

Appendix K. Sample Press Release

Note: Retype this release on association stationery, filling in the appropriate information in the blanks as indicated. The contact at the top of the release should be the person who handles media calls.

For further information contact:

**Media relations
contact :**

**Phone
number:**

Local Association of REALTORS® Launches Mediation Service for Buyers and Sellers

(Your town) Date -- "Area real estate buyers and sellers now have an alternative to expensive and time-consuming litigation when there is a problem with their transactions," according to (full name of association president), President of the (association's name).

The mediation component of the Dispute Resolution System (DRS) was developed by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® for use by local associations of REALTORS® nationwide. Through the service, buyers and sellers have access to mediators who will conduct mediation under the DRS procedures.

"Although most real estate transactions are completed without difficulties, occasionally there is a need to resolve a dispute," said (last name of association president). "Many of the most common disputes, such as disagreements over earnest money deposits, are natural candidates for this type of service."

(Last name of association president) added that DRS is an economical and efficient method of settling conflicts that otherwise might take months to resolve through the courts or through outside arbitration services.

In the mediation process, the parties meet with a trained, impartial mediator who helps them attempt to reach a mutually agreeable solution to the dispute. Unlike an arbitrator, the mediator does not render a binding decision. If the parties cannot reach an agreement, they may pursue arbitration or litigation.

"It's a 'win-win' situation, with no risk involved for either party," said (last name of association president). "If the parties reach a settlement, the dispute is over. If they don't, they are free to take other courses of action."

For additional information on the DRS, contact the (association's name).

Association of REALTORS® Mediation Program Fact Sheet

Note: This fact sheet can be revised as necessary and published on association stationery, filling in the appropriate information in the blanks. The contact at the top of the fact sheet should be the person who handles media calls. This fact sheet should serve as background information in conjunction with a news release or feature story idea for local media.

What: The Dispute Resolution System (DRS) Mediation Program is a dispute resolution service designed by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® for its local associations of REALTORS®. The program offers buyers, sellers, brokers and other parties in a real estate transaction an efficient, affordable method of resolving disputes out of court. Associations voluntarily choose to endorse and participate in the program.

How: Participating associations identify qualified mediators who provide DRS mediation services. All parties involved can agree to use the DRS program before mediation begins. The mediator does not have the authority to render a binding decision, nor does the mediator have the authority to force any party to enter into an agreement. Rather, the mediator merely assists the parties in working together to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

Any settlement agreed in mediation must be put into writing and signed by all the parties to become a binding contract enforceable in a court of law. In the event the parties are unable to agree to a solution to the dispute, they are still free to pursue arbitration or litigation.

Benefits:

- Faster than litigation.
- Less expensive than litigation.
- Discourages litigation of frivolous claims.
- Parties do not forfeit their legal rights to arbitrate or litigate the dispute if mediation is unsuccessful.
- Brokers provide a valuable service to their clients and customers.
- Potential for lowering the number of claims that must be settled or litigated by the insurance company, thereby lowering insurance costs.
- Mediation in general has an extremely high success rate.

Who: The DRS program is available through the (association's name). The program was developed by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®. For additional information on the DRS mediation program, contact, (full name of contact) at (telephone).