

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI**

NOTICE

July 10, 2025

The Mediation and Assessment Program (MAP) for the United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri has reopened applications for the Court's List of Neutrals, Category I and Category II, with a submission deadline of August 15, 2025. The MAP General Order affords parties access to a neutral early in the litigation for mediation, facilitative communications, or other ADR. The link to the PDF fillable applications and other information about the Program is at: <https://www.mow.uscourts.gov/mediation-and-assessment-program-map>. Please review all the information available through the link before deciding whether to apply for Category I, Category II, or both. Late and/or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

MAP is an integral part of judicial efficiency and access to justice. For more than a decade, an average of 1,000 civil cases annually have been through the Program, with an annual resolution rate of 45-55% during Early-Stage ADR, typically within 75 days of the Rule 26 conference. Following a lengthy assessment of the Program from late-2021 to early 2023, the Court en banc adopted the Amendment to the MAP General Order effective August 1, 2023. The Court maintained its long-standing preference for in-person mediation and other ADR, incorporated protocols for use of technology in appropriate circumstances, implemented procedures for Later-Stage ADR when cases do not resolve early, and created Category I and Category II for case assignments.

Cases are randomly assigned to MAP as follows: 1) Category I in which the parties select a neutral from the Court's Category I List on the website; 2) Category II in which the MAP Director selects the neutral from the Court's internal Category II List; 3) the MAP Director; or 4) Magistrate or Bankruptcy Judge. As cases are randomly assigned, cases cannot be reassigned to a different category absent extraordinary circumstances.

Acceptance to Category I and/or Category II is not intended to promote the ADR practice of an individual or organization. Rather, acceptance assists in serving the needs of the parties consistent with the provisions of the MAP General Order, with individuals selected based on their qualifications and willingness to serve. Although many highly qualified applicants will likely apply, not all applicants who are qualified and willing to serve will be selected for one or both lists. When appropriate, an individual not on the Category I List can be considered for Early-Stage ADR if prior approval is requested from and provided by the MAP Director. (General Order, Section II.D.1.a.). Given the number of current Category I Neutrals, it is not anticipated that many individuals will be added to that list when it is updated in October of 2025. However, qualified individuals are encouraged to apply for Category I, Category II, or both.

Current members of the Category I List do not need to submit a new application. Current Category I Neutrals need to complete a Renewal Form by August 15 to be considered for inclusion. The Renewal Form will be provided separately to those on the current Category I List.

Individuals selected for Category II serve staggered terms for up to three years, with the option for renewed terms. The Honorable District Judge Stephen R. Bough chaired the Category II Selection Committee in 2023 and will do so again this year. This year's Selection Committee includes Bankruptcy Judge Cynthia A. Norton, Magistrate Judge W. Brian Gaddy, and MAP Director Laurel Stevenson. No more than 25 individuals will be on the Category II List, resulting in an average of 5-6 direct assignments annually.

Specific expertise is not required to serve as a neutral as individuals with appropriate education and training can handle most cases. Most civil case filings involve employment disputes, claims under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, personal injury, contracts, insurance, and class actions. The Court has seen a significant increase in complex insurance disputes and trademark and patent disputes over the past year.

Individuals selected for Category I, Category II, or both will be notified by September 10, 2025. Individuals selected for Category II must attend a training in Kansas City on October 2 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. absent an unavoidable conflict.