, Michael and Dan were grateful for the support of Judges Robert MacDonald (Chesapeake CC) and Thomas Sotelo (Fairfax Co. J&DR court). One of them joined us at the front of the room at all three sessions, and proved once again what great advocates they are for mediation and other Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services in the courtroom. Judges MacDonald and Sotelo certainly know how to command a room, and the positive impression they clearly made on the incoming judges will hopefully pay dividends for the ADR community well into the future.

## **Judicial Conference of Virginia for District Courts**

DAN WASSINK, DRS MANAGER



In late August, Jon will be Dan's traveling companion as they attend this Conference in Roanoke. In lieu of formal presentations, Jon and Dan will staff an exhibitor's table chock full of promotional and practical information related to all things ADR. They will make themselves available throughout two full days of the Conference, distributing materials and answering questions. If DRS is gifted with a spot near the self-serve coffee table as in 2023, the foot traffic will once again be heavy!

DRS also wishes to thank Caroline Kirkpatrick and the entire Educational Services team at OES for carving out time and space for us at these events, and for their above-and-beyond support of our efforts!

# RE-CERTIFICATION! RE-CERTIFICATION!

MICHAEL BARR, ADR ANALYST



Have you been certified for over a year? Did you not have to recertify last year? If you can answer yes to both of these questions, then it is your turn! Recert season runs from early August through October 31st and is your opportunity to tell us what trainings you have taken to advance your professional growth in the past two years. The way you do so is with the newly revised [Application for Mediator Recertification, ADR-1003 form](#).

How do you find acceptable trainings? Trainings that are pre-approved for CME credit are verified by the ADR 1010 form distributed at the end of the course and listed on the [Advanced Training Calendar](#). This calendar is updated often so check back if you do not see a training of interest. Did you attend a conference or a training through an organization outside Virginia but related to your mediation practice? To receive credit hours for the instruction received, complete a [Mediator Application for CME Course Certification, ADR 2002 form](#), but please allow up to three weeks for approval.

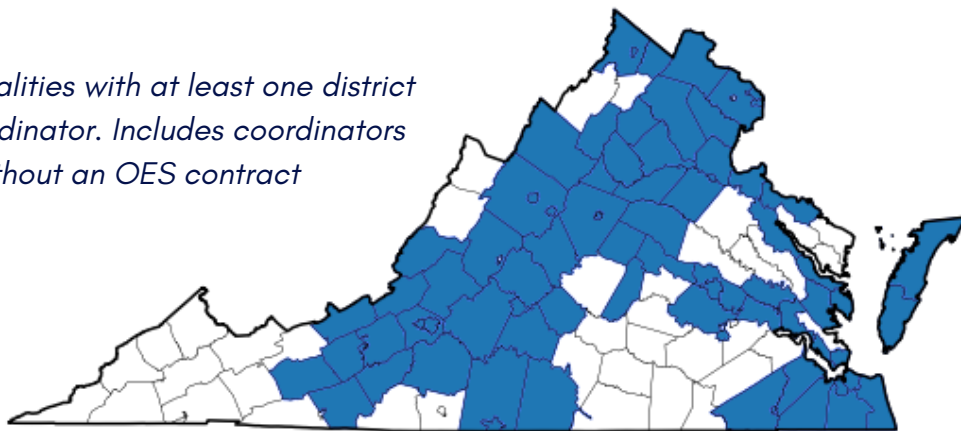
What is new this year for recertification? Taking a cue from certified mediators and the Virginia State Bar, a limit is placed on the number of credit hours (4) that may be earned from courses that are pre-recorded, asynchronous, on-demand webinars or videos and not designed for interaction. Since the pandemic, such courses have proliferated and while still of benefit, they are somewhat at odds with the purpose of 'mediating,' to foster dialogue. For more information on this policy, or how to recertify and find courses, have you visited the DRS website lately? Good information can be found by exploring the [Mediator Recertification tab](#) and [FAQ's about Recertification](#). Happy training!

# NEW FISCAL YEAR - NEW CONTRACTS!

JON LAMP,  
ADR PROGRAMS SPECIALIST

July 1st, 2024 marked the beginning of a new fiscal year for DRS, which is an exciting (and busy) time for our office. Each fiscal year, DRS enters or renews contracts with various entities who provide a variety of ADR services in Virginia. Most of our contracts are from the Mediation Coordination program, which supplies district courts across the Commonwealth with dedicated organizations and individuals who manage the courts' mediation programs. These contractors, generally called "Coordinators," serve a vital function by completing work that might otherwise need to be completed by the clerk's offices, such as scheduling mediations, managing mediator rosters, screening cases for appropriateness, managing case paperwork, and more. Coordinators are also the primary contact for mediation-related inquiries, and act as liaison between the mediation program and court staff, DRS, and the public.

*Map of localities with at least one district court coordinator. Includes coordinators without an OES contract*



We are starting this fiscal year with 24 contracted mediation coordinators, who manage programs in over 100 courts between them. The coordinators are a diverse group, including mediation centers, non-profits, LLCs, and individuals. Some coordinators have been at their courts since before Y2K, and some have just started in the past year or two. Some coordinate Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts, General District Courts, or both!

# NEW FISCAL YEAR - NEW CONTRACTS!

JON LAMP,  
ADR PROGRAMS SPECIALIST

Just as there are no two courts are completely alike, no two coordinators are the same either. This allows our coordinator program the flexibility to meet the varied needs of Virginia's many courts. You can see just how wide of a breadth of courts and coordinators are involved in this program by visiting our lists of contracted coordinators on [our website](#) under "Directories".<sup>[1]</sup>

Are you interested in coordinating the mediation program in a court near you? With the fiscal year having just begun, now is the perfect time to get the conversation started with courts looking ahead to next year! If you find an interested court, please reach out to our office at [disputeresolution@vacourts.gov](mailto:disputeresolution@vacourts.gov). We can help you and the court to set up a new mediation program, and provide you with an application to determine eligibility. Coordinator contract values are generally between \$5,000 and \$25,000 as determined by the amount of coordination work needed. This is estimated from the number of mediations from each court, the number of mediators, and more. Remember, you do not need to be a coordinator to mediate cases. There are some courts that may prefer not to have a coordinator, but may still have need for an additional mediator.

Many courts' programs would not be where they are today without the dedication of Virginia's mediation coordinators, and DRS is grateful for the services they provide. If you have questions about mediation coordination in Virginia's district courts, or you are interested in becoming a coordinator yourself, please reach out to our office at any time!

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[1] There are a few courts with coordinators that do not have a contract with our office. These programs do not appear on our lists of contractors.



# DRS TRAINING CALENDAR



# THANK YOU

*for all you do!*

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## SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

Have an idea for a future article?

Submit your ideas to  
[disputeresolution@vacourts.gov](mailto:disputeresolution@vacourts.gov)

As always, thank you for all you do for  
ADR in Virginia.

*Dispute Resolution  
Services*