

The program is voluntary and does not carry any cost to either the consumer or business. We may also send you other useful information that may assist you become a better-informed business.

guidelines

for understanding Consumer Mediation and Arbitration process in Massachusetts

City of Worcester



Consumer Rights Program

Working in cooperation with Massachusetts Attorney General's Office.

Funded by the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office.

Worcester Consumer Rights Program

Proudly serving the residents of Worcester and neighboring towns of:

Auburn, Berlin, Blackstone, Boylston, Clinton, Cochituate, Douglas, Grafton, Holden, Hopedale, Leicester, Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millis, Millville, Northborough, Northbridge, Paxton, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, West Boylston, and Westborough.

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Let's
Work
Together



Who we are & what we do:

We are Worcester Consumer Rights Program (WCRP) and we work in cooperation with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office (AGO). We are one of the many consumer aid programs that is located within city halls and directly reports to Massachusetts AGO.

Our mission is to provide consumer education & outreach and promote consumer protection through mediation. The program represents any consumer who is involved in a dispute or have a complaint against a business in Massachusetts or elsewhere in continental USA.

What is our process?

The Consumer Rights program office will contact you if or when a consumer complaint is made against your business. Our correspondence will request that you participate in amicable mediation and as such find a common ground to resolve the consumer complaint. Your prompt response will ensure a quick resolution that is



What does this mean for my business?

Every business wants to do what is right for the consumer. As such, a consumer complaint does not always result in a legal tussle, which can be costly, time-consuming and bears negatively on your business. It can be mutually resolved between both parties. This method of mutual resolution is sometimes referred to as the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). It may take the form of "Mediation" or "Arbitration" process.

**In mediation, a consumer (typically referred to as the "complainant") and the business (referred to as the "respondent") are brought together by a neutral third party (the "mediator"), who seek to facilitate the process and resolve the problem. The goal of mediation is to find points of agreement between both parties and ultimately a ground for resolution. The format is very informal. It can be by mail correspondent, telephone engagement or face-to-face negotiation.



**Arbitration is the second form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) outside the courts system. However, both parties (complainant and respondent) to the dispute



would typically agree to be bound by the arbitration decision. The process is overseen by

an independent third party (or a group of individuals) known as the adjudicator(s) or arbitrator(s). Consumer contracts may sometimes include an arbitration clause so that if a dispute were to arise, it will be adjudicated by the process of arbitration. The process is more formal than mediation but quicker than litigation. It uses the discovery procedure which involves taking and answering questions and producing relevant supporting documents.

Who we are and what we do:

We are Worcester Consumer Rights Program (WCRP) and we work in cooperation with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office (AGO). The purpose of the Program is to provide amicable mediation to consumers who are involved in a dispute or have a complaint against a business that is licensed to operate in Massachusetts.