

Policy: 1104.1, Citizen Dispute and Family Law Mediation Service Program

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Distribution Group: All Employees

Review Responsibility: Patrol Services Bureau Commander

Accreditation Chapter(s): 2

Chief of Police: Eric D. Smith

Contents

- I. PURPOSE**
- II. POLICY**
- III. DEFINITIONS**
- IV. PROCEDURES**
 - 1. CITIZEN DISPUTE AND FAMILY LAW MEDIATION SERVICE**
 - 2. TYPES OF CASES TO REFER**
 - 3. PROGRAM REFERRAL**
- V. FORMS AND APPENDICES**
- VI. REFERENCES**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a free and alternative solution to parties involved in minor incidents, nuisance issues, and civil disputes.

II. POLICY

Members of the Orlando Police Department shall evaluate minor criminal conduct and civil disputes and may recommend the parties involve to the Citizen Dispute and Family Mediation Service when they meet the criteria set forth by the Orange County Bar Association (OCBA).

III. DEFINITIONS

None

IV. PROCEDURES

1. CITIZEN DISPUTE AND FAMILY LAW MEDIATION SERVICE

The Orange County Bar Association's Citizen Dispute & Family Law Mediation Service is an informal, confidential approach for individuals to resolve an existing dispute and avoid a lawsuit and going to court. The settlement/mediation meeting is facilitated by an impartial, professional mediator who listens to both parties and encourages a resolution. By reaching a settlement, both parties avoid court costs and the uncertainty of a trial outcome. Most mediation meetings are scheduled during normal business hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) virtually.

Any member of the Orlando Police Department, that handles citizen complaints, may refer disputants to this program in accordance with this directive.

2. TYPES OF CASES TO REFER

2.1 TYPE OF CASES

The program is designed to handle the following types of cases:

- Alimony
- Child Custody and Visitation
- Child Support
- Animal Nuisance
- Consumer Complaints
- Disorderly Conduct
- Harassment
- Landlord and Tenants
- Neighborhood Disputes
- Property Damage
- Recovery of Money and Property
- And various other civil related issues

2.2 CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE REFERRALS

The intent of this program is to focus on selected misdemeanors and civil disputes. Prior to recommending the program to disputing parties, consideration must be given to the following:

- a. The nature of the dispute.
- b. The lack of criminal intent or pattern.
- c. The willingness of the parties to settle.
- d. The officer feels the situation has cooled to a point there will be no immediate reoccurrence of the dispute.

3. PROGRAM REFERRAL

3.1 OBLIGATION

The Citizen Dispute and Family Mediation Service is in no way binding on the disputing parties, or the responding member or the Orlando Police Department. The recommendation of the service will be done solely at the discretion of the responding member.

3.2 REFERRAL AND INCIDENT REPORT

If an event occurs that requires an Incident Report to be completed and the responding member feels the case might better be handled by the civil program, the member should do the following:

- a. Complete the Incident Report and annotate in the narrative that the disputants have been referred to the Citizen Dispute and Family Mediation Service.
- b. Direct both disputants to the Orange County Bar Association-Citizen Dispute website to complete the "Mediation Request Form" to be submitted to the OCBA via email.
- c. Disputants may also call 407.422.4551 for assistance.

3.3 REFERRAL WITH NO REPORT

If an event occurs that does not require an Incident Report and the responding member feels the disputants could resolve their problems through this program, the member need only direct the disputants to the Orange County Bar Association – Citizen Dispute website (<https://orangecountybar.org/page/Citizen-Dispute>) for them to complete a "Mediation Request Form" or to call 407.422.4551 for assistance.

V. FORMS AND APPENDICES

None

VI. REFERENCES

This policy rescinds Policy and Procedure 1104.0

Related Policies: Not Applicable

Related Laws: Not Applicable