

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

INFORMAL REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (IRFP) Solicitation Number: 325-21-400-073

What constitutes a completed mediation agreement, as referenced in the IRFP?

The state will consider a mediation agreement to be completed when the two parties (renter and housing provider) have agreed to engage in the mediation and a resolution has been reached.

“Resolution” could include a number of scenarios, including, but not limited to, the housing provider accepting payment for outstanding obligations and re-entering into a lease; the housing provider agreeing to stop an impending eviction proceeding if a renter agrees to vacate the premises in a certain period of time; and the renter agreeing to remedy outstanding situations related to the lease that are a source of friction.

The goal of the mediation services offered in conjunction with ND Rent Help is to prevent a housing crisis by resolving the fractured relationship between a housing provider and renter, whether the resolution is to remain in a contractual relationship or to part ways without having to resort to the eviction.

Parties are often reluctant to come together. How difficult will it be for mediators to get parties to the table?

The state will be making referrals to ND Rent Help mediators from within the ND Rent Help program. We anticipate that the parties will be in a more advanced stage of readiness for mediation because of their connection to ND Rent Help. ND Rent Help application counselors and housing facilitators who have been engaged with either the renter or the housing provider can also support efforts to bring parties together for mediation.

What resources are available to help give mediations the best chance of successful resolution?

Research on eviction prevention practices has demonstrated that mediation can be an extremely effective eviction prevention tool, especially when paired with rental assistance and flexible financial resources available to help satisfy outstanding obligations and/or to assist with re-location to a new living arrangement.

ND Rent Help can provide the financial resources that will give mediation a strong chance of positive resolution for both parties. In the early months of the program, the state’s experience suggests that increasing access to a neutral party who has the skill to help the parties resolve their relationship will support efforts to interrupt or prevent eviction and ultimately restore housing stability.