



New Jersey Association of Professional Mediators

26 Park Street, Suite 2041, Montclair, New Jersey 07042 (800) 981-4800

NJAPM Standards for Accreditation Divorce and Family Mediator Accreditation

Procedures:

The Accreditation and Standards Committee is designated to review and evaluate applications for accreditation. While the review of applications is usually on the submissions of the applicant, the Accreditation and Standards Committee may require any applicant to meet with the Committee or a subcommittee to resolve any issues concerning the applicant's credentials and experience.

All submissions to the Accreditation and Standards Committee concerning credentials and experience will be treated as confidential and used only for the accreditation process. All submissions become the property of the New Jersey Association of Professional Mediators. The organization is not responsible for any lost or misdirected submissions.

Requirements:

1. Membership

All persons applying for accreditation must be current members of the Association in good standing and for a minimum of two (2) consecutive years preceding the application submission and will be required to satisfy the additional requirements for Accreditation as set forth below.

2. Education

- a. An applicant must have at a minimum, a Masters level degree from an institute of higher education in one of the following areas: Law, Business, Accounting, Finance, Social Work, or Psychology. Advance degrees in other subject areas *do not satisfy this requirement*. The applicant shall submit to the Accreditation and Standards Committee documentation to substantiate his/her education.

- b. If required for his/her profession, the applicant shall demonstrate that he/she is in good standing or in retired status and has a New Jersey professional license such as: Attorney at Law, Certified Public Accountant, Certified Financial Planner, Licensed Social Worker, Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Psychologist, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist or other mental health field license (licenses held in different fields are not accepted as a substitute). The applicant shall submit to the Accreditation and Standards Committee documentation to substantiate his/her professional license is in good standing or is in retired status.
- c. Waiver The education requirement *may only* be waived for mediators who hold an undergraduate college degree from a recognized college or university and can prove *substantial* mediation experience in formal mediations, specifically divorce mediations, or mediations of other Family Part matters. If the applicant does not have an advanced degree (and/or applicable professional license) in one of the areas identified in the Standards for Accreditation, but has a college degree and *substantial mediation experience (as above)*, the applicant shall first file for a waiver of the education requirement and demonstrate to the Accreditation Chairperson's satisfaction that the applicant has sufficient qualitative mediation experience.

3. Mediation Training

- a. Completion of an approved forty (40) hour New Jersey Family and Divorce mediation training course. Applicants who have completed a forty (40) hour mediation training course in another state must also have completed at least sixteen (16) hours of continuing education on New Jersey divorce law from NJAPM, Institute of Continuing Legal Education (ICLE), Rutgers University or another NJAPM approved continuing education provider. In addition, the Accreditation Committee Chairperson will review the applicant's documentation from the 40 hour training seminar from another state to determine whether that seminar meets NJAPM standards.
- b. Completion of at least two (2) hours of a domestic violence training course.
- c. The applicant has attended in the immediate two years prior to submission of the application; a minimum of ten (10) hours in each year of NJAPM sponsored seminars, conferences and/or general meetings. The applicant in lieu of documentation may provide the dates and certify his/her participation in NJAPM sponsored seminars, conferences and/or general meetings.
- d. The applicant shall submit to the Accreditation and Standards Committee documentation to substantiate his/her mediation training.

4. Mediation Experience

- a. An applicant will have at a minimum one hundred (100) hours of direct handling of divorce and/or family mediations. The applicant shall submit to the Accreditation and Standards Committee documentation which lists the names of the cases, dates of the mediation sessions and total hours expended on each case.
- b. The applicant has completed at a minimum the direct handling of fifteen (15) divorce and/or family mediation cases.
- c. Up to 48 hours of participation in an approved apprenticeship, practicum, internship or co-mediation with an Accredited Divorce and Family Professional Mediator may be counted towards the required hours for mediation experience.
- d. All mediation experience qualifying for (A.) and (B.) above shall have been completed within five (5) years preceding the submission of the application.
- e. The applicant shall submit to the Accreditation and Standards Committee either fifteen (15) case summaries or four (4) Memorandum of Understandings or four (4) Marital Settlement Agreements authored by the applicant that includes at least one child support worksheet and at least one alimony component.
- f. The applicant shall also submit an exemplar of his/her Agreement to Meditate, Retainer, Engagement Letter or other such document used in his/her practice.
- g. The applicant shall also submit a copy of his/her current Professional Liability Insurance Declaration Coverage Sheet.
- h. The applicant shall also provide four (4) references from individuals who have direct knowledge of the applicant's mediation skills. Use the NJAPM Referral form.

5. Procedure

- a. The applicant shall submit a complete package to the Association. Any information or documents missing from the package will cause the package to be deemed incomplete and the application shall not be processed. A complete application and package containing all of the required documentation will be processed in a timely manner. The Accreditation Committee Chairperson or his/her designated representative shall review and determine whether the applicant's education, credentials and experience documentation is complete and satisfies the standards for Accreditation. The Accreditation Committee Chairperson will designate the Committee's Members who shall review the applicant's submission of case summaries Memorandum of Understandings or Marital Settlement Agreements. This part of the review process will be conducted by the Committee Members without knowledge of the applicant's name. The applicant is not entitled to know the Committee Member's identities who reviewed the applicant's submissions. The Committee Members will report their findings to the

Committee Chairperson. The Accreditation Committee reserves the right to request additional documentation from the applicant, to meet with the applicant and/or to submit additional questions to the applicant. The Accreditation Chairperson will communicate the Committee's decision on Accreditation to the applicant. The applicant may appeal the Accreditation Committee's decision to the Board of Directors by submitting a memorandum to the Board which includes the basis of the appeal and such additional documentation as needed to supplement the memorandum. The Board may seek information and reply from the Accreditation Committee and thereafter, render a decision which shall be final on the matter.

- b. An applicant who is awarded the designation of Accredited Professional Mediator may commence and will be authorized to use that title and/or the initials, "APM" following their name after submitting the required membership dues designated for APM members and receipt of the Certificate of Award for Accreditation. The applicant may continue to use the designation of Accredited Professional Mediator and/or the initials, "APM" so long as he/she remains accredited by and in good standing with the Association.

6. Term

Accreditation is granted for a period of not more than one full year. Renewal after the first period and for each subsequent one year period is granted only to members of the Association in good standing and upon satisfaction of the continuing education and participation requirements.

7. Continuing Education and Participation Requirements for APM Designation

- a. Participation in ten (10) hours of continuing education every twelve (12) months. At least five (5) hours shall be in the field of mediation and the remaining hours may be in such fields as law, mental health, finance or conflict resolution.
- b. Participation in at least ten (10) hours of NJAPM sponsored conferences, seminars, or general meetings annually. Attendance at the NJAPM annual conference usually counts as 6 hours; general meetings usually count as 1.5 hours each.
- c. Members are responsible for maintaining their own continuing education records and may be required to submit and/or certify annually.
- d. The Board of Directors for good cause may suspend or revoke the designation of Accredited Professional Mediator of any APM member.