

ADVERTISEMENT



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ABOUT OUR SERVICES‡

PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVESSM is a separate operational division of The Heard Law Offices, LLC, dedicated to providing a variety of professional conflict resolution and related consulting services to individuals, organizations, businesses, and other groups that are either (a) involved in, (b) about to become involved in, or (c) searching for ways to avoid disputes. Our mission is manifested in our logo, which incorporates the West African Adinkra symbol *Mpatapo* (“knot of reconciliation”). *Mpatapo* symbolizes the spiritual tie that binds parties in a dispute to a harmonious reconciliation and is used to signify a state of peacemaking after strife.

Conflict resolution can take many forms, some of which may be combined, and can be used either before or after a lawsuit is filed. Some of the more popular forms of conflict resolution are:

- ▶ **Mediation:** A voluntary and confidential process in which a neutral third-party facilitator helps people discuss difficult issues and negotiate an agreement. Basic steps in the process include gathering information, framing the issues, developing options, negotiating, and formalizing agreements. Parties in mediation create their own solutions and the mediator does not have any decision-making power over the outcome.
- ▶ **Arbitration:** A process in which a third-party neutral, after reviewing evidence and listening to arguments from both sides, issues a decision to settle the case. Arbitration is often used in commercial and labor/management disputes.
- ▶ **Mediation-Arbitration:** A hybrid that combines both of the above processes. Prior to the session, the disputing parties agree to try mediation first, but give the neutral third party the authority to make a decision if mediation is not successful.
- ▶ **Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE):** A process in which a third-party neutral independently reviews, investigates, and/or evaluates the merits of the case in the early stages of a dispute (either before or soon after suit is filed), reports his or her findings and recommendations orally or in writing to the disputants, and encourages the parties to attempt a resolution. ENE differs from mediation and arbitration in that the third-party neutral does not simply rely on the disputants for information but rather conducts his or her own fact-finding.

Please contact the office at the number above to inquire further about **PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVESSM** services, or to schedule an appointment with one of our conflict resolution professionals.

‡NOTICE: The conflict resolution services provided by professional third-party neutrals through **PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVESSM** are not legal services and should not be construed as such. Many conflict resolution professionals are also licensed attorneys; however other specially trained professionals (i.e., psychologists, counselors, education specialists) may be qualified to perform certain conflict resolution services. **No attorney-client relationship is formed by, through, or as a result of any conflict resolution services provided by or under the direction or auspices of PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVESSM.** In particular, the **confidentiality and conflict-of-interest principles** that are applicable to conflict resolution professionals and participants **differ in many material respects** from the confidentiality and conflict-of-interest principles that apply to the attorney-client relationship.

If you are seeking legal representation by a licensed attorney — in connection with an existing or contemplated conflict resolution process or for any other legal matter — such services are handled through the **Legal Services Division** of The Heard Law Offices, LLC.