

## Guiding Principles

### Academy of Court-Appointed Neutrals

A Court-Appointed Neutral is a disinterested professional appointed as an adjunct – a special officer appointment – to assist a court in its case-management, adjudicative or post-resolution responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of these Guiding Principles and any standards established by the court for qualification to hold such an appointment. It is the duty of a Court-Appointed Neutral to provide competent, impartial, and efficient services. The scope of the Court-Appointed Neutral's authority is described in the court's appointment order and in any other applicable statutes or rules that govern the responsibilities that the court has authority to delegate.

Fellows and Members of the Academy of Court-Appointed Neutrals (ACAN) agree to abide by the following guiding principles and to urge their adoption by others in similar roles:

- Before accepting any court appointment, complete a thorough check for personal and professional conflicts of interest that could lead the neutral's impartiality to be reasonably questioned and, as necessary, disclose such conflicts of interest if the court determines the conflict can be waived by the parties involved;
- Accept court appointment only when the neutral has the competence, including the legal knowledge, skill, time, and ability, to fulfill the appointment order;
- Comply with the Rules of Professional Conduct applicable in the states or jurisdictions in which the neutral is admitted or is serving as a neutral;
- Comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing the subject matter of the court's appointment order and the rules and orders applicable to that court and to the jurisdiction in which it is located;
- Perform the duties of the court's appointment order in a manner that is professional and respectful, and promotes civility, diversity, and inclusion among all parties and others involved in the matter, and avoiding explicit or implicit bias, preference, or discrimination;
- Maintain the highest level of confidentiality that is appropriate in the matter and in accordance with the court's appointment order;
- Comply with the rules governing *ex parte* communications that apply to the matter, the court's appointment, and the applicable rules and procedures.
- Perform the duties of the court's appointment in a cost-effective manner that provides the parties with a just, appropriate, efficient, and effective outcome.

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The ACAN *Benchbook* explains in detail the standards applicable to Fellows and Members of the Academy of Court-Appointed Neutrals:

<https://www.courtappointedneutrals.org/benchbook/appointing-neutrals-handbook/>