

Mediation

The Rent Control Board provides free mediation services to resolve disputes between tenants and property owners under the following circumstances:

- After a petition is filed - When a rent decrease petition is filed for construction impacts; or to recover excess rent payments.
- When requested by both a tenant and owner after a petition is filed for a lack of maintenance or loss of housing services.
- Where no petition has been filed, but there is a dispute under the Rent Control Law about rent or maintenance.

The Rent Control Board does not mediate issues unrelated to the Rent Control law.

For disputes unrelated to the Rent Control Law, please contact Center for Civic Mediation at (877)473-7658. This is a non-profit organization that provides free mediation services to residents of Los Angeles County.

The Mediator

The mediator is an impartial, neutral intermediary whose role is to assist the parties in reaching a settlement of their controversy or claim. The mediator cannot impose a settlement or decide the issues but will assist the parties to achieve their own settlement. The mediator will not give legal or professional advice or serve as an advocate for any party. Lawyers do not ordinarily participate in the mediations, but participants may consult with an attorney before finalizing an agreement.

Nature of Mediation

Mediation conferences are held virtually, telephonically, or in a conference room at City Hall and usually last one to two hours. Sometimes the parties meet more than once or visit the unit with the mediator to look at conditions while they discuss them. Often, the mediator will continue to negotiate between the parties until a resolution is reached.

Mediation after a Petition is Filed

When a petition is filed, the Hearings Department will send a notice to all parties to schedule a mediation conference prior to a hearing. If the parties reach an agreement, the mediator will write a Settlement Agreement for the parties' approval. More than 50% of Rent Control pre-hearing mediations reach resolution without need for a formal hearing.

Mediation When Requested by a Tenant or Owner

If a tenant or owner wants help resolving a dispute about maintenance, amenities, or payment of rent, he or she can request mediation. The mediator will contact the other party to see if they are willing to mediate, and if so, set up a meeting. Tenants and owners can settle disputes in this way, quickly and amicably, without the need to file a petition.

Mediation is Confidential

Under Board Regulations and State law, nothing that went on during mediation can be evidence at a hearing nor can the mediator serve as a witness. This is to ensure that people can be open to share ideas and offers, without being concerned that what was said at mediation will be put into evidence during a hearing.

Mediation is Voluntary

Either party may withdraw from or suspend the mediation at any time, for any reason. Where a petition has already been filed, either party may request that an administrative hearing be held.

The mediator may also suspend or terminate the mediation, if she or he determines that:

- the mediation will lead to an unjust or unreasonable result;
- an impasse has been reached;
- she or he can no longer effectively perform her/his facilitative role.