

**Head Start Program  
Education Service Center, Region 20**

**Dispute Resolution and Mediation Process Plan**

This procedure provides a mediation process for conflicts that could lead to adverse action against the Education Service Center, Region 20 as the fiscal agent and program administrator.

In the event of a dispute between the Policy Council and the Education Service Center, Region 20 (ESC-20), the following steps will be taken.

**Step I:**

The Associate Director of Administrative & Instructional Services will facilitate a small group meeting between the Policy Council representative and Center program administrators. This problem solving session will define the issue, develop an action plan and determine if the plan is agreeable to all parties. If all parties agree on the plan, the Associate Director will monitor the implementation of the plan. The group will reconvene as necessary to ensure resolution of the problem. If resolution of the issue cannot be reached in this step, then the process will move to step two.

**Step II:**

After becoming aware that there is a conflict between ESC-20 and the Policy Council, ESC-20 will inform the ACF Region VI office as soon as possible. If the unresolved conflict could lead to termination or denial of refunding of the Head Start grant, ESC-20 will notify the ACF Region VI office within ten days of the Policy Council's decision to disapprove the refunding application. If the Policy Council's decision to withhold its approval occurs within 90 days of the refunding date, ESC-20 will notify the ACF Region VI office immediately.

The ACF Region VI administrator or designee will conduct one or more meetings with the Associate Director of Administrative & Instructional Services, the Head Start administrators and the Policy Council Chairperson. The attendance of ESC-20 Board members at such a meeting will be at the discretion of the chairperson of the ESC-20 Board of Directors. The meetings will address resolution of any issues between the ESC-20 and the Policy Council to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. If no resolution is reached in Step 2, the process moves to Step 3.

**Step III:**

ESC- 20 will secure the services of a mediator with the approval of the designated ACF Region VI official. The mediator will design a process that includes participation by the Policy Council, the ESC- 20 Board of Directors Chairperson, and the Executive Director, Associate Director of Administrative & Instructional Services, Head Start administrators and/or other pertinent parties. Representatives are expected to attend any meetings as requested by the mediator. If conflict relates to refunding, the mediation process must be completed 15 days prior to the ESC-20 refunding application deadline. If additional time is needed for mediation, the mediator must request an extension in writing to the ACF Region VI office. The refusal of either party to engage in a mediation process shall be taken into consideration by the ACF Region VI office in determining what course of action is warranted.

*Reviewed November 2011/CM*

ESC-20 Board Approved:

Policy Council Approved: