24th Annual Dispute Resolution Spring Conference
Guidelines for Program Proposals

The ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Spring Conference is the largest ADR conference in the world, typically attracting up to 700+ participants. Our attendees gather to learn the latest in dispute resolution techniques and trends, exchange ideas with experts and peers, and strengthen their professional relationships. The 2022 ABA Section of Dispute Resolution Spring Conference will be held in Los Angeles, CA from April 27-30 at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites.

The theme of the 2022 Spring Conference is:

> **Where Do We Grow from Here? New Directions and Rejuvenation**
> As we transition into a new era, will we expand our reliance on technology or return to more traditional in-person connections? The other side of the pandemic presents opportunities to apply new approaches and lessons learned to advance and diversify our profession, our teaching, and our service to parties. Yet, for some of us, a return to pre-pandemic practices holds the greatest appeal. This year the Spring Conference looks to examine what we gain and lose as we explore hybrid systems, new developments, and established approaches to our profession. The conference programs will explore the evolution of legal representation, dispute resolution systems and practice, court systems, and legal education in our new era.

In addition to our dispute resolution themed programs, this year we are collaborating with the ABA Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division to include in the agenda a group of programs that will appeal to general practice, solo, and small firm practitioners.

Our plan is to hold the conference in-person. All in-person events will follow local and CDC public health guidelines and regulations. We may also incorporate virtual programs as a supplement to the in-person conference, subject to demand and capacity.

We welcome program proposals from anyone who can enlighten and connect with our anticipated audience of attendees, which includes dispute resolution leaders, mediators, arbitrators, attorney advocates, court administrators, neutral providers, ADR consumers, legal scholars, and general practice, solo, and small firm practitioners.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR PROPOSAL

- **Programs will be 60 or 75 minutes long.**

- **All presenters, including moderators, who attend the conference <u>must register for the conference and pay the applicable registration fee</u>**. Please be sure your presenters all agree to this rule when you contact them about listing them in your proposal.

- **Accepted proposals must adhere to the ABA presenter diversity requirements.** This requires that all programs with three or more presenters include at least one presenter from an underrepresented group in the profession such as a person of color, a woman, a person with a disability, or a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person. Individual programs with 5-8 presenters, including the moderator, require at least 2 diverse presenters. Click here for full details of our policy. Program Organizers also should consider including qualified young lawyers on their panels. The Women in Dispute Resolution Directory (WIDR Directory) and the Section of Dispute Resolution Diversity Committee may be helpful in identifying diverse panel members.

- **We will only accept complete proposals.** Please do not submit "placeholder" proposals with key information blank, such as the description or presenters. It is important that we have the full picture of a proposal when we are considering it for acceptance.

- **Proposal Organizers are encouraged to consult with the chairs of relevant Section of Dispute Resolution Committees or GP Solo Division liaisons while developing program content**. Committee chairs and liaisons have a good sense of topics that are of interest to attendees, and may also be able to suggest appropriate presenters who will contribute to panel diversity. A list of Dispute Resolution committees, links to committee websites, and committee chair contact information can be accessed on the Section Committees and Task Forces page. The GP Solo Division liaisons are Melvin O. Shaw and Jeffrey Allen.

- Possible program formats include:
  - **Panel Programs** - Panel programs offer two to four presenters the opportunity to weave together innovative ideas, practical experiences, fresh approaches and perspectives, and critical reflection on a current topic or pressing issue.
  - **Roundtable Discussions** - Roundtables are small, informal group discussions that give attendees the opportunity to exchange information, discuss best practices, and network with others around common themes and issues. Roundtable facilitators should identify and develop a topic that will allow participants to discuss how they are dealing with specific issues in their own work. Roundtable discussions are limited approximately to ten individuals per table, including participants and facilitator(s). Individuals submitting roundtable proposals should address the topic(s) to be covered, their importance to current practice, and three questions they would use to keep the discussion moving.
  - **Resource Shares -** Resource Shares are large, moderated roundtable discussions addressing a specific topic. As one example, for many years the Section of Dispute Resolution Spring Conference has included a Legal Educators' Resource Share, facilitated by two law professors, where teachers share ideas for classroom exercises and teaching tools.
  - **Workshops** - Workshops offer significant active and in-depth learning. Participants will engage an issue, learn a new skill, or develop an action plan or other activity where hands-on learning is integral. Proposals should allow for significant involvement and contribution to the learning process from the participants. Proposals will be selected for the conference based on the timeliness of the topic, the stated learning outcomes, drafts of interactive exercise(s), and the degree of active learning. In order to ensure that the

workshops really are "hands-on" and provide participants with a tangible skill or action plan by the end of the program, proposals must include an example of an activity you plan to provide.

- The conference will have two themed groupings of dispute resolution programs: the Court ADR Symposium on Wednesday and the Legal Educators' Colloquium on Saturday. Please indicate in your proposal if you would like for your program to be considered for inclusion in either of these groups. Otherwise, it will be considered a general conference program.

PROGRAM SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION

Factors that will be considered in selecting programs include the extent to which:
- the program will provide valuable information for the conference attendees
- the planned presentation format is appropriate for the program content
- the program is consistent with the conference theme
- the proposal is clear and well thought out
- the proposal is complete ("placeholder" proposals will not be accepted)
- the program title and description are clear, concise, accurate and likely to draw conference attendees
- the proposed presenters have expertise in the subject matter of the program
- the proposal's panel of presenters meets the ABA's diversity requirements
- the proposal includes presenters from different organizations
- the program content has not been presented at another conference.

Proposals will be peer reviewed by section members, committee chairs, and other experts in the field. The peer reviewers will assess how well the proposals meet the above criteria and recommend whether the proposed program should be included within the conference agenda.

The Spring Conference Standing Committee will consider the peer reviews and make the final program selections. During the selection process, the Conference Committee may contact Program Organizers about their proposals to clarify, augment or revise their proposals if needed before final program selections are made. The Conference Committee will notify the Program Organizers whether or not their proposals have been accepted by December 2021.

PROGRAM ORGANIZER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ACCEPTED PROGRAMS

By submitting a proposal, a Program Organizer agrees to:
- Serve as the primary contact for the panel—including receiving communications from the Conference Committee and Section staff and forwarding the communications to the panel of presenters.
- Facilitate the coordination, planning, and implementation of the program by adhering to all planning deadlines.

- Publicize the program – and the entire Spring Conference – when possible via personal networking channels.
- If MCLE credit will be offered for the program, ensure that the program meets all accreditation requirements. (This should be in collaboration with the presenters but is ultimately the program organizer's responsibility.)
- Ensure that all program presenters are aware of the registration requirements and register for the Conference.

DEADLINE AND METHOD FOR PROPOSING A PROGRAM

Program proposals must be submitted by 5:00 pm Eastern on Wednesday, September 29, 2021 using this [Program Proposal Submission Link](.).

[To review the proposal form questions before submitting your proposal, click here.]() Please note that this is NOT the proposal submission form and you MUST submit your proposal through the Program Submission Link above. Once you submit a proposal, you will be able to edit it until the 9/29 submission deadline.

FOR QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Melissa Buckley - melissa.buckley@americanbar.org
Rishi Batra - rishib@gmail.com