



# United States Department of the Interior


## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

[As amended by Memorandum dated March 3, 2025]

### Director's Order #93: Conflict Resolution (CORE)

Approved:   
Director, National Park Service

Effective Date: JUL -3 2001

Sunset Date: JUL -3 2005

This is a new Director's Order based on Department of the Interior guidance.

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#### I. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The National Park Service (NPS) actively supports teamwork, delegation to the most effective level, empowerment of employees, and accountability. In support of these principles, the purpose of this Director's Order is to establish an operational Conflict Resolution (CORE) framework for use by the Service. The CORE framework also supports the NPS goal of reducing destructive workplace conflict among employees, and between employees and employer. The framework focuses on: (1) maximizing the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods, (2) improving personal communications between the specific parties, and (3) preserving relationships between employees and supervisors rather than advancing adversarial positions.

ADR is any consensual method used to resolve disputes between two or more parties. It exists in a variety of forms ranging from informal facilitation of issues or concerns to formal arbitration, where a third party makes a decision that may be binding or advisory. In the Federal agency context, ADR typically is thought of as any method used to resolve conflict where the disputants work with a neutral third party to write a mutually acceptable resolution agreement.

The CORE program is an early intervention alternative to other established dispute resolution processes. CORE provides a fair, equitable and effective means for resolving workplace disputes at the earliest opportunity, at the lowest organizational level, and to the common satisfaction of all parties. The program encourages better communication and early resolution of concerns and conflicts by providing: (1) information that will address specific workplace issues/concerns, and (2) when appropriate, neutral

dispute resolution assistance by a third party to address both employee and management concerns. Additional guidance can be found in the CORE Implementation Handbook, published by the Department of the Interior Office of Personnel Policy.

This Order is consistent with the Department of the Interior guidance on resolving conflicts among employees and between employees and their supervisors. It is based upon Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) principles that are commonly used among private sector employers and by the Federal Conciliation and Mediation Service, an agency of the United States Government.

The Service advocates that employees, supervisors and managers resolve promptly those matters that detract from a professional work environment. All are encouraged to use this informal program to do so. Should such efforts fail to be successful, formal avenues may be used to address these concerns.

## **II. AUTHORITY**

Authority to issue this Director's Order is found in the National Park Service Organic Act (16 USC 1-4) and the delegation of authority contained in Part 245 of the Department of the Interior Manual.

This Order is consistent with the Departmental guidance on conflict resolution, which may be found in the Departmental Manual at Part 370, Chapter 770 (370 DM 770). The confidentiality provisions are consistent with the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996 (5 USC 571-584). Supplemental guidance may be found in the "CORE Handbook for Program Implementation and Administration," which is published by the Department of the Interior, updated periodically and referred to as the "CORE Handbook" in this Order. (See also Director's Order #12, which calls for using alternative dispute resolution within the National Environmental Protection Act [NEPA] process for resolving internal and external disputes.)

## **III. APPLICABILITY**

### **A. Access to CORE**

CORE resources are available to all NPS employees, without regard to type or tenure of appointment. Volunteers and former employees are not covered. All employees are free to use the CORE program without restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal of any kind. If a park or office has a recognized bargaining unit, a bargaining unit employee may not use CORE services unless or until the bargaining unit officially agrees to make CORE services available to its membership. If the unit chooses to do so, a statement to this effect must appear in the collective bargaining agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local management.

An employee seeking CORE assistance can identify a CORE Specialist through the Department of the Interior web page at: [www.doi.gov/core/](http://www.doi.gov/core/). The employee may choose to contact his or her servicing personnel office, an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program Manager or the Employee Assistance Program Manager for help in identifying and contacting a CORE Specialist.

### **B. Matters Covered**

CORE may be used to address any workplace issue or concern an employee may have. The CORE program is designed to resolve conflicts informally and at the lowest possible level. Any issue of concern involving the workplace may be raised, including a matter of prohibited discrimination.

There are some issues that have specific administrative processes and timeframes that an employee must follow in order to file a formal complaint. Should an employee not wish to use CORE services to resolve

a particular issue or concern under consideration, the CORE Specialist should assist the employee in finding an alternative avenue to seek resolution of the issue.

CORE and EEO are mutually supportable NPS programs. Both are intended to resolve workplace issues and concerns that may adversely impact the performance of the employee and by extension, the agency. Should the employee believe that he or she has been subjected to legally prohibited discrimination, he or she is encouraged to use EEO channels to address this circumstance. During the 30 day informal EEO counseling period, the EEO counselor will provide information on ADR as a means to resolve an issue that is brought to the EEO Counselor's attention. The employee may elect to use ADR to resolve the matter within the EEO framework. Should the employee wish to do so, the 30 day period is extended by 60 additional days and the EEO Counselor may then contact a CORE Specialist for assistance if it is needed (See 29 C.F.R. Part 1614.105 Pre-complaint Processing).

### C. Confidentiality

All parties to the CORE process should understand that some statements that are made in the context of CORE services are confidential and some are not. A detailed explanation of the reasonable expectations of confidentiality for parties who participate in CORE services may be found in the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996 (5 U.S.C. 571-584). Subject to certain exceptions, the following two types of communications are potentially confidential under the ADR Act:

1. A dispute resolution communication - any oral or written statement made by a party or a neutral that occurs during a dispute resolution proceeding and any writing prepared specifically for the purposes of a dispute resolution proceeding. Written agreements to enter into a dispute resolution proceeding and any written final agreement reached as a result of the proceeding are not dispute resolution communications and, therefore, are not confidential. [5 U.S.C. 571(5)]

2. A communication provided in confidence to the neutral - any oral statement or document provided to a neutral during a dispute resolution proceeding. The communication must be made: a) with the express intent that it not be disclosed, or b) provided under circumstances that would create a reasonable expectation that it not be disclosed. [5 U.S.C. 571(7) and 574 (a)]

## IV. **OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### A. Participation of Managers and Supervisors in the CORE Process

As required by the Departmental Manual (370 DM 770.1.2), management must participate in the CORE process when requested to do so by an employee. If an employee's supervisor is directly involved in the issue/concern and does not wish to voluntarily participate in it, another supervisor or manager, preferably in the employee's supervisory chain, must do so, as the CORE framework is intended to resolve disputes at the lowest level possible.

### B. Relationship to Other Processes

The CORE procedure does not provide any extension of timeframes in which to seek redress under other formal administrative processes. Nor does the CORE process serve to delay any pending disciplinary action unless management concurs that the action can be held in abeyance based on the particular circumstances of the case. To the maximum extent possible, NPS will use informal measures to resolve a conflict or dispute, including the full range of ADR methods used by CORE Specialists. These include; mediation, consultation, coaching, developing alternatives, fact finding and facilitation. Should these efforts fail, the CORE Specialist should refer the employee to another process and assist the employee in doing so.

The employee must understand that there are strict timeframes which must be adhered to if he/she decides to file a formal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint of discrimination, and that using CORE services does not extend the timeframe for filing an EEO complaint. The employee must contact an EEO Counselor or EO Manager within 45 days from the date of the incident or knowledge of the incident. Failure to meet this time limitation may affect the employee's right to file a formal complaint. A complaint of discrimination may be based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or mental or physical disability in connection with the matter(s) from which the complaint arose. It may also be filed as an alleged reprisal as covered under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), the Equal Pay Act (EPA), or the Rehabilitation Act.

However, this time standard does not apply to an issue or concern that the employee may choose to resolve through the formal procedure for processing an employee grievance. Should the CORE mediation fail to result in resolving the matter under consideration, the employee may be able to file a formal grievance if the issue is covered under the administrative grievance procedure and was brought to CORE within the required timeframe for filing an informal grievance. A formal grievance should be filed with the employee's serving personnel office within 15 days of the receipt of Notice of Results and Options from the CORE Specialist.

### C. Employee Representation

Any participant in the CORE framework may wish to have another person represent him or her in the CORE process, and may elect to have representation at any time. However, the employee's representative may not take the place of the employee and the employee must be present for all CORE activities and procedures. The participant may be represented by a person he or she selects at any time, except that the choice cannot:

1. conflict with the priority needs of the bureau, i.e., by contributing appreciably to the neglect of representative's duties;
2. constitute a conflict of position or conflict of interest; or
3. cause unreasonable cost to the government.

Designation of a representative must be made in writing to the CORE Specialist. Should a dispute arise regarding representation, the CORE Specialist may consult with the CORE Program Manager for assistance in resolving it. In the absence of specific statutory authority, attorney fees and other costs that are associated with representation (such as travel expenses), must be paid by the individual who contracts for representation.

### D. Use of Official Time

An employee is entitled to a reasonable amount of official time to present an issue or concern. "Present" includes discussions with the supervisor, meeting with a CORE Specialist, or participating in the CORE process, but does NOT include preparation for such discussions. Preparation of an issue is to be done on the employee's own time. Use of government equipment or material is allowed only to the extent it is permitted under Director's Order #5: Correspondence Administration and the Department of the Interior Policies on Limited Personal Use of Government Office Equipment dated June 14, 2000.

If the employee selects a representative to speak on his or her behalf, the representative is also entitled to a reasonable amount of official time to present the matter, as long as the representative is an employee of the Department of the Interior.

A reasonable amount of official time and travel will be allowed without charge to leave or loss of pay in accordance with pertinent regulations. Official time and travel must be requested and approved in

advance by the appropriate supervisory official. Initial contact with a CORE Specialist does not require supervisory approval.

E. Region, Denver Service Center (DSC), Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) and Washington Office (WASO), CORE Program Requirements

Regional Offices, the Denver Service Center, the Harpers Ferry Center and WASO have primary responsibility for managing and implementing the CORE program at their respective park unit and other locations, consistent with the provisions of this order and the guidance of the CORE Program Manager. Regions, DSC, HFC and WASO will develop implementing procedures based on specific capabilities and local needs.

The following are the minimum requirements for region, center and WASO CORE programs. Each is permitted latitude in implementing the CORE program, including organizational assignment of this responsibility and resources devoted to it.

1. Establishment of the Region, DSC, HFC and WASO CORE Function

Establish the CORE function in an organization that best serves the interest of the region or center in resolving workplace complaints and dispute issues. Since neutrality is central to ADR, the CORE function will not be placed within any office in which workplace issues are normally considered and acted upon.

Designate one or more persons to perform the functions of a CORE Specialist as they are described in the Definitions section. CORE Specialists will be trained in compliance with the training requirements as stated below. The position of CORE Specialist may not be contracted out. When mediation or other ADR services are needed, a contractor, Federal employee or other qualified person may be engaged to provide this service if a CORE Specialist is unavailable or otherwise unable to participate.

To maintain neutrality, CORE Specialists should not be assigned advocacy duties of any type, such as representing management or employees in disciplinary proceedings, grievances or EEO cases. CORE Specialists may serve concurrently as EEO Counselors with the approval of the Regional CORE Program Manager and Regional EEO Manager.

2. Time Standards and Compliance with Other Processes

Ensure compliance with the labor relations statute (5 U.S.C. Chapter 71) and collective bargaining agreements when bargaining unit employees seek assistance through CORE. (Specific authority must be provided in the collective bargaining agreement or by MOU.)

Allow employees to bring any issues to the CORE function without time constraints. This provision does not act to change or extend time limits in formal avenues of redress.

Should an employee raise an issue or concern that involves an allegation of prohibited discrimination, he or she must be informed of their right to file a formal EEO complaint. He or she must also be notified that to retain this right, it must be brought to the attention of an EEO counselor within 45 days of the event or circumstances that gave rise to the event. These actions must be documented by the completion of the CORE Intake Form and signed by the employee.

3. Steps and Procedures

The CORE Specialist will retain the intake form. Within 15-days of the initial contact, the CORE Specialist conducts initial fact-finding and determines the appropriate method or approach to address the

employee's issues or concerns. If the CORE Specialist considers mediation to be appropriate, the parties will sign an "Agreement to Mediate" that covers confidentiality and other aspects of the mediation process.

The CORE Specialist may extend the timeframe beyond the first 15 days of the initial contact, in no more than two 15-day increments, if the parties wish to continue their efforts to resolve the issue(s) within the CORE process. However, should the CORE Specialist determine that the issue(s) is likely to remain unresolved, he or she will provide a Notice of Results and Options to employee within 5 days of this determination. Likewise, if the timeframe is about to expire and, in the CORE Specialist's judgment, the parties are not close to resolution, the CORE Specialist will issue the Notice of Results and Options.

When the Notice of Results and Options is issued, the CORE Specialist will provide the employee with the opportunity to:

- a. take no further action;
- b. submit a formal grievance to the Servicing Personnel Office within 15 days of receipt of the Notice of Results and Options,
- c. enter the EEO process, or
- d. take action to initiate any other applicable formal avenue of redress.

#### 4. Written Agreements

Matters having been brought to the attention of a CORE Specialist are expected to be resolved in writing. Written agreements may not violate applicable laws, regulations, policies, orders or collective bargaining agreements. Should a question arise as to compliance with other rules or bargaining agreements, the CORE Specialist should seek assistance from the Regional CORE Manager. He or she also may seek technical assistance from other organizational components, such as the human resources and equal employment opportunity offices. Although the CORE Specialist is not prohibited from consulting the Solicitor's office directly on a CORE matter, it is preferred that he or she consult first with the appropriate internal authority. Following this step, he or she may be guided to the Office of the Solicitor for further consultation.

Written agreements can facilitate resolution of a disagreement and may be prepared and signed at any time. They may reflect partial or full resolution of the disagreement. The principal parties to the mediation and the CORE Specialist will sign the agreement. The CORE Specialist will provide both parties with a copy of the agreement, and each copy will contain original signatures. The CORE Specialist will maintain a copy of the agreement in accordance with the records management requirements of this order. Pursuant to paragraph III C above, a written final agreement is not a confidential document.

The participating parties are bound by the terms of the written agreement to the extent legally permissible. The written agreement is to be specific to the dispute being resolved and is not considered as controlling concerning future matters in which similar issues may arise. Employees, supervisors and managers should keep in mind that when they sign an agreement they are also giving their personal commitment to adhere to the provisions therein. This is part of bargaining in good faith, and is critical to developing a positive workplace environment. If an allegation arises that a party to the agreement has not complied or is not complying with it, the matter should be brought to the attention of the CORE Specialist for further action as he or she considers to be appropriate. The CORE Specialist has no enforcement authority or responsibility in a matter of noncompliance with a written agreement. Should either party to an agreement suggest noncompliance by the other party, the CORE Specialist may reconvene the parties, determine the circumstances of the possible noncompliance and renegotiate the agreement. Alternatively, he or she may refer the matter to the Regional or Center CORE Program Manager, who will recommend an appropriate action to the responsible management official to ensure compliance by all parties with the terms of the agreement.

## 5. Program Evaluation

Each region and center must evaluate its CORE program every year. The required reporting format is included in the Departmental Manual (370 DM 770, Appendix A). Evaluation reports are due annually to the CORE Program Manager on September 15.

In addition to the formal evaluation report, CORE Program Managers should meet quarterly with Human Resources Program Managers and EEO Program Managers to assess the progress of the CORE program, identify issue and trends, evaluate need for a change in procedures, and generally heighten awareness of the program's effectiveness. Periodic feedback and evaluation will help identify and target patterns of conflict for preventive management action.

## 6. Records Management

Regions and centers will develop and manage a records system for the regional or center program. The system must provide for confidentiality of the records and for an approved records disposition schedule. CORE Specialists should establish an individual case file for each person who raises an issue or concern. The Specialist should encourage the person to complete the "Participant Evaluation of CORE Services" form and return it to the CORE Program Manager in the Washington Office (See the NPS CORE Handbook for copy of the form and current mailing address).

CORE Specialists will maintain the following records on file for a period of not less than 4 nor more than 7 years; Agreement to Mediate, Intake Form, Notice of Results and Options and an original copy of written agreements. The CORE Program Manager will maintain the Participant Evaluation Form on file for a period of not less than 4 or more than 7 years and subsequently destroy it.

## 7. Training

Regions, Centers and the Washington Office should periodically train employees, supervisors, and managers in conflict management and confrontational skills and on the availability of the CORE process for resolving employee concerns and disputes. Continued training for CORE Specialists is critical for achieving the purpose of the program. Individuals performing this work should have excellent oral and written communication skills, problem- solving skills, listening skills, the ability to give and receive feedback and the commitment to maintain confidentiality.

They must be able to gather sufficient information on issues, facilitate meetings and mediate disputes effectively. They must know and be able to explain the EEO pre-complaint and complaints process requirements and the Department Administrative Grievance and Discipline and Adverse Action Policies. They must know and be able to explain the procedures for appeals to the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Special Counsel, Office of the Inspector General, the Merit System Protection Board and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Guidance for recruiting and selecting CORE Specialists is provided in the CORE Handbook.

The CORE Program Manager must set up requirements that must meet, at a minimum, all of the required training and skills identified in this section and certify that each CORE Specialist has met these requirements. Established procedures must ensure that individuals who perform conflict resolution responsibilities within the CORE function will have completed Basic Mediation training (minimum 5 days), EEO training, Discipline and Adverse Action training, and training on the Departmental Administrative Grievance Procedure. Additional requirements for CORE Specialists may include training in communication, other aspects of conflict assessment, management and resolution, and training in the various avenues of redress, including the administrative grievance procedures, Office of the Inspector General Whistle Blower Protection Act, and EEO.

Individuals who have completed mediation training will complete at least three cases with an experienced mediator. The co-mediator will give guidance to the CORE Specialist and evaluate his or her ability to apply ADR skills and serve successfully as a mediator. CORE Specialists must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Regional CORE Program Manager, that they have kept their skills current through actual performance and/or completion of a minimum of 16 hours of advanced mediation training, annually.

Since mediation is the most common form of ADR used for workplace disputes, mediation training is required. However, CORE Specialists are also encouraged to develop expertise in and use facilitation and other appropriate conflict resolution methods.

#### 8. Continuing Education

The CORE Program Manager will seek to establish continuing education criteria that include advanced or refresher courses in mediation, EEO, Administrative Grievance, and Discipline and Adverse Action, to be completed every 2 years in order to maintain technical state-of-the-art skills.

### **V. RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A. Associate Director - Administration**

1. Develop and implement the National Park Service CORE policy in the manner required by 370 DM 770 and this Director's Order.
2. Provide guidance and advice to the NPS CORE function regarding personnel issues.
3. Appoint a CORE Program Manager to fulfill NPS Service-wide responsibilities.
4. Certify those individuals having completed all requirements needed to serve as a Conflict Resolution Specialist.

#### **B. CORE Program Managers**

1. Direct and administer the Conflict Resolution Program in the National Park Service.
2. Provide conflict resolution program information and training for managers, supervisors, employees and others who may become engaged in the CORE process.
3. Ensure that CORE Specialists are provided ongoing training opportunities and meet program requirements for individual development.
4. Monitor and evaluate the success of the CORE program, consistent with 370 DM 770 and provide annual evaluation reports to the Department.
5. Review region and center CORE program implementation to identify systemic weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.
6. Identify and recommend employees to serve as Conflict Resolution Specialists.

#### **C. Regional Directors, Denver Service Center and Harpers Ferry Center Managers**

1. Implement the CORE program in a manner that is consistent with this order.



2. Provide personnel and financial resources as needed and available, to achieve CORE program objectives.
3. Assign internal accountability for the CORE Program to the organization which best serves the interests of the region or center in resolving workplace disputes, issues and concerns.
4. Support the program by making its benefits and availability known to managers, supervisors and employees.
5. Encourage first line supervisors to support the program and participate in good faith in the CORE process when called upon to do so.
6. Provide training and information for supervisors in conflict resolution techniques.
7. Encourage employees to bring issues & concerns to the attention of their supervisors personally or through the CORE framework.
8. Appoint a Regional CORE Program Manager to carry out CORE responsibilities at the regional level and notify the Associate Director - Administration of the designation in writing.
9. Concur in recommendations of employees to serve as Conflict Resolution Specialists.
10. Recommend certification of those individuals having completed all requirements needed to serve as a Conflict Resolution Specialist.

D. Human Resource Managers

1. Provide technical advice on personnel matters and review settlement proposals as requested by CORE Specialists.
2. Provide training and information on the CORE process to personnel specialists.
3. Keep the CORE Program Manager informed of union locals whose bargaining unit employees are authorized to have access to CORE by way of specific authorization in the collective bargaining agreement, or by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the union and local management.

E. EEO Managers

1. Provide technical advice on EEO matters and review settlement proposals, as requested, by CORE Specialists.
2. Provide training and information on the CORE process to EEO Specialists and Counselors.
3. Provide advice and information to CORE Specialists regarding workforce issues, as needed.

F. CORE Specialists

Employees, supervisors and other participants must feel free to discuss issues and concerns freely within the context of the CORE process. They must also have trust that the matters discussed will be kept confidential. To maintain credibility and facilitate success, CORE Specialists must, to the maximum extent permissible by law, keep information given to them confidential unless given permission by all

parties to use the information for specific purposes. In addition, the mediation process requires confidentiality. In accordance with these matters, the CORE Specialist will:

1. Act as a neutral third party to assist employees and supervisors in resolving workplace issues and concerns.
2. Within legal requirements, strictly protect the confidentiality of the CORE process.
3. Advise employees and management participants of procedures, timeframes, and/or special procedures that may be applicable to the issue(s) of concern.
4. Offer support and advice, when appropriate, to encourage parties in conflict to communicate and try to resolve matters without third party assistance.
5. Provide early conflict resolution assistance, which may include fact-finding, conciliation, mediation, and coaching. Determine the approach that is appropriate to each situation. Arrange for or conduct an ADR method that is appropriate and acceptable to the parties. Secure the services of other ADR practitioners when appropriate and acceptable to the parties.
6. Provide training and information to employees and management on the CORE process and provides CORE services consistent with this order.

G. Managers and Supervisors

1. Maintain open and consistent communications on work issues with employees, clarify misunderstandings and objectively address work problems and relationships with employees.
2. Actively seek resolution of workplace issues at the earliest opportunity.
3. Attempt to resolve issues with other employees before seeking the aid of a neutral third party. He or she may seek assistance from a CORE Specialist on how to reach informal agreement, as needed.
4. Provide employees with training and information regarding the CORE process and its availability.
5. Participate in good faith in mediation or other dispute resolution efforts.
6. Within legal requirements, strictly protect the confidentiality of the CORE process.

H. Employees

1. Report issues/concerns and actively seek resolution of the disputed matter as early as possible, and at the lowest level of the organization as possible.
2. Attempt to resolve issues with other employees or supervisors before requesting the use of a neutral party, seeking advice from a CORE Specialist on how most effectively to approach the issue, as needed.
3. Maintain open and consistent communications on work issues with supervisors and co-workers.
4. Participate in good faith in mediation or other dispute resolution efforts.

5. Within legal requirements, strictly protect the confidentiality of issues, concerns and all substantive matters related to the CORE process. This confidentiality requirement does not apply to procedural matters, including formal, written agreements.

## **VI. DEFINITIONS**

A. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) - Assisted negotiation, having settlement of an issue or concern between two or more parties as the goal. ADR may consist of informal facilitation or mediation and feature neutral third party assistance. It may be formal arbitration, where a third party makes a decision that is advisory or binding on the parties. In formal arbitration, the parties understand and agree in advance that the decision of the arbitrator will be either advisory or binding.

B. Bargaining Unit Employee. A bargaining unit is a group of employees that a union represents or seeks to represent and that the Federal Labor Relations Authority finds appropriate for collective bargaining purposes. An employee of the National Park Service who is included in a bargaining unit is known as a “bargaining unit employee.”

C. CORE Program Manager - The individual who conducts or directs conflict resolution and alternative dispute resolution services for employees in the National Park Service. A Regional or Center CORE Program Manager conducts or directs these services in his or her respective region or center.

D. Conflict Resolution (CORE) Program or Function - A bureau administrative function that provides a single, neutral point of contact where any employee (including supervisors and managers) may have workplace concerns addressed, or receive appropriate conflict resolution assistance.

E. Conflict Resolution Specialist - A National Park Service or other Federal agency employee who delivers CORE services in his or her organization. He or she provides or arranges for various kinds of assistance appropriate to each circumstance. Assistance may include - but is not limited to:

1. providing information (including access and timeframe information on administrative, EEO or other methods or avenues of redress),
2. referring specific matters to appropriate sources for assistance and or information,
3. helping define issues or specific concerns, suggesting effective communication and conflict resolution strategies and techniques,
4. coaching parties in attempts to resolve conflicts on their own, facilitating meetings, conciliating, gathering information relevant to a particular conflict (when needed to enhance resolution efforts), and mediating (when negotiation is appropriate and the parties are willing to participate) or securing the services of other mediators acceptable to the parties.

F. Days refers to consecutive calendar days.

G. Dispute - A conflict between two or more persons within the workplace and having a negative effect on productivity.

H. Employee refers to a person who is currently working for and paid by the National Park Service.

I. Fact-Finding - The process of gathering information that is relevant to identified issues or concerns. The sole purpose of fact-finding is to give the CORE Specialist enough knowledge to assist involved parties in resolving their differences. Fact-finding is not a formal investigation and no written determination or opinion will be produced from it.

J. An Issue or Concern is an expression of discontent or dissatisfaction concerning the workplace. An employee or group of employees will usually raise it.

K. A Manager or Supervisor refers to a person who conducts or directs the business or daily affairs of an organization. He or she may be a party in a dispute and is, therefore, expected to participate in good faith to resolve it. He or she approves and implements written agreements, subject to appropriate administrative, technical and legal review.

L. Mediator - A neutral third party trained to assist the parties in negotiating an agreement. The mediator has no independent authority and does not render an opinion, but rather assists the parties in creating mutually acceptable solutions that reflect their interests and objectives.

M. Notice of Results and Options - A summary of actions to be taken on a dispute, issue or concern that follows a CORE mediation. Alternatively, it may consist of a statement of other avenues for seeking redress, should a determination be made that resolution cannot be achieved in the CORE framework.

N. Representative - An individual who is chosen by a party to a mediation and who is authorized to speak for the party in resolving the matter(s) being considered.

O. Settlement/Agreement - These are interchangeable terms, which are defined as a written resolution signed by both parties.

---End of Director's Order---