

FEMA ADR Advisors

Information Packet Updated on November 17, 2017

I. ADR ADVISOR POSITION INFORMATION

A. Positions. The FEMA Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Cadre employs full-time

and part-time ADR Advisors for deployment to response and recovery operations for disasters and emergencies declared by the president. They work primarily with FEMA staff to provide professional dispute resolution services such as listening and problem-solving, facilitation, coaching, training, conciliation, and mediation to disaster operations. Substantial training and experience are required. Pay is \$35.74 per hour plus a locality pay adjustment of +15% to +38% based on the employee's residence. Daily per diem for miscellaneous and incidental expenses is also paid during periods when deployed. The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan is available and the government pays about 70% of the cost of premiums. These are 2-year term temporary Federal positions authorized by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). Full-time positions are part of the Agency's Cadre of On-call Response and recovery Employees (CORE) program. Part-time positions are part of the Agency's Reservist (RSV) program. Reservists are duty stationed at their homes and COREs are duty stationed at FEMA HQ in Washington, D.C.

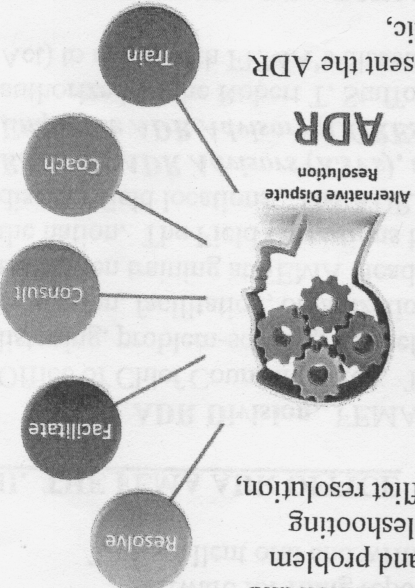
B. Vacancies. We anticipate both full-time CORE and part-time RSV vacancies in the near future. We announce vacancies through conflict resolution professional associations, organizations, blogs, and online publications, and post them on <https://www.usajobs.gov>.

C. Duties. ADR Advisors in the FEMA ADR Cadre provide professional conflict

prevention and resolution services to FEMA employees at disaster operations. Duties include:

1. Providing a wide range of informal non-EEO dispute prevention and intervention processes, including consulting, listening and problem solving with only one party, individual coaching, troubleshooting employee problems, interpersonal and work group conflict resolution, teambuilding, mediation, and conciliation.

2. Providing meeting, group, and public participation facilitation, and facilitated discussions.
3. Designing and delivering training for conflict resolution skill development, conflict prevention & intervention processes.
4. Practicing ADR according to standards and principles required of the FEMA ADR Cadre and working collaboratively with HQ Cadre management and other ADR team members.
5. Networking with field office leadership and staff to build rapport, assess dispute resolution needs, and represent the ADR Office in a manner that is at all times friendly, diplomatic, collaborative, and professional.
6. Producing deliverables such as training materials, manuals, guidance, and documentation.



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7. Regular use of Microsoft Windows based computers, Microsoft Office, mobile computing devices, and government software systems for filing reports, completing tasks, checking records, getting paid, traveling, etc.

D. Requirements. To qualify for these position, you must possess:

1. U.S. citizenship
2. A four year undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university, 300 hours of conflict resolution skills training, and five (5) years of professional dispute resolution experience. The dispute resolution experience should be varied and involve work with individuals and groups that includes ADR processes such as conflict coaching, listening and problem-solving, ombuds, facilitated discussions, teambuilding, interpersonal and work group conflict resolution, group facilitation, mediation, and dispute resolution training. An advanced degree in conflict resolution may be substituted for 100 hours of training and two (2) years of experience.
4. Experience working as an employee in a large organization and demonstrating the ability to successfully deal diplomatically with bureaucracy, diverse staff, difficult personalities, competing factions, and chain of command, while maintaining a reputation for being a positive, effective, collaborative, and professional employee. Six years at the same organization is preferred.
5. Demonstrated interpersonal skills in self-reflection, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills to build relationships, effectively manage teamwork and collaboration, engage critical thinking before taking action, and accurately gauge the effectiveness of their communications so that they can make adjustments. Must remain calm and civil under stress and when challenged.
6. Demonstrated ability to use Windows computers, Microsoft Office, and government software for filing reports, record-keeping, timekeeping, traveling, and other tasks.
7. Excellent oral and written communications skills.

II. THE FEMA ADR OFFICE

A. ADR Division. FEMA has an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Division in the Office of Chief Counsel (OCC). The ADR Division provides informal dispute resolution, listening, problem-solving, and referral, conflict and executive coaching, ombuds services, mediation, facilitation, organizational conflict management and development, and conflict resolution training at FEMA Headquarters, Regional offices, and disaster field offices throughout the nation. The Field Operations branch includes the ADR Cadre that provides ADR services at disaster field locations. The ADR Cadre is composed of 57 ADR Advisors: 39 part-time

Reservist ADR Advisors (RSVs), and 18 full-time *Cade of On-call Response and recovery Employee ADR Advisors (COREs)*. Reservists and COREs are temporary Federal employees authorized by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) to assist with FEMA's disaster response mission.

III. RESERVIST ADR ADVISORS

A. Reservist Program. FEMA Reservists are called up to work when needed to respond to a disaster or emergency declared by the President. The FEMA Reservist Program is composed of about 5,200 Reservists that are organized into 24 functional work groups, such as

field attorneys, EEO/civil rights, logistics, public assistance, disaster survivor assistance, individual assistance, mitigation, environmental and historic preservation, etc., and the ADR Cadre is one of these.

B. Deployment for 60 Days on Short Notice. Reservists are on-call to travel within 72 hours for 60 days once or twice a year or more depending on the service tier they choose. The ideal candidate can deploy almost full time or has the ability to maintain themselves financially through their independent practice and the flexibility to quickly reschedule and make themselves available for a 60-day FEMA deployment on short notice. This is because sometimes disasters are light and there is no FEMA work and sometimes we need all hands on deck.

C. Reservist Positions are non-career, *temporary, intermittent, on-call, and part-time* positions with *no guarantee* of any minimum work hours. The typical disaster deployment is initially for 60 days but may be longer if there is a need. Reservists are assigned to one of four tiers depending on their availability.

B. Tiers. Each Reservist signs up when they come on board for one of four tiers of

service, depending on their availability, other work, activities, commitments, etc. We

continually refine our tier system in an ongoing basis to match our readiness need. Switching

tiers is fine but depends on space in the desired tier since each has a fixed number of slots in

order to maintain cadre readiness. The four tiers are summarized as follows:

1. Tier One – The Reservist is ready to deploy substantially all the time unless they put in for non-availability for health or similar reasons. They will meet their commitment if they are needed *and deploy* for 180 days per year.

2. Tier Two – The Reservist is available and ready to deploy, when needed, for 60 days twice per year and can clear their calendar for major events like Katrina, Sandy, and Harvey.

3. Tier Three – The Reservist is available and ready to deploy, when needed, for 60 days once per year or 30 days twice per year and can clear their calendar for major events like Katrina, Sandy, and Harvey.

4. Tier Four – The Reservist is available and ready to deploy, when needed, for 30 days at least once per two-year term as a Reservist and can clear their calendar for major events like hurricanes Katrina and Sandy and more recently Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

C. Temporary means that Reservists are essentially at-will employees who are

appointed to two-year terms under the authority of the Stafford Act. After 2-years, the Agency

must renew their appointment for another 2 years, if both the Agency and the Reservist agree.

All Reservists are on the same 2 year cycle, so the length of the first appointment depends on

when the Reservist was hired in the cycle. This first period is considered a probationary period

in the ADR Cadre. The cycle runs from the first day of pay period 7 (about April 1) in each even

year through the last day of pay period 6 (about March 31st) of the next even year.

D. Intermittent means that Reservists are deployed and demobilized (sent home) as

needed. In the typical medium sized tornado, hurricane, or flood disaster, Reservists will be

deployed rapidly at the beginning to a strength of 200-1,000. In just a few weeks, some of those

who set the operation up and notified the community of available benefits will be demobilized

and Reservists with another set of skills will be deployed. ADR Advisors will typically be

deployed after the first week, stay for 60 days and then be extended or demobilized from active duty. The length of time deployed is subject to discussion and depends on the wishes of the ADR Advisor, the needs of the disaster operation, and the needs of the ADR Cadre. The ability to deploy for at least 60 days at a time is an absolutely essential part of the ADR Advisor's job. Disaster field offices do not deploy ADR Advisors for less than 30 days and 60 days is the norm.

E. On-call means that Reservists are expected to deploy rapidly when called for an assignment – often within two to three days. ADR Cadre has an "on-call" list of ADR Advisors who are ready to deploy. How often and for how long depends on what they sign up for and what the need is. We have a several "tiers" in which people sign up to be available for more or less time each year.

F. Part-time means that these are not 52-weeks-per-year jobs and Reservists are employed only as needed. When deployed, Reservists work full-time and sometimes even overtime. During big disasters they may need to work 12 hours per day and 7 days per week.

G. Time Commitment When Not Deployed. FEMA needs to be ready to respond to many disasters each year. To do this effectively, Reservists need to be current with their jobs, policies and procedures, and government issued phones and possibly other equipment. This means that there are regular commitments required of Reservists even when not deployed. These commitments include: being issued a cell phone that needs to be used or tested regularly, calling in to cadre coordination calls 4-8 times per year, completing on-line training, and traveling to in-person training programs.

H. Current Federal Employees. Some current full-time Federal Employees have inquired about signing up for the ADR Cadre while staying in their current positions. We don't currently have the ability to do this.

I. Periods of Low Activity. Disaster declarations do not occur on a regular basis. There can be periods where we essentially need all hands on deck and other periods where we don't need to deploy anyone for a year or more.

J. Pay. Reservists are paid on an hourly basis for each hour worked, including their time traveling to and from disaster assignments. The hourly rate for Reservist ADR Advisors is currently \$35.74 per hour plus an additional 15% to 38% locality pay depending on where the Reservist's home is located. The exact starting rate will be determined by the Human Capital Office at the time a person is hired. Per Federal statute, overtime for ADR Advisors is paid at the regular rate.

K. Benefits. FEMA has implemented a package of benefits for Reservist positions. These are intended to work with the intermittent, on-call nature of the positions. Here is an overview of benefits for Reservists. Please discuss and confirm with the Human Capital Office any of these that are critical to you before accepting an offer of employment from them.

1. FEHB Health Insurance. The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan is one of the top benefits for Reservists. This is the full plan that is available to almost

every Federal employee. FEMA has worked hard to figure out a way to offer this full-time employee benefit to intermittent employees.

a. Reservists are eligible to sign up for FEHB *only while deployed and having*

worked 130 hours in a calendar month.

b. Reservists choose a health insurance plan just like any other Federal employee and the Agency will pay about 70% of the premiums.

c. In order to maintain the coverage, Reservists must be proactive in taking online training and/or attending phone meetings for at least 1 hour each and every pay period. Otherwise, regulations require it to be cancelled after a number of days in a non-pay status.

d. Visit the Office of Personnel site for more information on FEHB health insurance plans. <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/>

2. **Sick Leave.** Reservists accrue and may use sick leave for up to 3-7 days during a

deployment. Beyond that, the disaster management will typically demobilize the

Reservist due to the high cost of per diem and the urgency of the need to respond.

3. **Holidays.** Holiday pay while deployed is usually available with some exceptions.

4. **No Annual Leave.** There is no paid annual leave for Reservists

5. **No Retirement.** There is no retirement plan for Reservists.

L. **Travel Expense Reimbursement.** ADR Advisors receive per diem for meals &

incidental expenses at the GSA rate for the location to which they are deployed (usually about

\$56/day or \$42/travel day). They also receive reimbursement for actual hotel, air fare, ground

transportation, rental car and gas, baggage fees, and specific other expenses, within official

limits. *Note that travelers must use ground transportation to the airport; airport parking fees*

are NOT reimbursed. Major expenses are charged to the government travel card so employees

don't use their own funds to pay those expenses up front.

M. **Federal Civil Service Annuitants.** Pay for Federal civil service retirees is subject to

offset just as it would be for re-employment in most other civilian Federal jobs. A waiver is

available to Reservists for the first 120 days of a "Presidentially Declared Disaster." No waiver

is available before the *disaster* declaration, or after the 120 day period, or for any other event,

such as a declared *emergency*, or participation in *required initial and annual training* classes.

IV. CORE ADR ADVISORS

A. **CORE Program.** FEMA CORE ADR Advisors work a full-time schedule providing

ADR at field locations. They need to be ready to deploy on short notice to respond to a disaster

or emergency declared by the President. For example, following Hurricane Sandy, CORE ADR

Advisors were on station in NY and NJ within two days. The FEMA CORE Program is

composed of about 3,600 CORE employees working many different disaster support assignments

based at HQ or one of FEMA's Regional Offices. CORE ADR Advisors are based at FEMA HQ

in Washington, D.C. and work in the field on deployment assignments for up to 300 each year.

B. **CORE Positions** are non-career and temporary positions. Non-career means that

they are not part of the Federal merit system and do not earn merit status required to

apply for career positions in the Federal government. Temporary means that COREs are

appointed to two-year terms under the authority of the Stafford Act. After 2-years, the Agency

must renew their appointment for another 2 years, if both the Agency and the CORE employee agree. Temporary also means that, if the CORE position is no longer needed, the employee can be released even before the two-year term is up.

C. When Not Deployed. When not deployed, CORE ADR Advisors work in the FEMA HQ ADR office to provide services to employees and offices in HQ, Regions, as well as remotely to staff deployed to disasters.

D. Pay. COREs are paid a regular salary that starts at \$35.74 per hour plus an additional 27.10% locality pay for the Washington, D.C. metro area. That works out to \$94,796 per year. The exact starting rate will be determined by the Human Capital Office. Per Federal statute, overtime for ADR Advisors is paid at the regular rate

E. Benefits. CORE employees receive all the same benefits as most other Federal full-time employees including retirement, Thrift Savings Plan (like a 401K), health insurance, sick leave, annual leave, life insurance, dental, vision, and long-term care insurance. Most require employee contributions, in some cases substantial, and have limited enrollment periods. More information can be found on the Office of Personnel Management website: <https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/guide-me/federal-employees/>

F. Travel Expense Reimbursement. ADR Advisors receive per diem for meals & incidental expenses at the GSA rate for the location to which they are deployed (usually about \$56/day or \$42/travel day). They also receive reimbursement for actual hotel, air fare, ground transportation, rental car and gas, baggage fees, and specific other expenses, within official limits. *Note that travelers must use ground transportation to the airport; airport parking fees are NOT reimbursed.* Major expenses are charged to the government travel card so employees don't use their own funds to pay those expenses up front.

V. TRAINING & MENTORING

A. No ADR Competency Training. FEMA hires fully trained and experienced conflict resolution professionals for ADR Advisor positions. No training is provided to new cadre members in the core competencies of coaching, facilitation, ADR training, mediation, workgroup conflict resolution, public participation design, etc. Only those with substantial professional experience in these areas are hired. The training FEMA provides is for the purpose of helping these professionals adapt to the FEMA environment.

B. FEMA Disaster Operations Training. New cadre members receive about 4-5 weeks of FEMA training in their first year including 2 weeks of FEMA disaster operations training, 1 week of Introduction to ADR Advisor training, 1 week of ADR Advisor Exercise training, and 1 week of FEMA disaster manager training. The ADR training usually has set dates; the other training may have multiple offerings and some flexibility in scheduling.

C. Mentoring. The first assignment for ADR Advisors is a 30 to 60 day intensive on-the-job (OJT) assignment with an experienced ADR Advisor. At first, the new ADR Advisor shadows the experienced ADR Advisor and is then shadowed by them as they practice in the Joint Field Office (JFO). During this OJT assignment, new ADR Advisors will learn and

demonstrate competency in the essential skills of the ADR Advisor such as traveling and deploying for FEMA, setting up and operating an ADR office in the field, conducting ADR within the FEMA context, handling administrative functions, building relationships with key contacts, and understanding the FEMA disaster operations culture. *Following their OJT assignment, new ADR Advisors are evaluated and must receive a satisfactory rating.*

VI. ADR ADVISOR PRACTICE

A. ADR Advisor Work. The work of the ADR Cadre is focused primarily on non-EEO workplace conflict resolution and prevention. It's very different from many other ADR programs: First, FEMA ADR Advisors are *embedded in the workforce* and use their mediation, facilitation, coaching, process design, training, and conflict resolution skills in a variety of ways – often working with disputants *one-on-one* in real-time while the conflict is still developing. Second, ADR Advisors mediate only rarely. They are more typically *coaching and consulting* one-on-one. Third, ADR Advisors operate inside a structured chain-of-command hierarchy which is much different than working as an outside consultant. Fourth, success depends on the ability of the ADR Advisor to work *collaboratively* with other ADR Advisors, command staff, program staff, and in *partnership* with HQ ADR staff to accomplish the objectives of the Division and the mission of the Agency.

B. Challenges and Implications of Being Embedded. Being embedded in the workforce creates some very specific challenges. It means that ADR Advisors have to keep everyone happy with ADR or they can be sent home. They have to constantly try and reduce the drama – their own and others' – in a high-adrenaline environment. They need to resist attempts by employees who want them to advocate for them or carry their message forward anonymously. They're essentially always on duty even when they are checking into their hotel or doing their expense report on the computer. They have to be friendly with everyone but can't really be friends or they won't be viewed as neutral. They have to make sure they don't cross into someone else's turf. There is a lot they know how to do but can't or shouldn't do unless they are asked or unless they ask permission first. They have to resist the temptation to investigate and fix problems – this is especially difficult because they are employees too and may see an entrenched problem that needs to be fixed. And, they have to constantly have their radar on for how the chain of command is going to view what they are doing. These are real challenges, especially for new ADR Advisors who need to stay in "learning mode" for several years.

C. Typical intervention processes include:

1. Coaching, listening, and problem solving with only one party;
2. Troubleshooting employee problems;
3. Organizational conflict management;
4. Work group conflict resolution & teambuilding;
5. Training for skill development and conflict prevention;
6. Group Facilitation and group participation processes;
7. Mediation and conciliation;

D. Program ADR.

Although the primary mission of the ADR Cadre is non-EEO workplace dispute resolution, there are occasions when the facilitation and process design skills

of the ADR Advisor are needed and used in collaboration with FEMA program delivery staff for non-workplace issues.

E. Practicing Successfully in a Large Organization. Considerable thought and advance planning needs to be done to make sure interventions are handled in a way that is sensitive to ADR ethical considerations, the clients' chain of command and structure, collaboration with other staff, programs, and leadership, and partnership with HQ ADR staff. Being embedded in the work force rather than coming in as an independent consultant requires staying constantly mindful of key factors that affect your ability to sustain success for yourself and ADR Division over the long term. These include diplomacy, reputation, voluntariness, intervention approaches, neutrality, avoiding bias, maintaining confidentiality, and other practice considerations.

VII. ON-BOARDING & FIRST YEAR

There are quite a few activities, trainings, and deployments following selection to join the ADR Cadre. We try to help the new ADR Advisor schedule and move through all of these in the first year if possible. Sometimes schedules and lack of disaster activities push completion to a second year. Here is an outline of the on-boarding process and first year with the cadre:

A. Selection. Only the Human Capital Office (HC) can make an offer of employment. The ADR search committee can only make a "selection" of an applicant and forward that application to HC. The search committee will take 1-2 weeks following the interview to make a decision. This may sometimes be delayed due to disaster activity.

B. Forms & Background Investigation. Following selection, HC will contact the applicant and make a tentative offer, request completion of several forms, and forward the applicant's paperwork to the Personnel Security office which will conduct a background investigation. A final offer may be made before the background investigation is finalized. This whole process is very variable and may take as little as two weeks or as long as six months or more. The typical time is about two months.

C. Final Offer. Once all the paperwork is completed and Personnel Security approves, the HC office will contact the applicant and make a final offer and identify the starting rate of pay, currently about \$41/hour. If the applicant accepts, HC will set an "Entry on Duty" (EOD) date. The EOD can be negotiated somewhat but must be set for a Sunday that is the first day of a pay period. That day will be limited to days when there is an Emergency Management Orientation (EMO) class scheduled, which are sometimes full.

D. EMO. The EMO class is about two weeks long and is held at a variety of locations. FEMA will help you make travel arrangements, pay you for the hours of your travel and attendance, and pay your travel expenses.

E. Introductory ADR Advisor Training. Sometime during your first year, you will attend the ADR Cadre "Introductory ADR Advisor Training." This training will not teach you ADR. It will be a seminar with experienced ADR Cadre members who will guide you through exercises and discussions to help you learn how to apply your ADR skills in the FEMA disaster operations context. Because this training is only held every year or two, it is not required to be

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completed before your mentoring assignment. This training lasts for about a week, including travel days, from Sunday through Friday.

F. Mentoring Assignment. Your first deployment will be for 30-60 days at a disaster with another, experienced, ADR Advisor. You will first shadow the ADR Advisor, then co-practice with the ADR Advisor, and finally the ADR Advisor will shadow you in the provision of ADR to the JFO staff.

G. Mission Rehearsal Training. This training is held annually for all the employees in the ADR Division, currently about 60. This training lasts for about a week, including travel days, from Sunday through Friday or Saturday.

H. Supervisor Training. A requirement for ADR Advisor certification in the FEMA Qualification System (FQS) is to complete a training for mid-level supervisors. ADR Advisors are not supervisors but they work with supervisors frequently and benefit from the knowledge of the responsibilities, policies, and procedures affecting supervisors. This training lasts for about a week, including travel days.

VIII. DISCLAIMER & CONTACT INFORMATION

This information frequently changes and only Human Capital can set the conditions of employment. The specific duties, requirements, and benefits for the position are spelled out in each vacancy announcement. Please confirm your requirements with FEMA Human Capital before accepting employment. We appreciate your interest. Questions and comments should be directed to Rob Scott, ADR Deputy Director, Robert.Scott3@fema.dhs.gov.

