

**CITIZEN DISPUTE
SETTLEMENT**

FORT MYERS
Lee County Justice Center
1700 Monroe Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901
239-533-1595

**WHATEVER THE
PROBLEM...**

...with your neighbor, friend, family member, housemate, landlord or tenant, employer or employee, merchant or consumer...

“The notion that ordinary people want black robed judges, well-dressed lawyers and fine paneled courtrooms as the setting to resolve their disputes is not correct. People with problems, like people with pain, want relief—and they want it as quickly and as inexpensively as possible.”

Chief Justice Warren E. Burger

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CDS PROVIDES FREE ASSISTANCE...

...WE WILL TALK WITH YOU AND TELL YOU IF WE CAN WORK WITH YOUR DISPUTE.

What is Citizen Dispute Settlement?

When people are not able to solve their own problems, the Citizen Dispute Settlement (CDS) Program offers a viable alternative.

The Citizen Dispute Settlement Program is a court alternative program under the direction of the Office of the Court Administrator. Its purpose is to help disputing parties negotiate mutually beneficial solutions to their problems with the aid of a mediator. Problems addressed in this program include: landlord/tenant disputes, conflicts between neighbors, consumer/business problems and disputes between individuals that may not be covered under a specific law.

HOW DOES CDS OPERATE?

It takes about fifteen (15) days from the time the program coordinator hears the complaint until a hearing is scheduled. In an informal atmosphere, both sides have the opportunity to tell their stories. The mediator's role is to act as a neutral third party and as

a guide to help the parties reach an agreement that best meets their needs. It is a voluntary process and no one is obligated to sign an agreement.

There is no charge for our services because the program is mainly staffed by volunteers. The hearings are set at a time most convenient for the parties. If we are unable to help you resolve your dispute, you can then pursue legal action.

WHO WE ARE

- We are professionally trained volunteers in mediation, communication and conflict resolution techniques.
- We handle problems when all of the parties choose to participate.
- We operate under the Office of the Court Administrator.
- Our track record:
 - 85% of our mediations hearings result in agreements.
 - 80% of the agreements are maintained after the hearings.

THE BENEFITS

- No charge to participate and no lawyers are needed.
- Voluntary

- Convenient
- Private and informal
- Participants are heard, can negotiate and devise their own solutions.
- Relieves over-burdened law enforcement, legal and court personnel
- Cooperation with other agencies and services
- Utilizes trained volunteers and is cost effective

CONTACT US

To contact the Citizen Dispute Settlement Office nearest you to obtain more information or to initiate action on a dispute, call:

Fort Myers: 239-533-1595

Citizen Dispute Settlement

Citizen Dispute Settlement
Administrative Office of the Courts
Lee County Justice Center
1700 Monroe Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Phone: 239-533-1595