



The Mediation Center

Finding common ground.

Become a Volunteer Community Mediator March/April 2022 Community Mediation Training

Thank you so much for your interest in becoming a Volunteer Community Mediator with the Mediation Center. This document is intended to provide you with information that will answer many questions and give you information about next steps.

Volunteer mediators help people in our community move through difficult and stressful conflict by having productive conversations that put relationships first. Each year, Volunteer Community Mediators facilitate conversations between hundreds of people. When conflict is resolved peacefully, we all have a safer and more peaceful community.

The model of mediation we practice is radically non-judgmental. We value the self-determination of participants and believe that people know best how to move forward in their own conflicts. Mediators don't tell people what to do, decide who is right or wrong, give advice, share their own experiences, or push people towards agreements. They never make suggestions or make rules about how communication happens during mediation. Instead, they walk participants through a conflict resolution process so the participants can create their own solutions. We always use a co-mediation model where mediators work in pairs using the same evidence-supported model.

All mediators complete Community Mediation Training, which includes 40+ hours of classroom and homework time. The training is **free** to those who apply and are accepted to participate.

Upcoming Training – March 21 to April 9, 2022

Day	Date	Time	Format
Monday	March 21, 2022	4:00pm - 7:00pm	Zoom
Thursday	March 24, 2022	4:00pm - 7:00pm	Zoom
Friday	March 25, 2022	4:00pm - 7:00pm	Zoom
Saturday	March 26, 2022	9:00am – 5:00pm	In-person
Monday	March 28, 2022	4:00pm - 7:00pm	Zoom
Thursday	March 31, 2022	4:00pm – 8:00pm	Zoom
Monday	April 4, 2022	4:00pm - 8:00pm	Zoom
Thursdays	April 7, 2022	4:00pm - 8:00pm	Zoom
Friday	April 8, 2022	4:00pm - 8:00pm	In-person
Saturday	April 9, 2022	9:00am - 5:00pm	In-person

Training Attendance Policy

- All mediators-in-training must attend all 10 sessions.
- You can miss up to one hour. If you miss more than that, you'll need to drop out and reapply for a future training.
- In-person training will be in downtown Asheville. If the weather is nice, we may go to a park.
- Masks are required when we are inside.



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Complete the application at [this link](#).

Selection Process

We sometimes receive more application than we have spots available. All community mediators must be part of the Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, or Polk County communities. In general, we seek diversity in the following areas:

- People of color
- Young adults (under 45); minimum age is 16
- Low-income residents
- People without a college degree
- Those who live in public or section-8 housing
- People who are formerly incarcerated and those who have experience being involved in the justice system
- People who are originally from rural areas of Buncombe County.
- People who live in Henderson and Transylvania Counties
- Those who are fluent at a professional level in both English and Spanish.

What happens after training?

- ✚ You'll start an **apprenticeship process** of mediating with more experienced volunteer mediators.
- ✚ Volunteers attend **in-service training** at least every-other-month for as long as they continue to mediate.
- ✚ Each month, volunteers agree to hold **two, 2-hour blocks** on their calendar to mediate. Right now, all mediation is on Zoom. We will transition to in-person sessions when we are able.

Know Beforehand

Volunteers are not able to select cases or types of cases that they will mediate. Cases involve a wide variety of community issues including neighborhood conflicts, interpersonal issues between friends, family members, co-workers, misdemeanor criminal cases, and too many other types of conflict to list!

This is a training to become a volunteer within the community mediation program of the Mediation Center. You cannot represent yourself as a Mediation Center mediator and do your own mediations outside of our program. There is no legal or confidentiality protection for community mediators operating on their own which creates ethical issues. Of course, you can informally use the skills you learn in many different settings – just not offering mediation as a neutral third party on your own. If you have questions about this, be sure to ask us upfront!



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Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of mediation is this? In line with the most current research on mediation of interpersonal conflicts, the style of mediation we use places high value on non-judgment and the self-determination of participants. This means that the mediator manages the process but does not give advice or suggestions. We do not use ground rules in mediation (people are allowed to say whatever they want; however they want to say it). Mediation empowers participants to find solutions that work for them. Also, we always have two mediators mediating together cooperatively. This helps with quality control and gives both mediators support.

What kinds of conflict will I learn to mediate? We value mediation and conflict resolution because *relationships matter*, and that's the focus of our training. Participants might be family members, neighbors, co-workers, friends, acquaintances, or even just members of the same community. We do not mediate divorces/parenting plans at this time.

What's the training like? Well, perhaps most importantly - not boring! Our style is engaging and experiential. Experiential learning - where you try out skills that you may not yet have a solid handle on and then reflect about your experience - can be exciting, interesting, and sometimes frustrating. We will build your mediation skills step by step while you try them out and reflect along the way. We use discussion, handouts, games, role-plays, videos, music, and other approaches to keep things moving.

What will we do during the training? What's the agenda? The training starts with exploration of the values of mediation, discussion of the causes of conflicts, various approaches to conflict resolution, and the role of the mediator. We spend a LOT of time practicing mediator-specific listening skills that enable you to work on understanding what's most important to the participants without judgment, advice, or suggestions. The rest of the training involves skills development and many hours of role-play practice. Participants analyze their own practice and adherence to the model, give feedback to peers, and receive feedback from the trainers.

Is there anything I should read beforehand? How do I prepare? We don't ask participants to come prepared with background information. There are many models of mediation and there are certainly books about how to mediate, but the variation in models may prove more confusing than helpful.

Do I need to have a certain educational or professional background to participate? Absolutely not. Training participants are diverse and come from a variety of backgrounds. Participants share a desire to make our community a safer and more peaceful place for everyone. Having subject-specific knowledge or expertise is not required - and can sometimes even get in the way. That said, solid listening skills, a willingness to try out new skills, openness to being non-judgmental, and respect for others all give a useful foundation.

How often do you offer the training? Generally, once a year or every-other year.

If I have prior mediator training, do I still have to do your training? Yes. Mediation models vary and to ensure the highest quality services, we require that everyone complete our training.

Still have questions? E-mail community@mediatewnc.org