

## **Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution (ECCR) in the Federal Government Fiscal Year 2023 Agency Reporting Template**

### **Background**

On September 7, 2012, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Chairman of the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued a revised policy memorandum on environmental collaboration and conflict resolution (ECCR). This joint memo builds on, reinforces, and replaces the memo on ECR issued in 2005, and defines ECCR as:

*“ . . . third-party assisted collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution in the context of environmental, public lands, or natural resources issues or conflicts, including matters related to energy, transportation, and water and land management..... The term Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution encompasses a range of assisted collaboration, negotiation, and facilitated dialogue processes and applications. These processes directly engage affected interests and Federal department and agency decision makers in collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution.”*

The 2012 memorandum requires annual reporting by Federal Departments and Agencies to OMB and CEQ on their use of Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution and on the estimated cost savings and benefits realized through third-party assisted negotiation, mediation or other processes designed to help parties achieve agreement. The memo also encourages departments and agencies to work toward systematic collection of relevant information that can be useful in on-going information exchange across departments and agencies

The Udall Foundation's National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution (National Center) has, since 2005, collected select ECCR data on behalf of Federal Departments and Agencies. *Beginning in FY 2021, the National Center is streamlining the data it collects to reduce the reporting burden on Federal Departments and Agencies and provide the most salient information on ECCR use. This updated reporting template is focused collection of ECCR case studies and data on capacity building, including ECCR training. Case numbers and context reporting are optional.*

### **Fiscal Year 2023 Data Collection**

This annual reporting template is provided in accordance with the memo for activities in FY 2023.

The report deadline is Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Reports should be submitted to Steph Kavanaugh, NCECR Deputy Director, via e-mail at [kavanaugh@udall.gov](mailto:kavanaugh@udall.gov)

Departments should submit a single report that includes ECCR information from the agencies and other entities within the department. The information in your report will become part of a compilation of all FY 2023 ECCR reports submitted. You may be contacted for the purpose of clarifying information in your report.

For your reference, synthesis reports from past fiscal years are available at <https://www.udall.gov/OurPrograms/Institute/ECRReport.aspx>.

## 1. Agency Submission Information

Name of Department/Agency responding:	Department of Veterans Affairs
Name and Title/Position of person responding:	David Wagner/Director, Energy, Environment, and Fleet Program Service
Division/Office of person responding:	Office of Asset Enterprise Management
Contact information (phone/email):	David.cw.wagner@va.gov
Date this report is being submitted:	January 26, 2024
Name of ECCR Forum Representative	Catherine Johnson

## 2. ECCR Capacity Building and Investment:

Describe any **NEW, CHANGED, or ACTIVELY ONGOING** steps taken by your department or agency to build programmatic and institutional capacity for environmental collaboration and conflict resolution in FY 2023, including progress made since FY 2023.

Please also include any efforts to establish routine procedures for considering ECCR in specific situations or categories of cases, including any efforts to provide institutional support for non-assisted collaboration efforts.

Please refer to the mechanisms and strategies presented in Section 5 and attachment C of the [OMB-CEQ ECCR Policy Memo](#) for additional guidance on what to include here. Examples include but are not restricted to efforts to:

- Integrate ECCR objectives into agency mission statements, Government Performance and Results Act goals, and strategic planning;
  - Assure that your agency's infrastructure supports ECCR;
  - Invest in support, programs, or trainings; and focus on accountable performance and achievement.
  - ECCR programmatic FTEs
  - Dedicated ECCR budgets
  - Funds spent on contracts to support ECCR cases and programs
- a) Please refer to your agency's FY 2022 report to only include new, changed or actively ongoing ECCR investments or capacity building. **If none, leave this section blank.**

Historically, there have not been a significant number of VA projects where environmental collaboration and conflict resolution (ECCR) would be appropriate. However, VA is committed to increasing the use of collaborative decision-making and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes. VA is actively advocating the use of mediation and other ADR processes and ensuring that reliable, credible, technical, and scientific information is available to stakeholders that are engaged in collaborative resource management efforts.

VA continues to implement VA Directive 5978, Alternative Dispute Resolution which specifically addresses environmental conflict resolution. The directive designates the Director, Office of Asset Enterprise Management as the person responsible for VA's ECCR Program - including assuring participation of VA staff offices and Administrations in developing and implementing VA's ECCR program; promoting the use of ECCR where appropriate; and tracking and reporting on the use of ECCR within VA.

Additionally, VA seeks the input of stakeholders through public meetings for actions and projects that it anticipates will generate controversy. VA maintains an Environmental ADR Program website, <https://www.va.gov/adr/EnvADR.asp>

- b. Please describe the trainings given in your department/agency in FY 2023. Please include a list of the trainings, if possible. If known, please provide the course names and total number of people trained. Please refer to your agency's FY 2022 report to include ONLY trainings given in FY 2023. **If none, leave this section blank.**

VA did not provide any training on ECCR in FY 2023.

### 3. ECCR Case Example

Using the template below, provide a description of an ECCR case (preferably **completed** in FY 2023). If possible, focus on an interagency ECCR case. Please limit the length to **no more than 1 page**.

**Name/Identification of Problem/Conflict:** *[Please add case "title" here]*

**Overview of problem/conflict and timeline, including reference to the nature and timing of the third-party assistance, and how the ECCR effort was funded.**

VA did not utilize the ECCR process in FY 2023.

<b>Summary of how the problem or conflict was addressed using ECCR, including details of any innovative approaches to ECCR, and how the principles for engagement in ECCR outlined in the policy memo were used.</b>
N/A
<b>Identify the key beneficial outcomes of this case, including references to likely alternative decision-making forums and how the outcomes differed as a result of ECCR.</b>
N/A
<b>Please share any reflections on the lessons learned from the use of ECCR.</b>
N/A

**Other ECCR Notable Cases**

Briefly describe any other notable ECCR cases in FY 2023. **(OPTIONAL)**

**4. ECCR Case Number & Context Data (OPTIONAL)**

Context for ECCR Applications:	Case Numbers
Policy development	_____
Planning	_____
Siting and construction	_____
Rulemaking	_____
License and permit issuance	_____
Compliance and enforcement action	_____
Implementation/monitoring agreements	_____
Other (specify): _____	_____
TOTAL # of CASES	_____

Report due Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Submit report electronically to: [kavanaugh@udall.gov](mailto:kavanaugh@udall.gov)