

## **ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

### **Summary of Civil Code §§ 1369.510-1369.590**

Sections 1369.510 to 1369.590 of the Civil Code require that before owners and associations file lawsuits against each other for declaratory relief or injunctive relief in connection with a claim for money damages under \$5,000 or for enforcing the association's governing documents, the filing party "shall endeavor" to submit the dispute to alternative dispute resolution ("ADR"). Forms of ADR include mediation, negotiation, and binding or nonbinding arbitration. This provision does not apply to the filing of cross-complaints.

The ADR process is initiated by one party serving a Request for Resolution upon the other parties to the dispute. The request must include (i) a brief description of the dispute, (ii) a request for ADR, (iii) a notice that a response must be received within thirty (30) days or it will be deemed rejected, and (iv) a copy of Civil Code Sections 1369.510 to 1369.590.

If the individual receiving the request agrees to ADR, the process must be completed within ninety (90) days unless otherwise extended by agreement. The cost of ADR is to be paid by the participating parties. If a civil suit is filed, the filing party must submit to the court a Certificate of Compliance indicating the party has complied with the requirements of Sections 1369.510 to 1369.590. Failing to do so would be grounds for challenging the lawsuit.

Although the prevailing party is entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, the court may consider a party's refusal to participate in ADR when making the award.

**NOTE:** Failure by any member of the association to comply with the alternative dispute resolution requirements of Civil Code §1369.520 may result in the loss of your rights to sue the association or another member of the association regarding enforcement of the governing documents or the applicable law.