



FMCS

FEDERAL MEDIATION &  
CONCILIATION SERVICE

Dear FMCS Customer:

**So you are wondering, “what is online dispute resolution?”** In a nutshell, like with in-person meetings, the process can be whatever the parties make it to be. It can be facilitative, transactional, transformative, evaluative, problem-solving, in addition to a host of other iterations of what is commonly referred to as Alternative Dispute Resolution. FMCS’s online dispute resolution is a virtual meeting space where all parties are present with the mediator in a meeting that takes whatever form the parties agree it should take.

More concretely, FMCS mediators conduct collective bargaining and employment mediation using cutting edge video teleconferencing technology. This technology provides the ability for parties to collaborate virtually via:

- Fully private meeting rooms for parties, and
- Collaborate virtual joint meeting rooms.
- Sharing of online documents in joint and separate caucuses.
- Additional technology for idea generation and evaluation as part of comprehensive joint problem-solving.

The following pages will give you a flavor of what the online dispute resolution process is like with FMCS. However, they are not intended to constitute a comprehensive manual, or to take the place of the guidance that your mediator will give you once you agree to online dispute resolution. We do hope it will be helpful in making the determination to inquire further from your local FMCS Executive Manager or mediator about how the process might work for you in your negotiation. For your convenience, a list of FMCS Area Executive Managers and a map of each Executive Manager's area is attached to the end of this document.

Wishing you much success as you proceed into this new format for Alternative Dispute Resolution.

*FMCS Leadership Team*

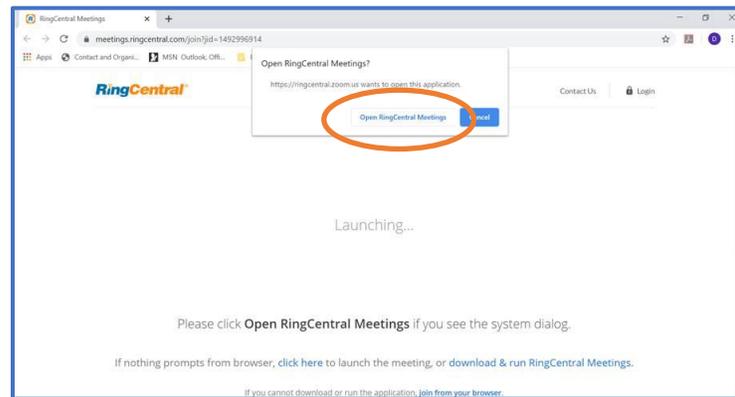
## Instructions You Will Receive Prior to Mediation

If both parties are amenable to online dispute resolution, in advance of your mediation date you will have the opportunity to hold a dry run with your mediator if you so desire. In advance of the dry run, or in advance of your actual meeting date, as the case may be, your FMCS mediator will send you an email with instructions similar to the following:

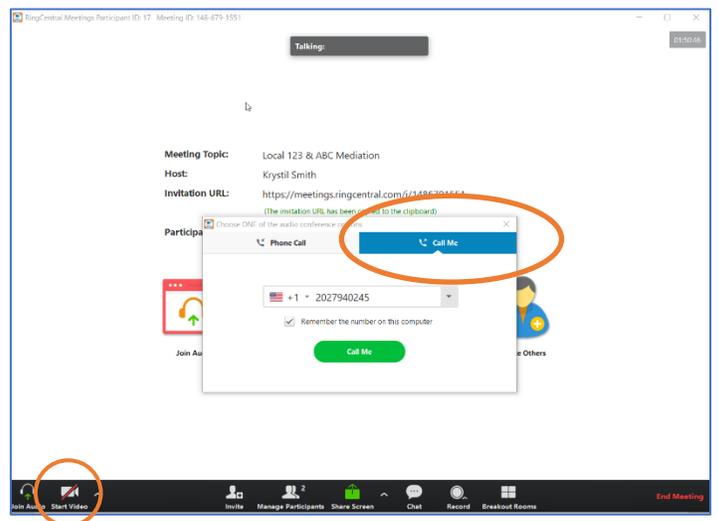
### Text of Email

#### Starting the meeting

1. Approximately 5-10 minutes before the designated starting time of the meeting, please join the session by clicking your RingCentral meeting link. You may receive another window, click **Open RingCentral Meetings**.



2. Wait 20-45 seconds, and the following screen should appear. When it does, please choose the **“Call Me”** option, and enter the number you wish to be called at. It is critical that you select **“call me”** because that will allow the number that you enter to go with you to the caucus room that I assign you. Your phone should ring within 5 seconds.
3. To activate your webcam, click **Start Video** in the lower left-hand corner of the menu bar.

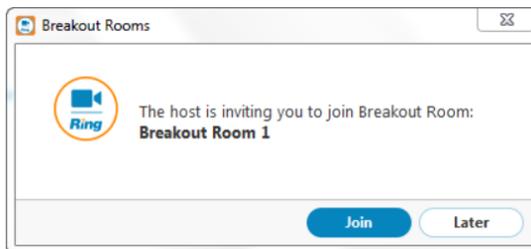


## Joint Meeting Room

1. Your mediator will most likely start you off in the joint meeting room. As with an in-person mediation, in the joint mediation room, at the beginning of the meeting, you will have the opportunity to make all necessary introductions, establish procedural and/or behavioral ground rules (if both parties so desire) and of course begin negotiations in the presence of the mediator. Access to this room is strictly monitored by the mediator so that anybody with audio and/or video access is accounted for.

## Additional Virtual Mediation Instructions Regarding Breakout Rooms (Separate Caucuses)

1. When it is time for a separate caucus, the mediator will assign you to your respective rooms. The mediator will work with the parties to make sure that each participant is assigned to the correct room. Once the mediator opens both rooms, each participant will get a message asking if he or she wants to join.
2. You must accept the invitation to the Breakout Room by clicking **JOIN**.



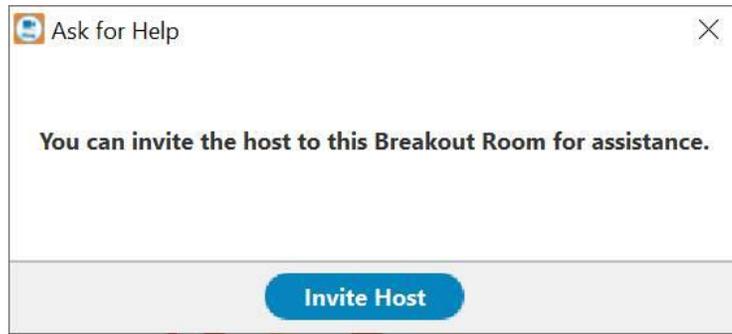
3. You will then see a window letting you know you are being moved to the Breakout Room.



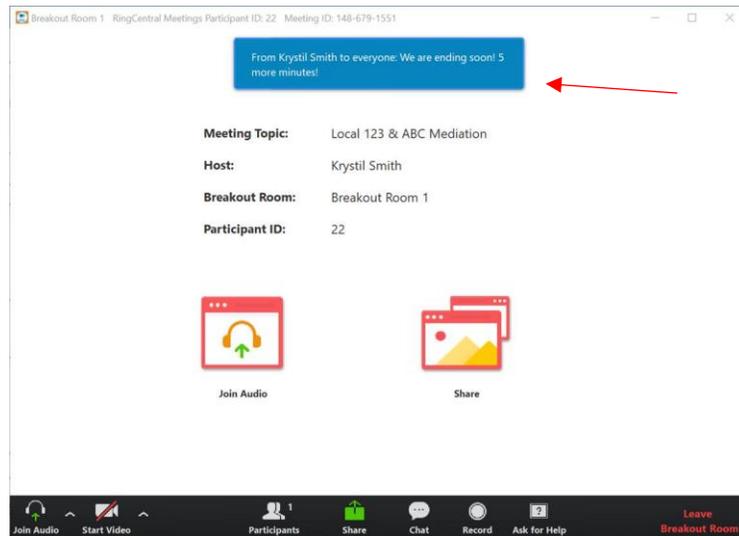
4. Once each party is in its respective virtual breakout room, the mediator will quickly test the system so everybody can be rest assured that the other side cannot hear or see them.
5. In your Breakout Room, you may ask for the Mediator's help by clicking **ASK FOR HELP** in the bottom menu bar.



6. Once you hit **ASK FOR HELP**, you will see the following message:



7. In addition, your mediator may broadcast a message to all Breakout Rooms. It will appear at the top of your screen in a blue box.



8. You may leave your Breakout Room at any time. When you are ready to leave a Breakout Room and rejoin the joint session, click **LEAVE BREAKOUT ROOM** in the bottom menu bar.



9. When your mediator initiates your return from the private meeting room to the joint meeting room, you will see the following message:



10. You can click **Return to Main Session** if you want to go back to the joint meeting room prior to the 55 seconds.

## Contact Information for FMCS Executive Managers

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