

Step by Step Guide How to Become a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator

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To assist new mediators, the Florida Dispute Resolution Center has created this guide which contains qualifications for mediator certification, a list of certified mediation training programs, good moral character screening procedures, and mentorship definitions and eligible activities.

Step by Step Guide

How to Become a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator

- Step One: Identify the area of mediator certification that you are interested in pursuing and review the educational requirements within Attachment A – Mediator Qualifications to verify that you meet the qualifications. Please note, a bachelor’s degree without a graduate certificate in conflict resolution or mediation experience is insufficient to meet the educational requirements for family, circuit, and dependency mediator certification.
- Step Two: After determining that you have the educational background to pursue certification, see the Dispute Resolution Center’s webpage [here](#) for a list and contact information for all certified mediation training program providers. Once you have successfully completed a certified mediation training program, the Dispute Resolution Center will email you the mediator certification application.
- Step Three: As part of the certification process, you will complete a mentorship wherein you observe and/or mediate under supervision with two different mediators. Attachment B includes the mentorship requirements and eligible types of cases.
- Step Four: Once you have completed your mentorship, you will complete the mediator certification application, attach verification of the points you are claiming, and mail the application to the Dispute Resolution Center with the appropriate fee.
- Step Five: Upon receipt of your mediator certification application, the Dispute Resolution Center will email you the process for completing the required criminal background screening. This process should not be initiated before receiving confirmation of receipt of your application. Attachment C includes general information on the steps to undertake the screening.

Attachment A - Mediator Certification Qualifications

100 Points Required in Each Area of Mediator Certification Area <i>Except</i> for Appellate and Certified Family, Dependency, or Circuit Court Mediators Seeking County Certification	
County	<p>Minimum Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) 30 certified county mediation training; and (2) 10 education for HS Diploma or GED; and (3) 60 mentorship. <i>[Note: Mentorship points cannot be reduced as a product of having more than the 10 points in the educational or educational and mediation experience component.]</i> <p>= 100 points</p>
Family	<p>Minimum Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) 30 certified family mediation training; and (2) 25 educational, or 20 for educational and 5 for mediation experience, or 20 educational and 5 for a graduate certificate in conflict resolution; and (3) 40 mentorship; and (4) 5 additional points via mentorship, higher education, mediation experience, or options under miscellaneous points. <p>= 100 points</p>
Dependency	<p>Minimum Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) 30 certified dependency mediation training; and (2) 25 educational, or 20 educational and 5 for mediation experience, or 20 educational and 5 for a graduate certificate in conflict resolution; and (3) 40 mentorship; and (4) 5 additional points via mentorship, higher education, mediation experience, or options under miscellaneous points. <p>= 100 points</p>

Any discrepancy between the summary and the written certification requirements shall be resolved in favor of the latter.

Circuit Court	<p>Minimum Points:</p> <p>(1) 30 certified circuit court mediation training; and</p> <p>(2) 25 educational, or 20 educational and 5 for mediation experience, or 20 educational and 5 for a graduate certificate in conflict resolution; and</p> <p>(3) 40 mentorship; and</p> <p>(4) 5 additional points via mentorship, higher education, mediation experience, or options under miscellaneous points.</p> <p>= 100 points</p>
Appellate	An applicant must be a Florida Supreme Court certified circuit court, family, or dependency mediator and successfully complete a certified appellate mediation training program.

Educational & Mediation Experience Points for Family, Circuit Court, and Dependency	
[Note: County Education Minimum Listed on Previous Page]	
40 points	Ph.D. from accredited conflict resolution program
30 points	Doctorate (e.g., JD, MD, PhD, EdD, LLM)
30 points	Master's degree in conflict resolution
25 points	Master's degree
25 points	Graduate certificate conflict resolution program and a bachelor's degree
25 points	Mediated 15 cases (<i>of any type</i>) a year as a Florida Supreme Court certified mediator for a consecutive five-year period and a bachelor's degree
25 points	Minimum of 100 mediations (<i>of any type</i>) conducted as mediator over a consecutive five-year period and a bachelor's degree
+5 points	An additional five points will be awarded for completion of a graduate level conflict resolution certificate program
Florida Supreme Court certified mediator: one point per year in which mediated at least 15 mediations over a five-year period (any type); or any mediator: five points for minimum of 100 mediations over a five-year period (any type)	

Any discrepancy between the summary and the written certification requirements shall be resolved in favor of the latter.

Mentorship Options: You Choose How to Reach Required Points [Note: You must work with at least two different certified mediators.]	
10 points each session	Observation
15 points each complete mediation	Supervised mediation

Miscellaneous Options: Helping You Reach 100 Points	
5 points (total)	Licensed to practice law, psychology, accounting, social work, mental health, health care, education or mediation in any U.S. jurisdiction
5 points (total)	Florida Supreme Court certified mediator (<i>currently certified</i>)
5 points (total)	Foreign language conversational ability as demonstrated by certification by ACTFL Oral Proficiency Test; qualified as a court interpreter; or accredited by the American Translators Association; sign language interpreter as demonstrated by approval by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
5 points (total)	Completion of additional mediation training program (minimum 30 hours in length) certified or approved by a state or court other than Florida

All mediators must be at least 21 years of age and be of good moral character.

RULE 10.100 CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) General. For certification as a county court, family, circuit court, dependency, or appellate mediator, a mediator must be at least 21 years of age and be of good moral character.

(b) Points. For certification as a county court, family, circuit court, or dependency mediator, an applicant must have the required number of points for the type of certification sought as specifically required in rule 10.105, except that certified family, dependency, or circuit court mediators seeking county court certification may qualify as provided in subdivisions (c)(2)-(3), below.

(c) County Court Mediators. For initial certification as a mediator of county court matters, an applicant must:

(1) Have at least a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and 100 points, which must include:

Any discrepancy between the summary and the written certification requirements shall be resolved in favor of the latter.

(A) 30 points for successful completion of a Florida Supreme Court certified county court mediation training program;

(B) 10 points for education; and

(C) 60 points for mentorship;

or

(2) Be a currently certified Florida Supreme Court circuit court mediator;

or

(3) Be a currently certified Florida Supreme Court family or dependency mediator and obtain 30 points of mentorship from observing or conducting mediations under the supervision of a certified county mediator for county court cases in the two years preceding application.

(d) Family Mediators. For initial certification as a mediator of family and dissolution of marriage issues, an applicant must have at least a bachelor's degree and 100 points, which must include, at a minimum:

(1) 30 points for successful completion of a Florida Supreme Court certified family mediation training program;

(2) 25 points for education, or 20 points for education and 5 points for mediation experience, or 20 points for education and 5 points for a graduate certificate in conflict resolution; and

(3) 40 points for mentorship.

Additional points above the minimum requirements may be awarded for completion of additional education, mediation experience, mentorship, or miscellaneous activities.

(e) Circuit Court Mediators. For initial certification as a mediator of circuit court matters, other than family matters, an applicant must have at least a bachelor's degree and 100 points, which must include, at a minimum:

(1) 30 points for successful completion of a Florida Supreme Court certified circuit court mediation training program;

(2) 25 points for education, or 20 points for education and 5 points for mediation experience, or 20 points for education and 5 points for a graduate certificate in conflict resolution; and

Any discrepancy between the summary and the written certification requirements shall be resolved in favor of the latter.

- (3) 40 points for mentorship.

Additional points above the minimum requirements may be awarded for completion of additional education, mediation experience, mentorship, or miscellaneous activities.

(f) Dependency Mediators. For initial certification as a mediator of dependency matters, as defined in Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.290, an applicant must have at least a bachelor's degree and 100 points, which must include, at a minimum:

- (1) 30 points for successful completion of a Florida Supreme Court certified dependency mediation training program;

- (2) 25 points for education, or 20 points for education and 5 points for mediation experience, or 20 points for education and 5 points for a graduate certificate in conflict resolution; and

- (3) 40 points for mentorship.

Additional points above the minimum requirements may be awarded for completion of additional education, mediation experience, mentorship, or miscellaneous activities.

(g) Appellate Mediators. For initial certification as a mediator of appellate matters, an applicant must be a Florida Supreme Court certified circuit court, family, or dependency mediator and successfully complete a Florida Supreme Court certified appellate mediation training program.

(h) Senior Judges Serving As Mediators. A senior judge may serve as a mediator in a court-ordered mediation in a circuit in which the senior judge is presiding over criminal cases or in a circuit in which the senior judge is not presiding as a judge, or in both, only if certified by the Florida Supreme Court as a mediator for that type of mediation.

(i) Referral for Discipline. If other professional certification or licensure of a mediator is suspended or revoked, or if the mediator holding such certification or licensure is in any other manner disciplined, such matter must be referred for appropriate action pursuant to rule 10.810.

(j) Special Conditions. Mediators who are certified prior to August 1, 2006, are not subject to the point requirements for any category of certification in relation to which continuing certification is maintained.

Any discrepancy between the summary and the written certification requirements shall be resolved in favor of the latter.

RULE 10.105 POINT SYSTEM CATEGORIES

(a) Education. Points will be awarded in accordance with the following schedule (points are only awarded for the highest level of education completed and honorary degrees are not included):

High School Diploma or GED	10 points
Associate Degree	15 points
Bachelor's Degree	20 points
Master's Degree	25 points
Master's Degree in Conflict Resolution	30 points
Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., J.D., M.D., Ed.D., LL.M)	30 points
Ph.D. from Accredited Conflict Resolution Program	40 points

An additional five points will be awarded for completion of a graduate level conflict resolution certificate program in an institution which has been accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the American Bar Association, or an entity of equal status.

(b) Mediation Experience. One point per year will be awarded to a Florida Supreme Court certified mediator for each year that mediator has mediated at least 15 cases of any type over a consecutive five-year period. In the alternative, a maximum of five points will be awarded to any mediator, regardless of Florida Supreme Court certification, who has conducted a minimum of 100 mediations over a consecutive five-year period.

(c) Mentorship. Fifteen points will be awarded for each supervised mediation completed of the type for which certification is sought and ten points will be awarded for each mediation session of the type for which certification is sought which is observed. Observations or supervised mediations must be completed with a minimum of two different mentors.

(d) Miscellaneous Points.

(1) Five points will be awarded to applicants currently licensed or certified in any United States jurisdiction in psychology, accounting, social work, mental health, health care, education, or the practice of law or mediation. Such award must not exceed a total of five points regardless of the number of licenses or certifications obtained.

Any discrepancy between the summary and the written certification requirements shall be resolved in favor of the latter.

(2) Five points will be awarded for possessing conversational ability in a foreign language as demonstrated by certification by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Test, qualification as a court interpreter, accreditation by the American Translators Association, or approval as a sign language interpreter by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Such award must not exceed a total of five points regardless of the number of languages in which the applicant is proficient.

(3) Five points will be awarded for the successful completion of a mediation training program (minimum 30 hours in length) which is certified or approved by a jurisdiction other than Florida and which may not be the required Florida Supreme Court certified mediation training program. Such award must not exceed five points regardless of the number of training programs completed.

(4) Five points will be awarded for certification as a mediator by the Florida Supreme Court. Such award will not exceed five points per category regardless of the number of training programs completed or certifications obtained.

Any discrepancy between the summary and the written certification requirements shall be resolved in favor of the latter.

Attachment B - Mentorship Requirements

Mentorship must include observing mediations conducted by certified mediators and may include conducting mediations under the supervision and observation of certified mediators. A trainee is not required to participate in supervised mediations under the certification point system. There is no requirement that either type of mentorship be conducted in person; both types of mentorship are permitted to be conducted by remote electronic means, either by audio or audio-video communication technology.

The mentorship requirements for those seeking certification must be performed in a manner consistent with the following requirements. The responsibility of structuring a mentorship rests with each trainee. The trainee must not receive any fees for any case which the trainee utilizes to complete the required mentorship.

All duly certified mediators are required to allow, upon request, a minimum of two mediation observations or supervised mediations per year. The certified mediator must not charge the trainee any fees to observe mediation conducted by the certified mediator. The certified mediator may charge a reasonable fee for supervising a trainee while the trainee conducts mediation. In addition, the certified mediator must be entitled to any compensation paid for the mediation.

The certified mediator must remain in control of the case.

For an applicant to be awarded mentorship points the applicant must work with at least two different certified mediators and the mediations involved must be of the type for which certification is sought.

State-funded trial court mediation programs must assist trainees in completing their mentorship requirements.

Applicants must provide original or verified electronic signatures of all mentors in relation to all mentorship activity claimed. In lieu of original or electronic signatures, the Center will accept an email from the mentor verifying mentorship activities. Such email verification must be addressed to the applicant or the Center.

A trainee must not fulfill any of the mentorship requirements completed before beginning the certified mediation training program; however, a trainee may be awarded points for observations completed after the commencement but prior to the conclusion of the certified mediation training program. A supervised mediation must only be conducted by a trainee after the completion of a certified mediation training program.

Mediation Observations

For each observation required for certification, the trainee must observe an entire session of the type of mediation for which certification is sought, conducted by a certified mediator in the same category for which certification is sought. The observation requirement must not be satisfied by any individual who is a party, participant, or representative in the mediation. An appellate or pre-suit mediation may be utilized for observation purposes if (1) it is or would have been the type of mediation for which certification is sought if it had been filed in a trial court and (2) if it is conducted by a certified mediator of the type for which certification is sought. A federal court mediation conducted by a certified circuit court mediator may be utilized to fulfill a circuit court mentorship. Pre-suit homeowner association (HOA) disputes, within the jurisdiction of the circuit court, mediated by a certified circuit court mediator may be utilized to fulfill a circuit court mentorship. Workers' compensation and administrative agency mediations mediated by a certified circuit court mediator may be utilized to fulfill circuit court mentorship.

Supervised Mediations

A supervised mediation is defined as one in which the trainee conducts a mediation under the supervision and observation of a certified mediator, or the trainee co-mediate with a certified mediator. At the conclusion of the mediation, the mentor must determine if the trainee made a substantial contribution to the mediation. If so, the case may qualify as a supervised mediation. If not, the case will qualify only as an observation.

For purposes of conducting supervised mediations, mediation is defined as a complete case, which may consist of multiple sessions. The entire mediation must be co-mediated or observed by a certified mediator of the type for which certification is sought. In the event the trainee is only able to participate in a single session of a multi-session mediation, such participation qualifies as an observation regardless of the trainee's level of participation. An appellate or pre-suit mediation may be utilized for the requirements to conduct mediations under supervision and observation if (1) it is or would have been the type of mediation for which certification is sought if it had been filed in a trial court, and (2) it is conducted by a certified mediator of the type for which certification is sought. A federal court mediation conducted by a certified circuit court mediator may be utilized to fulfill a circuit court mentorship. Pre-suit homeowner association (HOA) disputes, within the jurisdiction of the circuit court, mediated by a certified circuit court mediator may be utilized to fulfill a circuit court mentorship. Workers' compensation and administrative agency mediations mediated by a certified circuit court mediator may be utilized to fulfill circuit court mentorship.

Attachment C - Criminal Background Screening Process

The Rules for Certified and Court-Appointed Mediators require mediators to have good moral character. All applicants for mediator certification and certified mediators adding additional areas of certification are required to complete a criminal background screening conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Mediators seeking renewal are not required to complete this requirement. Any vendor fee and state and federal processing fees associated with the criminal background screening are to be borne by the applicant.

- Applicants are required to go to a Live Scan service provider to be fingerprinted. A list of Live Scan providers throughout the state is found [here](#). Applicants may want to contact more than one vendor. The cost of the criminal background screening varies depending on the Live Scan provider. Further, some providers have more onerous requirements for the submission of fingerprints, including opening an account and do-it-yourself printing, that can cause the process to be long and frustrating for many applicants. Call ahead to confirm the details before starting the process.
- Applicants are required to provide the Florida Dispute Resolution Center's (DRC) Originating Agency Identification (ORI) number to the Live Scan provider so that the criminal background screening results are sent directly to the DRC. The DRC will provide the ORI to applicants via email upon the DRC's receipt of the application for certification. Applicants **should not** submit fingerprints for a criminal background screening before filing an application with the DRC.
- Mediator certification applications will not be considered complete and processed until the results of the criminal background screening have been received by the DRC.
- If a certified mediator submitted fingerprints for a criminal background screening on or after July 1, 2023, and subsequently applies for another type of certification within two years of initial certification, additional criminal background screenings will not be required for the additional certification(s).