FINRA Arbitrator Application

User Guide

January 2013

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How Do I Get Started?

The Become an Arbitrator Web pages contain information about completing the application either electronically or by paper. Instructions for both methods are provided here.

Compatible Browsers

The DR Portal is compatible with the following browsers: Internet Explorer 8 and higher; Firefox 13 and higher; and Google Chrome.

Electronic Arbitrator Application

You will begin the application process by first registering with FINRA.

1. On the Become an Arbitrator page, there is an Apply Here link. Click on the link, and you will be taken to the "**Welcome to Dispute Resolution**" login page where you have the option to log into or create your FINRA account.

2. Click on "**Register Now**" to create a new user profile.

3. Enter the registration information. The email address that you use in this initial registration form will be the email that is reflected as your primary email address with FINRA Dispute Resolution. If you need to update your email address with FINRA, you will need to make this change when you log in the portal—this change cannot be made by FINRA staff. Once all information is entered, press "**Submit**."

4. You will receive a "**Registration Confirmation**" with your User ID. Be sure to write down your User ID and/or print this screen. If you leave this screen and cannot remember your user name, you will need to re-register.

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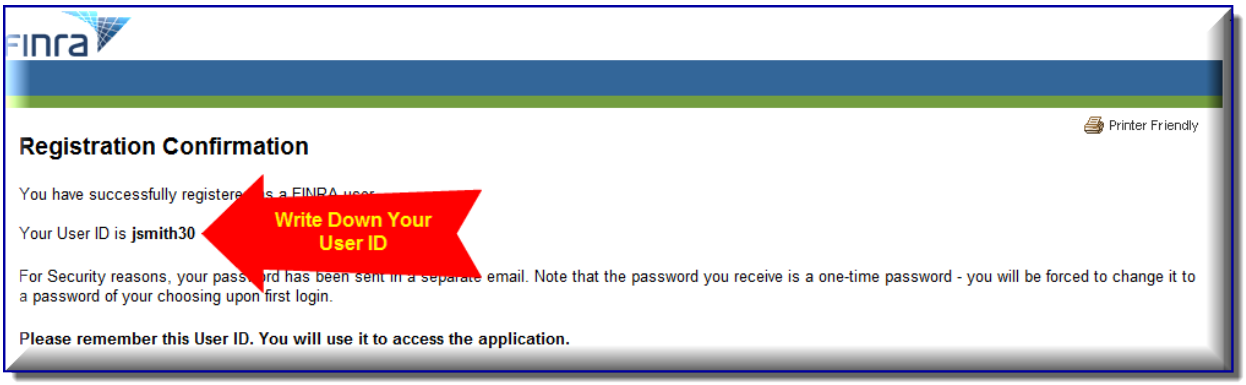

5. You will be sent an email with a temporary password. Copy the password and click on the words "**this link**" in the email to change your password.

6. Once on the "**Welcome to Dispute Resolution**" page, enter your user ID and temporary password and click "**I agree**."

7. You will be prompted to reset your password. Once you reset your password click "**Continue**."

8. You will receive a message "**Welcome to the FINRA Dispute Resolution Portal**." Click on the link to access the portal.

9. You can access the online arbitrator application from FINRA.org after completing the initial registration step. Neutrals can also create a "favorite" or "bookmark" in their browser for easy access to the application site. We recommend that you create the bookmark **after** you successfully log into the portal. You should use the following URL as the bookmark to access your application:
   http://www.finra.org/BecomeAnArbitrator/OnlineApplication

Paper Arbitrator Application

Applicants may choose to complete a paper application. The application is available on the Become an Arbitrator page. Applicants will need to download the PDF document and either handwrite or type the application and mail it with the necessary documents and payment.

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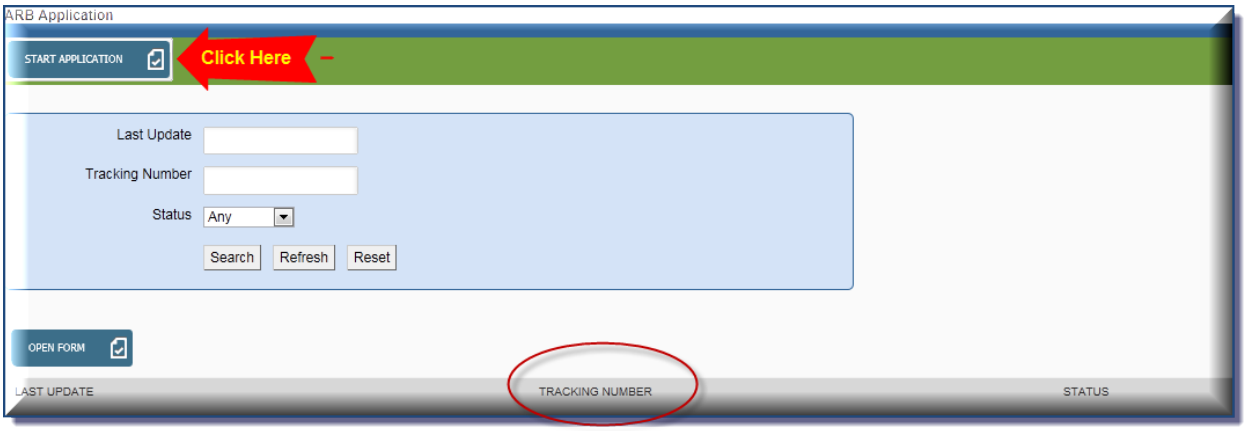
Getting Started With the Application

After you log into FINRA's system, you will see the following page. To start a new application, click on "**Start Application**" and that will take you to a new application form. A new "**Tracking Number**" will be assigned to the form that you open.



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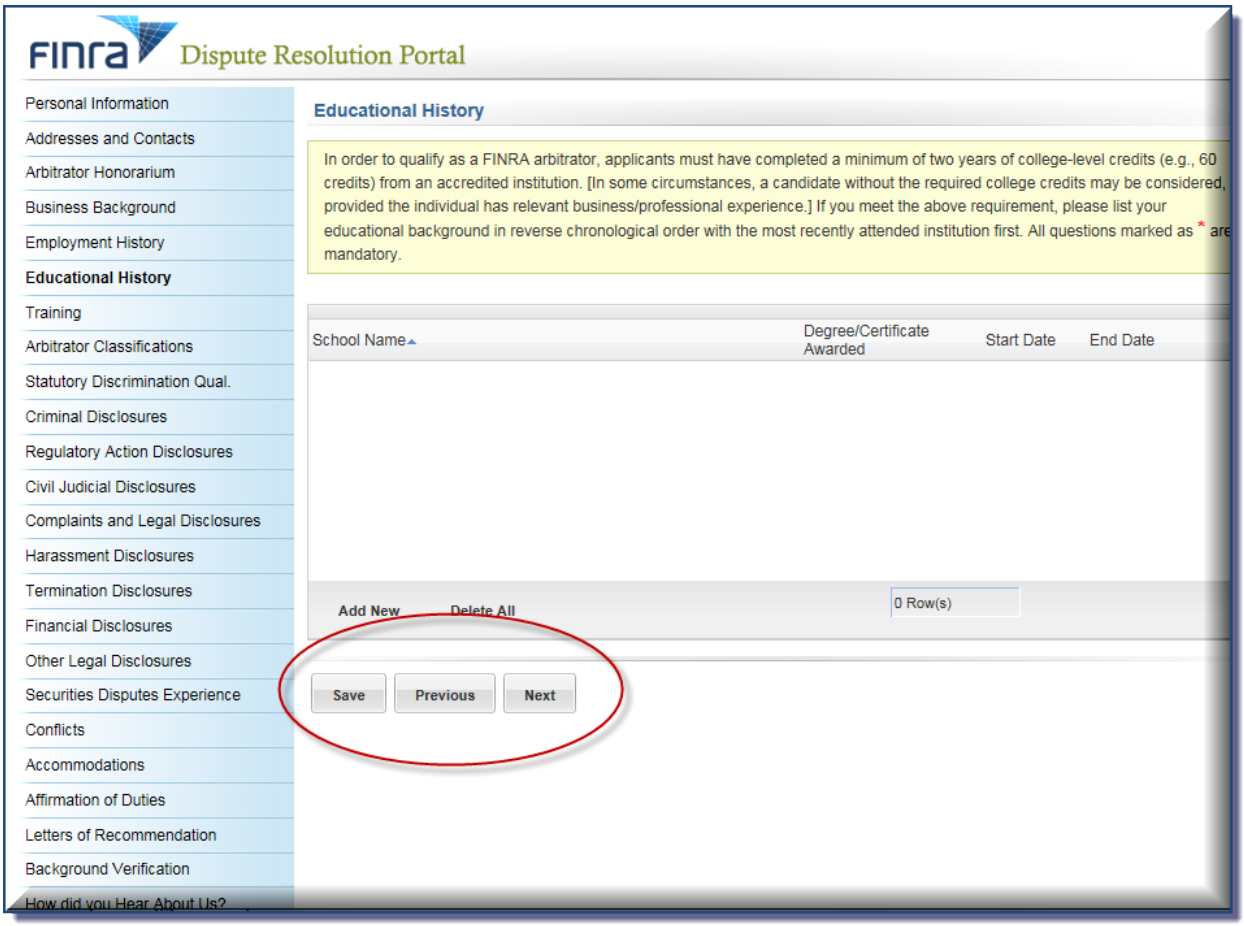
Completing the Application Form

You will need to complete each section of the application. On the left hand side, you will see a heading for each section. Each separate section will contain specific instructions at the top of the page. All questions with a red asterisk (*) are required.



Saving Information

You may complete the form in any order. For example, you can fill out the Personal information and then skip to the Employment section. After you enter information for any section, be sure to **save** your progress.

You can also work through the form in the order presented. After you enter information for a section, be sure to either **save** your progress or press NEXT to go onto the next section. By pressing **next**, the system will automatically save your progress. The system will also save your progress if you press **previous**.

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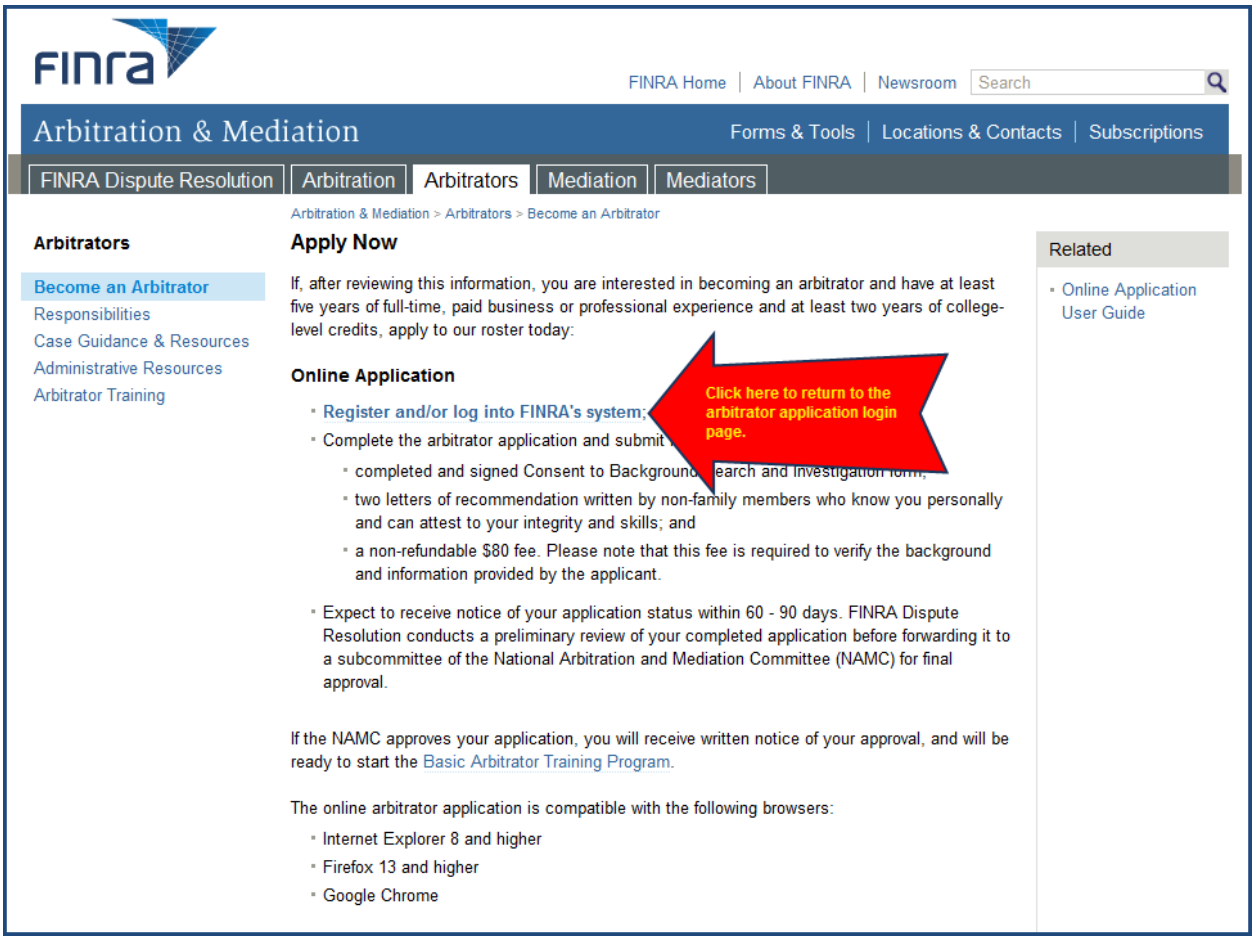
Returning to a Previous Draft

The application is lengthy, so you may not be able to complete it one session. You have the option of saving the application with the information entered and logging back into your account to complete it at a later time. You would need to log back into FINRA's system at www.finra.org/BecomeAnArbitrator and go to the Apply Now page:



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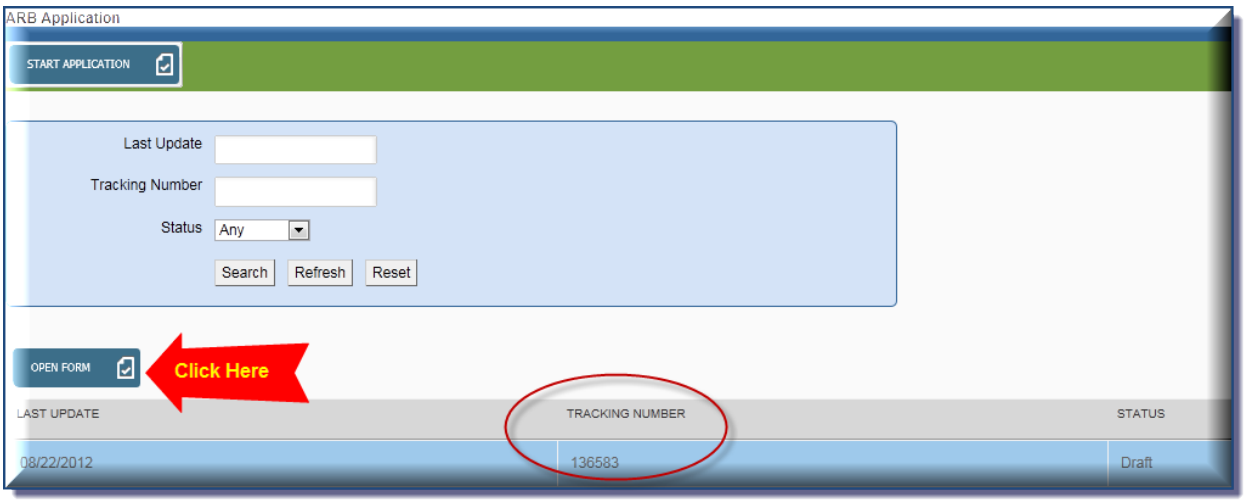
When you log back into your account, you will see your "**filing cabinet.**" You should see one draft of the application that you started. To return to the application, click anywhere on the row that contains details about your draft. After the row is highlighted, click "**Open Form**," and this will take you back to your application.



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Application: Section by Section

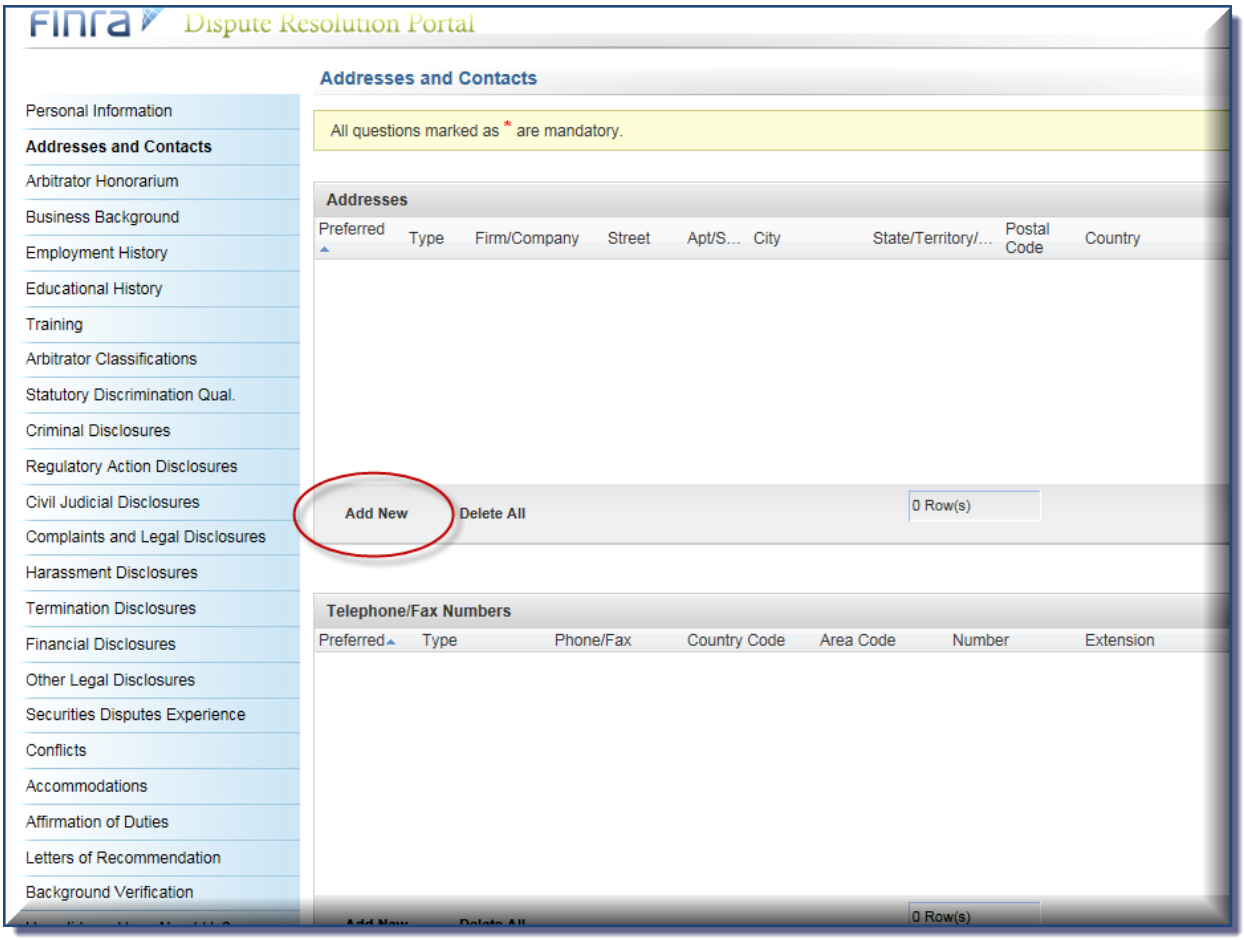
Personal Information

Enter basic, personal information such as name, Social Security number, etc. You will notice that your login ID and email are already included. This information is automatically added to your application upon registering with FINRA. Once you are done entering information on this screen, click SAVE or NEXT.

Addresses and Contacts

Enter your current addresses. You may enter more than one, for example, you can enter you home address as well as your work address. If you have multiple residences where you split your time during the year, you can add those addresses. Once you enter this information, you can designate which address should serve as your preferred address. This will be the address that FINRA sends you correspondence—both case related and general roster maintenance.

To add an address or telephone/fax, press "**Add New**"



When you are done entering information, click "**Add Row**" to add this information to your application.

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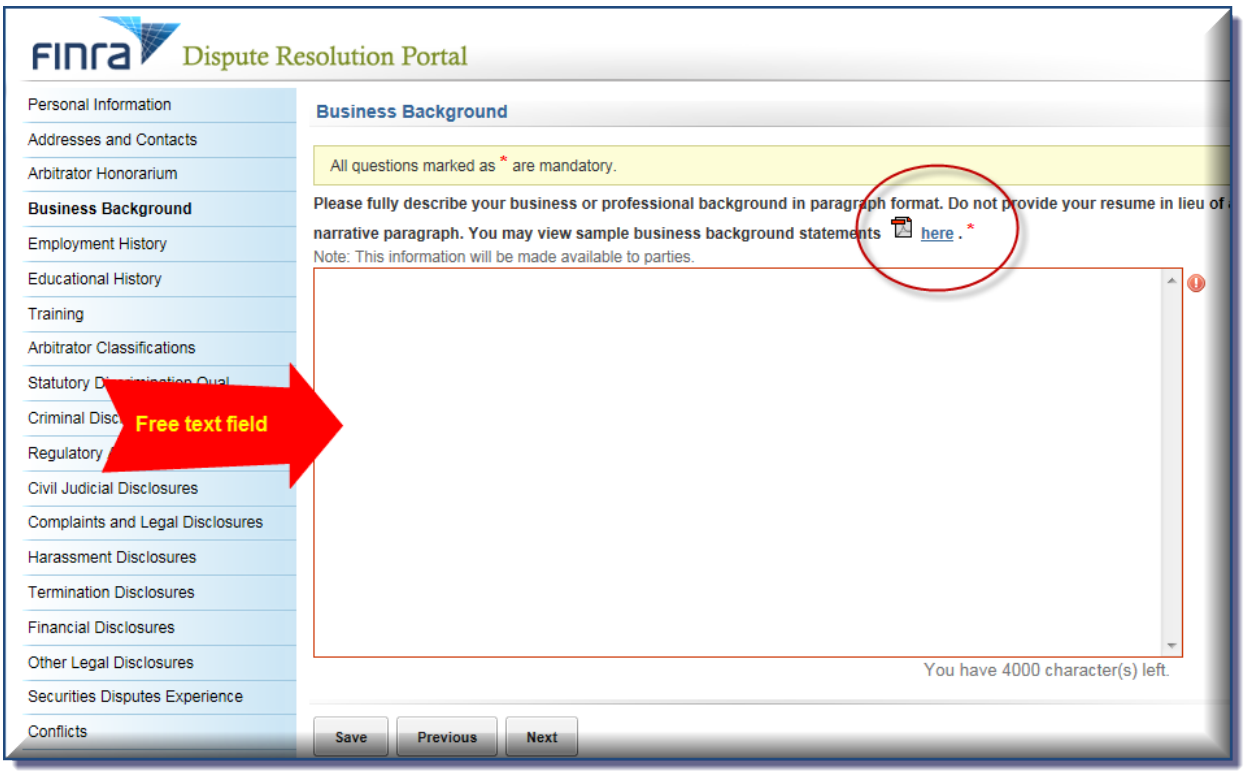
Arbitration Honorarium

Arbitrators are paid an honorarium according to Rule 12214 of the FINRA Code of Arbitration Procedure. Arbitrators must not set their own rates. Arbitrators serving on FINRA's roster are bound by FINRA's honorarium rate.

You may choose to have the honorarium paid to you or your employer. You may also choose to waive the honorarium.

Business Background

In this section, you should include a narrative of your professional background—in paragraph format. Do not provide your resume in lieu of a narrative paragraph. You can click on the PDF icon to see sample business statements. This text is added—exactly as you submit it here—to your disclosure report that is distributed to parties during the arbitrator selection process. You can type this information directly into the free text field or cut and paste from an existing document. You will, however, NOT be able to attach a document.



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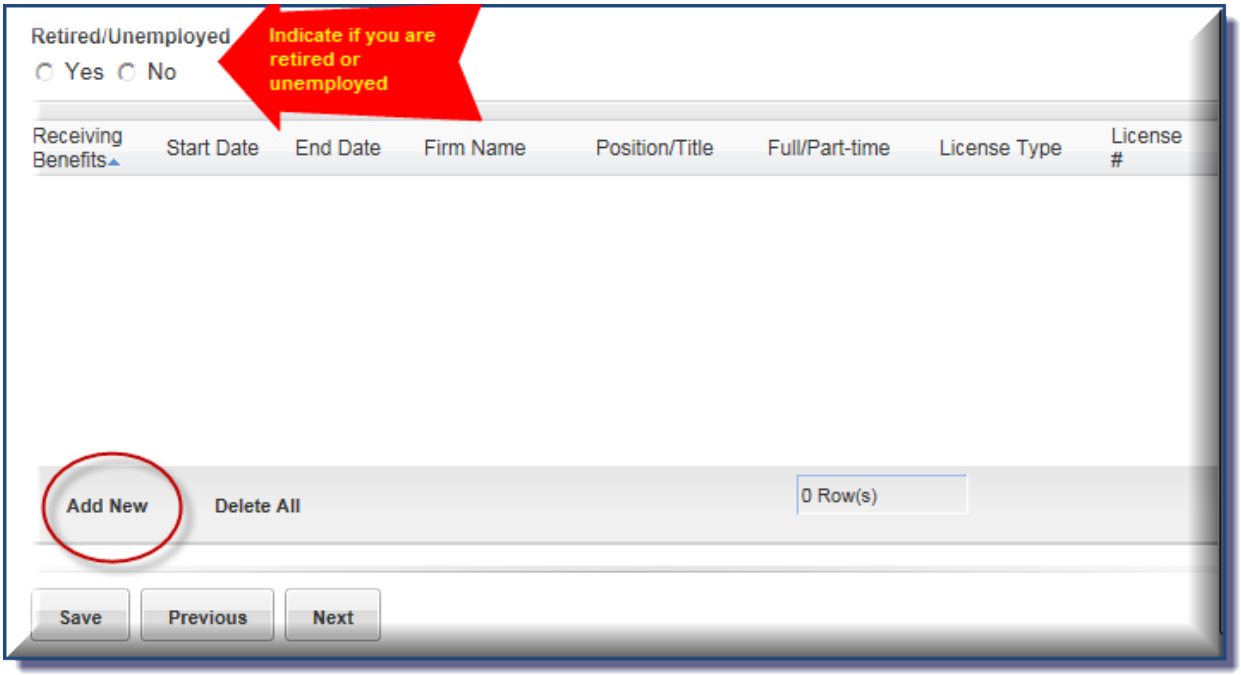
Employment History

In order to qualify as a FINRA arbitrator, applicants must have a minimum of five years of business and/or professional experience. Enter all employment that you have held since having completed your education. You cannot leave any gaps of more than 30 days. Therefore, if you were unemployed or taking a sabbatical, you must enter those time periods as "unemployed" so there are no gaps in your work history.

1. Click "**Add New**" to add employment and complete the required fields. You must enter the month and year (format: 11/1111) of your employment.
2. Indicate if you are retired or unemployed.
3. Indicate if you continue to receive benefits from a prior employer. For example, if you are no longer employed by a firm but continue to receive benefits such as health insurance, pension, office space, administrative, services, etc., you should indicate that you continue to receive benefits.



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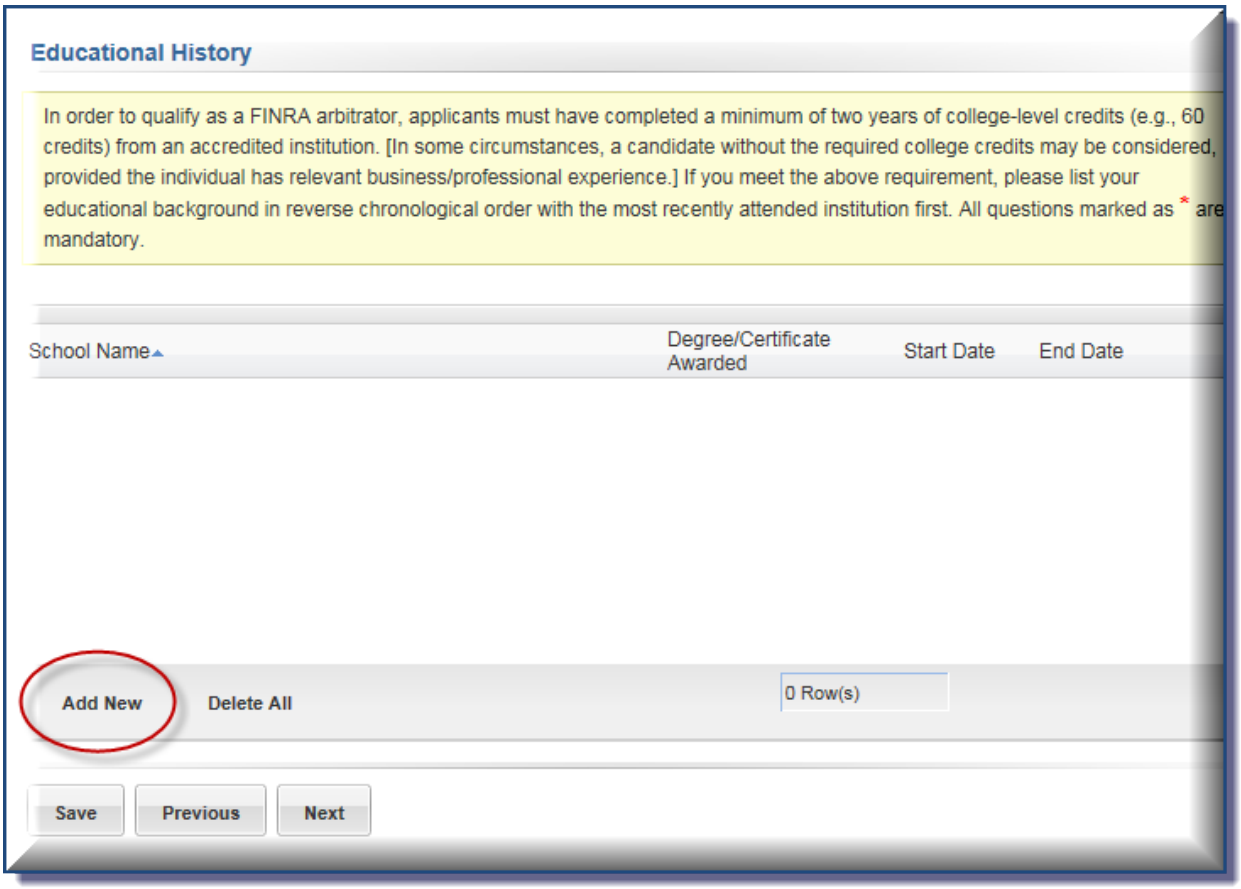
Educational History

In order to qualify as a FINRA arbitrator, applicants must have completed a minimum of two years of college-level credits (e.g., 60 credits) from an accredited institution. [In some circumstances, a candidate without the required college credits may be considered, provided the individual has relevant business/professional experience.].

1. List your educational background in reverse chronological order with the most recently attended institution first.

2. Click "**Add New**" to add education information and complete the required fields. You must enter the month and year (format: 11/1111) of your education.



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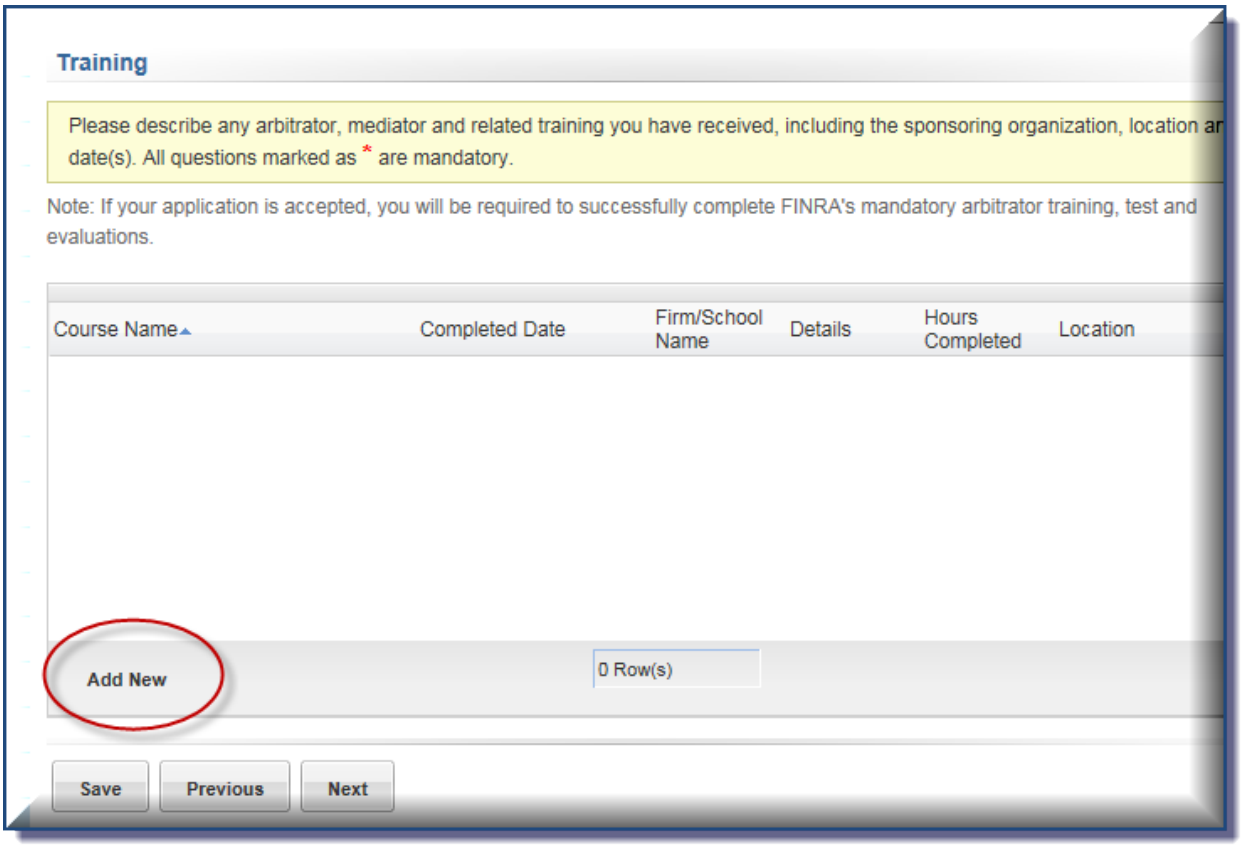
Training

Please enter any arbitration, mediation and related training you have received, including the sponsoring organization, location and date(s).

Click "**Add New**" to add training information and complete the required fields. You must enter the month and year (format: 11/1111) of your education.



Arbitrator Classifications

Arbitrators are classified as either "**Public**" or "**Non-Public**" pursuant to the FINRA Code of Arbitration Procedure Rules 12100/13100 (p) and (u). Potential applicants should review these rules before applying to the roster, as some individuals may not meet the requirements for either classification and are therefore, ineligible to serve.

Answer each question and check the box to affirm the accuracy of your answers.

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Statutory Discrimination Qualifications

If you are an attorney, and if you wish to qualify to serve as chairperson for statutory employment discrimination cases, please answer each question in this section. You will also need to provide explanation of your experience with statutory employment discrimination cases. You can type in your text in the provided space.

Legal or Regulatory Disclosures

This section requires disclosures in the following areas:

- Criminal Disclosures
- Regulatory Action Disclosures
- Civil Judicial Disclosures
- Complaints and Legal Disclosures
- Harassment Disclosures
- Termination Disclosures
- Financial Disclosures
- Other Legal Disclosures

If you answer "yes" to any of the questions in this section, please explain the circumstances or attach a copy of the appropriate legal documentation. Provide details, including case numbers, dates, damages requested and awarded, disposition, settlement amounts, etc. Any affirmative answers will be closely reviewed by the Director. The explanation for the answer may be disclosed to the parties. Please see the criteria for temporary and permanent disqualification.

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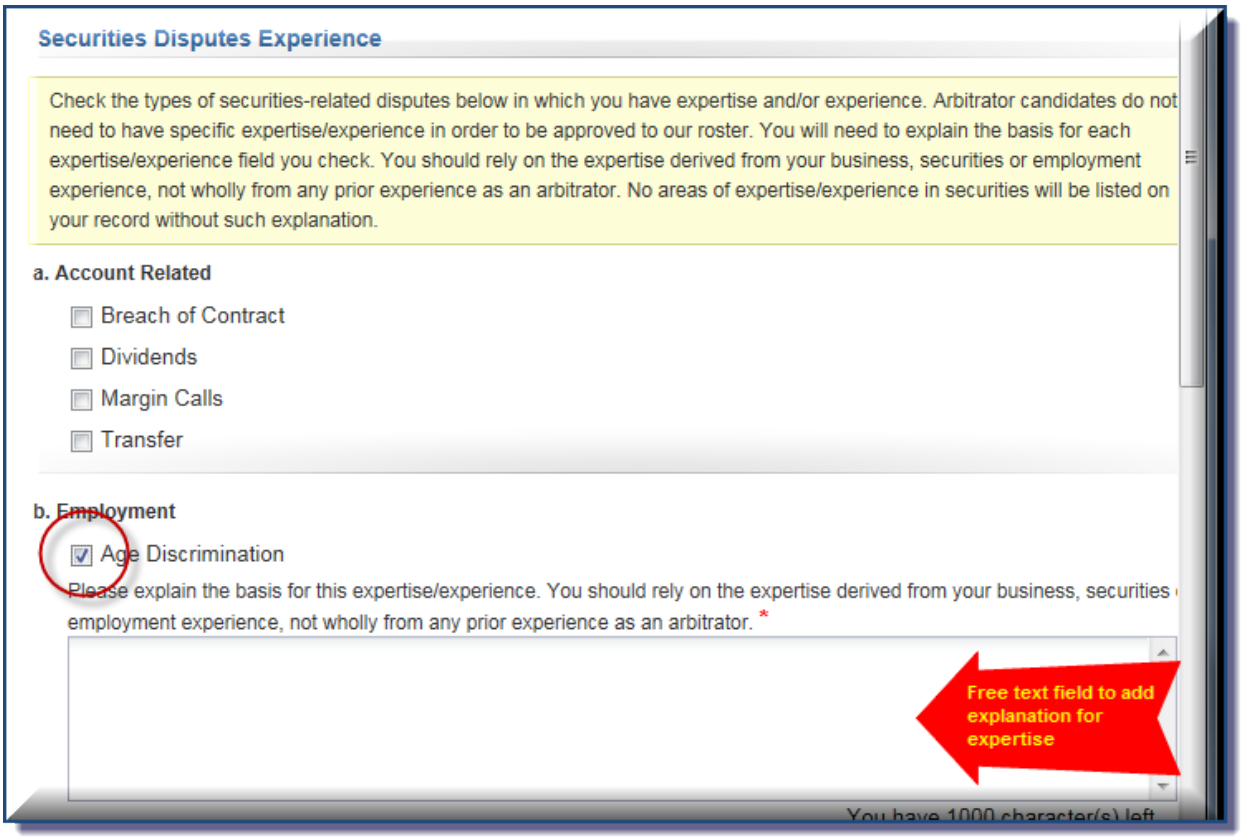
Securities Disputes Experience

Arbitrator candidates do not need to have specific securities expertise/experience in order to be approved to our roster. However, if you have a particular expertise, you may include this on your application.

You will need to explain the basis for each expertise/experience field you check. You should rely on the expertise derived from your business, securities or employment experience, not wholly from any prior experience as an arbitrator.

If you check a particular expertise, a text box will appear and you must enter an explanation. No areas of expertise/experience in securities will be listed on your record without an explanation.



Conflicts

Please list all known conflicts/disclosures and the nature of the conflict/disclosure. If you are accepted as an arbitrator, you will be under a continuing obligation to update this information and must disclose new relationships as they arise. Answer all questions that apply to you as completely as possible. If appropriate, include the member firm's CRD number in your answer.

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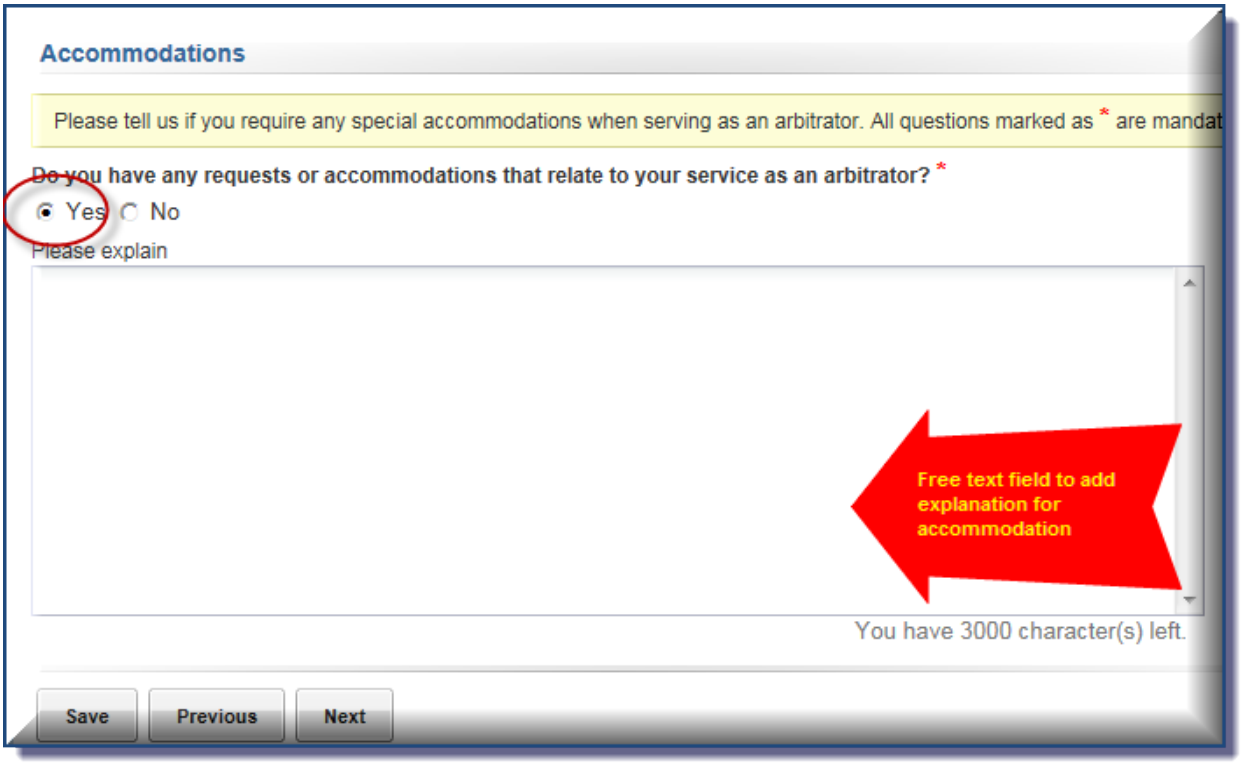
Accommodations

Enter information about any accommodations you may require when serving as an arbitrator.



Affirmation of Duties

After reviewing the affirmation and the terms and conditions of serving as a FINRA arbitrator, you must answer each question in this section confirming your understanding and acceptance. In addition, you must review the Arbitrator Honorarium FAQ, Arbitrator Disqualification Criteria and the definitions of a "public" arbitrator and "non-public" arbitrator in Rule 12100(p) and (u) and check the box to affirm that you understand these materials.'

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Letters of Recommendation

You must attach two letters of recommendation, neither of which may be from a family member. The letters of recommendation must include the **writer's name and address** and, at a minimum, indicate how long the writer has known the applicant and under what circumstances; include a description of the applicant's experience that qualifies him/her to be an arbitrator; and include an attestation to the applicant's character and fitness.

If the letter is from a Self-Regulatory Organization (SRO) or other dispute resolution forum, it should indicate that the applicant is an arbitrator in good standing. Note: Non-FINRA arbitrators who submit a letter of recommendation on your behalf may be solicited by FINRA to join our roster.

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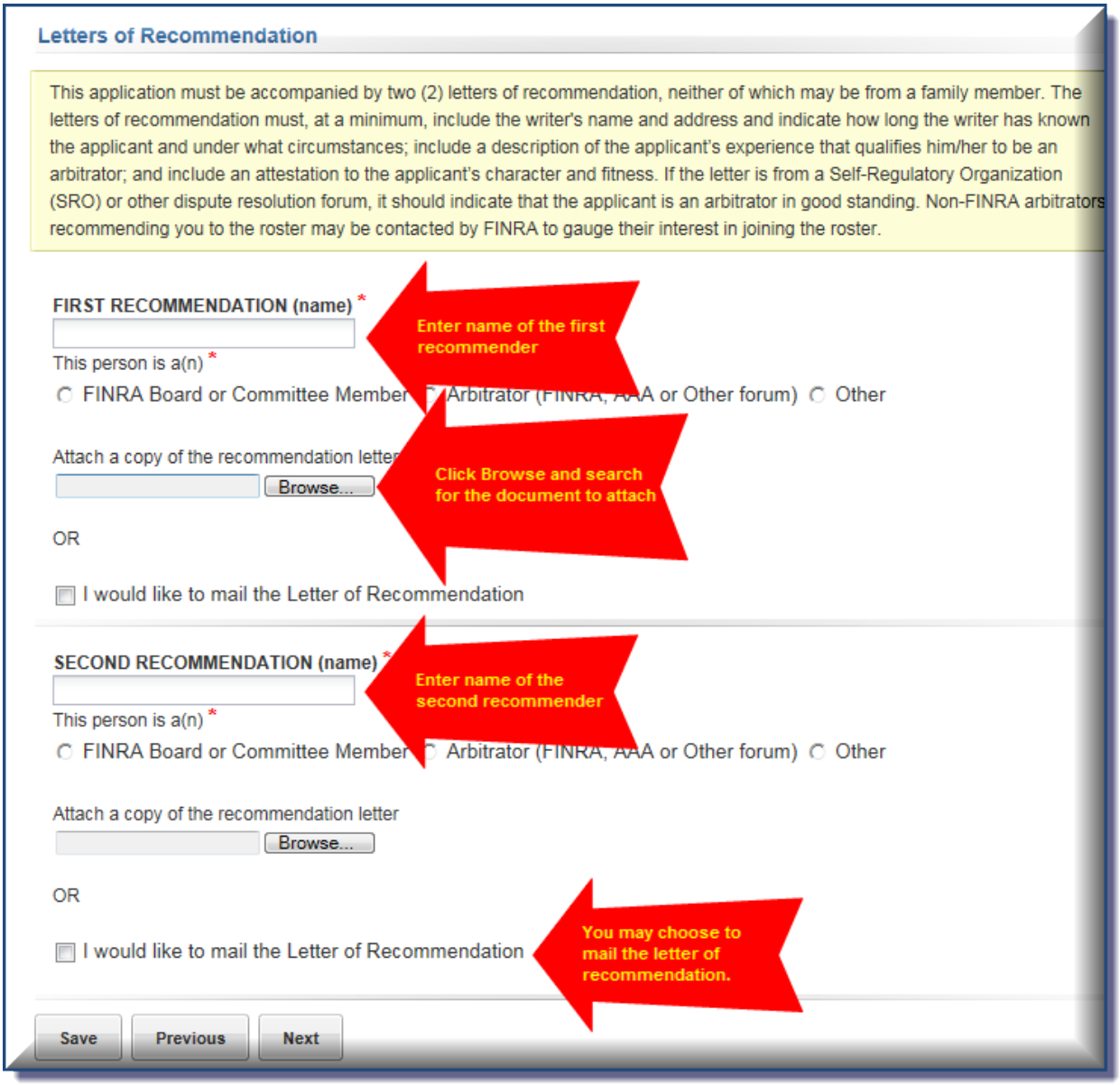
1. You must enter each recommender's name.
2. You can attach your letters by clicking "**Browse**," searching for the document on your computer and clicking "**Open**" to attach the document.
3. You may also check the box and choose to mail in the letters or have the recommenders mail the letters under separate cover.



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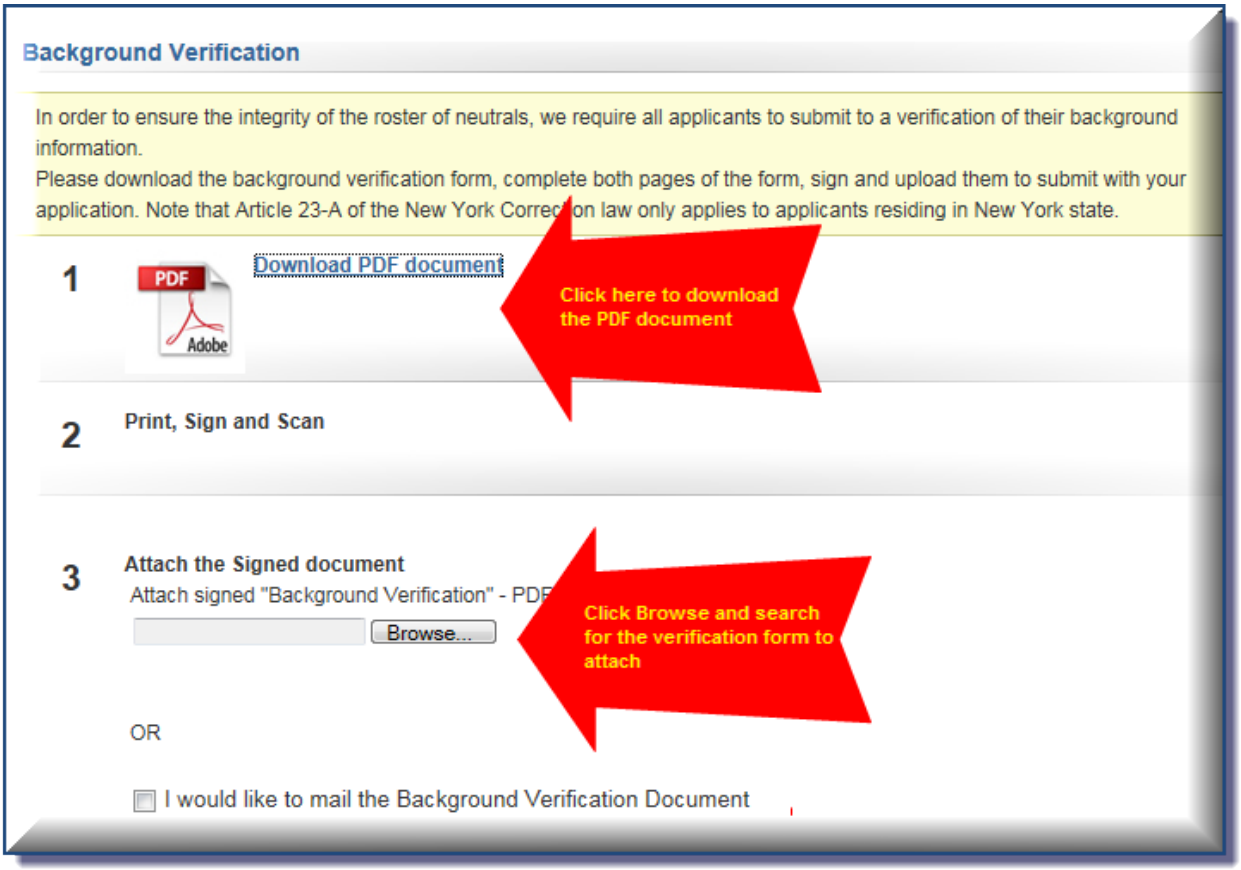
Background Verification

In order to ensure the integrity of the roster of neutrals, we require all applicants to submit to a verification of their background information. Please download the background verification form, complete both pages of the form, sign and upload them to submit with your application. Note that Article 23-A of the New York Correction law only applies to applicants residing in New York state.

1. Download the background verification form.
2. Complete both pages of the form.
3. Sign the form—the background verification vendor must have a "wet" signature (which can be scanned and emailed). No electronic signatures will be accepted.
4. Scan the form and save it to your computer.
5. Attach your letters by clicking "**Browse**," searching for the document in your computer and clicking "**Open**" to attach the document.
6. You may also check the box and choose to mail in the letters or have the recommenders mail the letters under separate cover.



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How Did You Hear About Us?

Please provide information about how you became interested in FINRA. As part of our recruiting efforts, we try to keep track of how we reach arbitrators and how they learn about FINRA.

Review and Submit

When you have completed the application and are ready to submit it, please carefully review the affirmation and sign and date the application. You may sign the form by entering you name and initials, preceded and followed by the forward slash symbol (/) (e.g., /Jane Q. Public jqp/).

When you are ready to submit your application, please click the "**Submit and Pay**" button. The system will let you know if you have not provided all required information. Assuming you have entered all the required information, you will be prompted to enter your credit card information to pay the $80 verification fee.

What Happens Next?

After you submit your application and fee, FINRA will start processing your application. FINRA will contact you if there are any questions regarding your submission. You should receive notice of your application status within **60 – 90 days**. FINRA conducts a preliminary review of your completed application before forwarding to a subcommittee of the National Arbitration and Mediation Committee (NAMC) for final approval.

Once the NAMC approves your application, you will receive written notice of your approval, and you will be ready to start the Basic Arbitrator Training Program:

1. Online basic arbitrator training course, which requires successful completion of an online test (25 multiple choice exam that requires 80% passing score).
2. Online expungement course, which requires completion of an online test (10 True/False).
3. Live video or onsite classroom training that requires successful evaluation by the trainer.

Additional Resources

For questions about the application, you can contact FINRA's Department of Neutral Management at ArbAppHelp@finra.org or at (212) 858-3999 or toll free at (855) 209-1620.

For information about FINRA Dispute Resolution's rules and procedures, you may review the following resources:

- Code of Arbitration Procedure
- Arbitrator's Guide
- Code of Ethics for Arbitrators in Commercial Disputes

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