

## **JUDGES PRO TEMPORE & ADR**

**There shall be established in the Commerce Program, an Alternative Dispute Resolution program for Commerce Program actions, which may include, but is not limited to, mediation and the assistance of Commerce Program Judges Pro Tempore.**

**1. Panel of Commerce Program Judges Pro Tempore. The Administrative Judge or designee shall designate a panel of Commerce Program Judges Pro Tempore from among volunteers nominated and approved by the Philadelphia Bar Association Business Law Section, Business Litigation Committee, who shall be distinguished attorneys engaged in active practice of law with no less than fifteen (15) years trial experience including a practice focused on the type of litigation described in section B.1 of Administrative Docket 01-2000, In Re: Commerce Case Management Program. Commerce Program Judges Pro Tempore shall serve without charge. Persons may be added to or removed from the panel as the Administrative Judge or designee may determine consistent with the qualifications above.**

**The Court may order a Commerce Program case to be assigned for Settlement Conference to a Commerce Program Judge Pro Tempore who shall, on a date certain, hold a Settlement Conference which must be attended by trial counsel representing the parties and any unrepresented parties. Counsel and unrepresented parties shall provide to the Commerce Program Judge Pro Tempore prior to the Settlement Conference a fully completed Settlement Memorandum, in a form to be established by the Commerce Program Judges. The Commerce Program Judge Pro Tempore on such a referral is not authorized to rule on any motions, but will attempt to facilitate a settlement between the parties.**

**2. Mediation.**

**a. Referral to Mediation and Selection of Mediator. Commerce Program cases may be referred to nonbinding mediation at the discretion of the Commerce Program Judge, who may make such referrals at the time of the Case Management Conference, at a Pretrial Conference referenced above, or at another time. Where appropriate and whether or not mediation is pursued at an early stage of the litigation, the Commerce Program Judge has the discretion to refer cases to nonbinding mediation at a later stage of the proceedings.**

**The Court may permit the parties to choose the mediator from among the panel of Commerce Program Judges Pro Tempore, or agree to pay for a mediator not on the panel. The order of reference to mediation shall not stay or delay any scheduling dates, unless the Court so orders.**

b. **Conflicts of Interest.** A mediator to whom a case is assigned must disclose to the parties and to the Court any apparent conflict of interest. Unless the mediator determines consistent with any applicable ethical requirements and guidelines that he or she should preside notwithstanding any such apparent conflict of interest and the parties and the Court agree that such mediator nevertheless shall preside, another mediator shall be selected.

c. **Confidentiality of Mediation.** The order referring an action to mediation shall require that the mediator report to the Court the disposition of the mediation in accordance with a schedule as determined by the Court, under the guidelines below. The order shall also provide that all information received by the mediator as to the merits of the matter, including the submitted memoranda, shall remain confidential and not be reported or submitted to the Court by the mediator or the parties, except as necessary in a stipulation of settlement agreed to by the parties.

d. **Mediation Procedure.** The first mediation session preferably shall be conducted within 30 days of the execution of the order of reference, unless the Court establishes a different schedule. At least ten days before the first session, each party shall deliver to the mediator a copy of its pleadings, any briefs filed in the action important to the mediation and a memorandum of not more than five pages (double-spaced), setting forth that party's contentions as to liability and damages. The memorandum shall be served on all parties, but shall be marked "Confidential, for Mediation Only," and may not be used, cited, quoted, marked as an exhibit or referenced in any proceedings. Attendance at the first mediation session shall be mandatory, and the mediator may require, in addition to the appearance of the attorneys, the presence of the parties or their representatives with authority to settle. If the first session is successful, the settlement shall be reduced to a stipulation, and the mediator shall submit forthwith the stipulation, the notice of discontinuance and the report of disposition to the Court. The report of disposition shall be on a form prescribed by the Court Administrator.

e. **Report; Extensions.** If the action is not settled upon completion of the first session, the mediator may schedule additional sessions on consent of the parties. However, at the end of the first session, any party or the mediator may terminate the mediation effort, and in that case the mediator shall advise the Court forthwith that mediation has been terminated but shall not disclose the identity of any parties who terminated or did not terminate the mediation.

Except as set forth below, subsequent sessions should be concluded within 15 days from the date by which the first session was to have been held according to the order of reference. The mediator shall report to the Court as to the outcome of the mediation session(s) no later than 20 days from the date by which the first session was to have been held according to the order of reference.

**If mediation cannot be concluded within 15 days from the date by which the first session was to have been held according to the order of reference, upon consent of all parties a 30-day extension of time to conduct further sessions may be granted by the mediator. If such extension is granted, the mediator shall report to the Court as to the success or lack of success of the additional sessions as soon as practicable but in any event no later than 5 days after the final mediation session.**

**All deadlines and relevant procedures shall be set forth in a standard form order of reference.**