

**WAC 391-55-211 Special provision—Interest arbitration—Selection of neutral chairperson for state.** (1) Preceding the commencement of negotiations for bargaining units eligible for interest arbitration under RCW 41.56.028, 41.56.029, 41.56.475, 41.56.510, 41.56.516, 41.80.200, 41.80.310, 47.64.300, or 74.39A.270 (2)(c), but no later than February 1st of each even-numbered year, the parties shall utilize the following procedure to select a neutral chairperson unless an alternative process is specified by law or has been mutually agreed upon by the parties:

(a) If the parties agree on the selection of a neutral chairperson, they shall obtain a commitment from that person to serve and shall notify the executive director of the identity of the chairperson.

(b) If the parties agree to have the agency appoint a staff member as the neutral chairperson, they shall submit a written joint request to the executive director. The parties are not entitled to influence the designation of a neutral chairperson under this subsection and may not, either in writing or by other communication, attempt to indicate any preference for or against any person as the neutral chairperson to be appointed by the agency. Upon the submission of a request, the executive director shall appoint a neutral chairperson from the agency staff.

(c) If the parties desire to select a neutral chairperson from a panel of arbitrators, they shall attempt to agree as to whether the public employment relations commission, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, or the American Arbitration Association will supply the list of arbitrators. If the choice of agency is agreed, either party or the parties jointly shall request a panel of at least five arbitrators specifying that the request is for interest arbitration proceedings under the applicable statute. Referrals and selection from the public employment relations commission's dispute resolution panel must be made as provided in WAC 391-75-020. Referrals and selection from other panels must be made under the rules of the agency supplying the list of arbitrators. The parties shall notify the executive director of the identity of the neutral chairperson.

(d) If the parties have not notified the executive director of their selection of a neutral chairperson within 28 days after February 1st of each even-numbered year, or requested an extension of time to complete the selection process, the parties are deemed to have waived the procedures in (a) through (c) of this subsection. The executive director shall issue a list of dispute resolution panel members and the neutral chairperson must be selected as provided in WAC 391-75-020.

(2) Once a neutral chairperson is selected, the parties shall work with the neutral chairperson to select a mutually agreeable hearing date(s) and location. This information must be transmitted to the executive director within 30 days of it being finalized.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.52.080, 41.56.090, 41.58.050, 41.59.110, 41.76.060, 41.80.080, 47.64.135, and 49.39.060. WSR 22-23-101, § 391-55-211, filed 11/16/22, effective 1/1/23.]