



**EEOC**  
TRAINING INSTITUTE



**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**  
**Dallas District Office • Houston District Office**

# **Maximizing the Investigation and Mediation Process: Tips and Best Practices**

**July 11, 2023**

**10:00 am – 1:15 pm CT**

## **AGENDA**

| <b>Time</b> | <b>Presentation</b> |
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|         |                           |
|---------|---------------------------|
| 9:30 am | Virtual Environment Opens |
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|          |                        |
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| 10:00 am | <b>Opening Remarks</b> |
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Travis Nicholson, District Director, EEOC Dallas District Office

|          |                              |
|----------|------------------------------|
| 10:05 am | <b>The Mediation Process</b> |
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Katherine S. Perez, Supervisory ADR Coordinator, EEOC Dallas District Office

This session describes the mediation process, explains the overwhelming benefits to mediation, and offers tips and techniques to ensure a successful mediation.

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| 11:05 am | <b>The Investigation Process</b> |
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Marina Guerra, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Houston District Office

The session describes the investigation process, offers tips and techniques designed to promote successful participation in an EEOC investigation, and provides the latest trends in EEOC discrimination charges and complaints.

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| 12:05 pm | Break |
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| 12:10 pm | <b>Maximizing The Processes</b> |
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Elizabeth Edwards, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Dallas District

Marina Guerra, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Houston District Office

Katherine S. Perez, Supervisory ADR Coordinator, EEOC Dallas District Office

This panel discusses how both processes can work together to achieve effective solutions and resolutions of discrimination charges and complaints. The session provides an interactive questions and answers session.

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| 1:10 pm | <b>Closing Remarks</b> |
|---------|------------------------|

Rayford O. Irvin, District Director, EEOC Houston District Office

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|--------|---------|
| 1:15pm | Adjourn |
|--------|---------|

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**REGISTRATION FEE: \$175.00 per person**

**REGISTER HERE: [Dallas – Houston Virtual Workshop](#)**

### **CREDITS:**

HRCI – “This program has been approved for three (HR (General)) recertification credit hours toward aPHR™, aPHRi™, PHR®, PHRca®, SPHR®, GPHR®, PHRi™ and SPHRi™ recertification through the HR Certification Institute.”

SHRM – submitted for approval

CLE – seeking credit for TX.

This workshop has been approved for Federal Counselor or Investigator Refresher credits (3 hours).

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### PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES



#### **Elizabeth Edwards, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Dallas District**

"Liz" Edwards has made a career out of education, teaching, and briefing. Ms. Edwards has a M.S. in Special Education and Human Services, a M.E. in Counseling Education and is currently working on her Doctorate in Educational Psychology. Ms. Edwards is a 25-year retired Air Force Intelligence Officer. Ms. Edwards has taught as an adjunct faculty member at many of her duty stations throughout the world including University College of the University of Maryland in Turkey, Colorado Mesa University in Colorado, Cochise College in Arizona, Wilmington College in Delaware, and Delaware Technical and Community College in Delaware.

Ms. Edwards has served the EEOC mission in the Federal government for over ten years and currently serves the as the Outreach and Education Coordinator in the EEOC Dallas District Office. Finally, and most importantly, Ms. Edwards enjoys being the spouse of a Colorado Army National Guardsman and the mom to three fantastic boys, 18-year-old twins who are seniors and getting ready to begin the college journey, and an amazing 9-year-old third grader who is convinced he will be the fastest running-back or receiver (he cannot decide) the NFL has ever seen.



#### **Marina Guerra, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Houston District Office**

Marina Guerra is an Outreach and Education Coordinator with the EEOC- Houston District office. Originally from Corpus Christi, Texas, she attended Texas A&M- Corpus Christi and graduated with honors receiving a B.S. in Criminal Justice. In 1999, shortly after graduating, Ms. Guerra moved to Houston and was hired with the EEOC through a Scholastic Achievement program. Ms. Guerra worked as an Investigator from 1999 through 2012, when she was asked to work a detail as the Acting Intake Supervisor. After a second detail, Ms. Guerra was promoted to a supervisory position in 2014, and held the position until 2020. In 2020, she was promoted to her current position.

Ms. Guerra is very passionate about the work she does and is especially honored to carry out the Mission of the EEOC daily. In addition to her duties of Outreach and Education Coordinator, Ms. Guerra also serves as the Houston District Office's representative for special emphasis programs and morale events for the Houston District Office.

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### **Rayford O. Irvin, District Director, EEOC Houston District Office**

Rayford O. Irvin began his employment with the EEOC in 2007 as the Deputy District Director and since 2010 was the District Director of the Phoenix District Office. This 1984 graduate of the Texas A& M Corp is pleased to return home to Texas where he has enforcement jurisdiction over 27 counties in the Southeast part of the state and all of Louisiana.

As District Director of the Houston District Office, Mr. Irvin is responsible for the investigation of charges of employment discrimination filed under multiple federal statutes. Under his direction, victims of employment discrimination have received substantial financial compensation and other forms of relief and employers have received technical assistance and guidance to prevent discrimination. Mr. Irvin is dedicated to enforcing the anti-discrimination laws as well as educating the employer community.

Mr. Irvin retired from the US Air Force Reserve on September 2012 as a Lieutenant Colonel (LtCol) in the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) with 28-years of service. He is a native of Gladewater, TX and holds a B.S in Industrial Engineering from Texas A&M University and a M.B.A. with a concentration in Information Technology / Operations from Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, TX.



### **Travis Nicholson, District Director, EEOC Dallas District Office**

Travis Nicholson is currently the District Director of the EEOC Dallas District. Mr. Nicholson began his career with the EEOC in 2009 as a Bilingual Investigator with the EEOC's Detroit Field Office. During his tenure with the Detroit Field Office, he investigated charges alleging violation of the statutes enforced by the Commission. Mr. Nicholson was the EEOC Charlotte District Outreach and Education Coordinator from 2014 to 2017 and was responsible for the full range of outreach initiatives and activities within the district's area of responsibility.

Mr. Nicholson served in the Office of Field Program (OFP Field Management Programs) as a Program Analyst from 2017 to 2019 and was the Houston District Deputy District Director from July 2019 to August 2022. Mr. Nicholson also served on a detail assignment as the Chief, National Enforcement Modernization Project where he led the charge / case management modernization efforts for OFP. Mr. Nicholson was formerly a Compliance Officer with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. Mr. Nicholson has been married to his lovely wife for 27 years and they have two fantastic boys. Mr. Nicholson is a proud Veteran of the U.S. Army and a native of Detroit, MI.

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### **Katherine S. Perez, Supervisory ADR Coordinator, EEOC Dallas District Office**

Katherine S. Perez currently serves as the Supervisory Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Coordinator for the EEOC. Ms. Perez has been with the Commission for over twenty-nine years. Ms. Perez began her career in 1994 as an Investigator for the former San Antonio District Office. As an Investigator, she was responsible for the investigation and conciliation of numerous private sector employment discrimination complaints involving the Federal statutes enforced by the EEOC.

In 1999, Ms. Perez was selected to be an ADR Mediator for the former San Antonio District Office. As a Mediator, she mediated a multitude of private sector employment discrimination charges of varying complexities, as well as a few federal sector complaints. In 2004, Ms. Perez was promoted to the ADR Coordinator position. In 2006, Ms. Perez was chosen for the position of Supervisory ADR Coordinator for the Dallas District, which oversees the mediation of employment discrimination cases throughout Northern, Western and Southern Texas, as well as Southern New Mexico. Additionally, Ms. Perez presents on a myriad of topics relating to employment discrimination and mediation for various organizations.

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