



Application Process for Admittance to the AAA® National Roster of Arbitrators

The American Arbitration Association® (AAA) is the nation's leading provider of alternative dispute resolution services. Openings on our Roster of Arbitrators are extremely limited, based primarily on caseload needs and user preferences. The AAA only recruits individuals who have expertise in areas that align with the types of cases the AAA administers. Consequently, even candidates with strong credentials may not be added to our roster.

AAA National Roster of Arbitrators

The American Arbitration Association National Roster of Arbitrators is composed of highly accomplished arbitrators – attorneys, former state and federal court judges and professionals specializing in a diverse range of domestic and international areas. Disputes administered by the AAA typically arise out of contractual agreements and cover a wide range of industries and areas such as Technology, Healthcare, Financial Services, Franchise, Energy, Employment, Construction and numerous others.

The AAA is committed to recruiting only the most qualified and exceptional arbitrators – possessing judicial capacity, temperament and extensive industry knowledge, experience and acceptability to parties. Candidates applying to the roster are typically prominent in their fields and have subject matter expertise in areas where arbitration is often used as an alternative form of dispute resolution. Candidates' backgrounds should also reflect experience in arbitration and/or other forms of dispute resolution. Parties to cases select arbitrators through a strike and rank process from lists provided by the AAA or by using an online platform that allows parties to search the entire AAA Roster. Therefore, as part of adding highly qualified arbitrators to its roster, the AAA seeks to recruit candidates whom parties will find attractive to serve on their cases.

Factors considered when recruiting for the AAA Roster also include consideration of the status of existing AAA regional caseloads that might support the expertise of a candidate. A region may or may not currently have the need for arbitrators with certain areas of expertise depending on that analysis.

Candidates should consider and be aware that there are costs and obligations associated with being a member of the AAA Roster, which include an annual panel fee to underwrite the administrative and technology cost of services provided to roster members, as well as annual arbitrator continuing-education requirements. Therefore, candidates who are not likely to be selected by parties to serve on cases should not be on the roster inasmuch as they will find the cost and requirements of being on the roster unacceptable.



Application Process

The following steps are followed as part of the application process:

1. Personal Letter and Resume

Candidates who meet the requirements outlined in the below “Threshold Criteria” section may submit a letter to their local AAA office explaining why they would like to be included on the AAA Roster of Arbitrators along with a copy of their personal resume or CV. The letter should, among other things: 1) describe the candidate’s experience and specific subject matter expertise, 2) detail the candidate’s training and/or experience in arbitration or other forms of dispute resolution, and 3) explain why the candidate believes parties would strongly consider or select them to serve as an arbitrator. The letter should also provide a detailed description of the candidate’s willingness to commit themselves to serving and representing the association and whether the candidate is currently a neutral with any other ADR agencies.

2. In-person Meeting or Teleconference

If after reviewing the candidate’s personal letter and resume the AAA determines that there is a need in the region for someone with the candidate’s background and subject-matter expertise and that the candidate would otherwise be a strong addition to the roster based on experience, accomplishments and reputation, an in-person meeting or teleconference with the candidate will be scheduled.

3. Nomination Letter

If the AAA determines that caseloads administered by the AAA would likely benefit from the candidate’s membership on the roster, the candidate will be requested to have someone prominent in their field submit a nomination letter to the AAA recommending the candidate for inclusion on the roster. Such letter should, among other things, address the candidate’s “judicial capacity,” how the candidate’s addition would enhance the quality of the AAA Roster and typically come from someone with a background in litigation or alternative dispute resolution. Letters of Recommendation will also be requested (described below).

4. Letters of Recommendation

When requested by the AAA to do so, the candidate should furnish letters from at least three active professionals in their field, but outside any firms or professional associations in which the candidate is employed or on which the candidate currently serves as an officer, director, or trustee. Such letters should attest to the candidate’s reputation for integrity, fairness and good judgment and must also address the following:

- a. Nature and duration of the relationship
- b. Why the applicant would be qualified to serve



Recommended sources for letters:

1. Current AAA Panel Members
2. Current or former state or federal judge
3. An attorney who served as opposing counsel
4. Former employer or client

**Letters of recommendation must be sent directly to the AAA Vice President from the writers.*

Advancing to the Roster

When a candidate has been provisionally accepted to the AAA Roster, the candidate will:

1. Create a Panelist Resume using an AAA template or complete a Resume Information Form provided by the AAA.
2. Review and sign the *Standards and Responsibilities for Members of the AAA Roster of Arbitrators and Mediators*.
3. Attend and successfully complete the two-day *Arbitration Fundamentals and Best Practices for New AAA Arbitrators* program and an online *Award Writing* course. (The *Arbitration Fundamentals* program is offered in various U.S. cities at which the attendees are evaluated by faculty consisting of a tenured arbitrator and AAA executive. Candidates will not be active on the AAA Roster unless they successfully complete these initial training programs.)

Threshold Criteria

Candidates for membership on the AAA National Roster of Arbitrators must meet or exceed the following threshold requirements:*

1. Qualifications

- a. Minimum of 15 years of senior level legal, business or professional experience
- b. Educational degree(s) and/or professional license(s) appropriate to your field of expertise
- c. Honors, awards and citations indicating leadership in your field
- d. Training or experience in arbitration and/or other forms of dispute resolution
- e. Membership in a professional association(s)
- f. Other relevant experience or accomplishments (e.g., published articles)



2. Neutrality

- a. Freedom from bias and prejudice
- b. Thorough and impartial evaluation of testimony and other evidence

3. Reputation

- a. Held in the highest regard by peers for integrity, fairness and good judgment
- b. Dedicated to upholding the AAA Code of Ethics for Arbitrators in Commercial Disputes

4. Commitment to ADR Process

- a. Willingness to devote time and effort when selected to serve
- b. Willingness to support efforts of the AAA
- c. Willingness to successfully complete training under the guidelines of the Commercial Arbitration Development Program

** Candidates for admittance to the AAA Panel of Construction Arbitrators must meet the threshold requirements set forth in the Qualification Criteria and Responsibilities for Members of the AAA Panel of Construction Arbitrators, Candidates for admittance to the AAA Panel of Employment Arbitrators must meet or exceed the threshold requirements set forth in the Qualification Criteria and Responsibilities for Members of the AAA Panel of Employment Arbitrators.*