

GRIEVANCE MEDIATION

Labor mediators at the Michigan Employment Relations Commission/Bureau of Employment Relations offer grievance mediation at no cost to the parties. Grievance mediation is a voluntary, informal process whereby a skilled labor mediator assists parties to reach a mutually acceptable resolution to a grievance dispute asserting a violation of the collective bargaining agreement.

MERC mediators have an extensive background in contract administration and typically have handled numerous grievances disputes – some involving arbitration. By mutual agreement between the employer and the union or when included as a step in the contract’s grievance procedure, both parties present the basis of their position to the mediator. The mediator will become familiar with all aspects of the case and will seek to assist the parties to reach a satisfactory settlement that will resolve the dispute. An experienced mediator may also take an unbiased look at the dispute and share a neutral perspective on the parties’ respective positions. A mediator’s assessment of the weak points in a case or clarification of the underlying issue of the grievance, may prompt one or both parties to view the dispute in a different light and seek resolution in lieu of arbitration. Settlement options may include granting the grievance, withdrawal of the grievance or a compromise. Ultimately, however, settlement of the grievance is within the control of the parties. The mediator is present only as a confidential neutral to assist in settling the dispute, or to offer suggestions and recommendations.

The many advantages of grievance mediation include:

- Expedience*
- Cost effectiveness*
- Less adversarial; hence, promotes cooperation*
- Not tied to a contract remedy; therefore, resolves the “real” issue*
- It works (with about a 90% success rate)*

To initiate grievance mediation, the parties simply download and file a *Request for Grievance Mediation* form, found on the MERC website (www.michigan.gov/merc) under the Forms link. A mediator will be assigned and will promptly contact the parties to schedule a mediation conference. For further information, please contact the Bureau offices either by telephone or email.

Detroit BER Office	Lansing BER Office
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