

**61—17.4(654A,654B) Duties.** The duties of the mediation service under these rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

**17.4(1) *Training.*** The mediation service shall provide training in mediation techniques to all mediators utilized by the mediation service. This training shall include at least 32 hours of initial training on the mediation process, mediation skills and agricultural farm finance issues. At the director's discretion the training period may be adapted for previously trained mediators. The mediation service shall provide training for mediators who assist in handling care and feeding contract, nuisance, and preliminary wetlands designation disputes.

**17.4(2) *Support.*** The mediation service shall provide support for each mediator. For purposes of these rules, support includes, but is not limited to, technical assistance in complying with these rules and applicable statutes, clerical support and supplies as necessary.

**17.4(3) *Compensation.*** The mediation service shall provide compensation for mediators at a rate of no more than \$25 per hour and at a rate and in a manner as prescribed by the board of the mediation services. The board shall also verify and reimburse expenses incurred by the mediators, including mileage and telephone expenses upon submission of verified expense claims.

**17.4(4) *Additional personnel.*** The mediation service may train and utilize additional personnel to act in assisting farmers, creditors, farm residents, affected landowners, the department of natural resources and other parties in preparing for mediation. The board of the mediation service may provide for payment or reimbursement of specified expenses to these personnel upon the submission of verified expense claims.

**17.4(5) *Coordination of efforts.*** The mediation service shall coordinate its efforts with those of the Legal Services Corporation of Iowa and the ASSIST program of the Iowa State University extension service.

**17.4(6) *Forms.*** The mediation service shall adopt and utilize the forms described in these rules and provide these forms through its offices and mediators. These forms may be altered with the prior approval of the farm assistance program coordinator.