

2023 IMPACTS

RESOLVING DISPUTES. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES.

144,168

PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH DIRECT SERVICES, INCLUDING ERPP

37,461

YOUTH IMPACTED

3,066

DISTRICT, SUPERIOR, TRIBAL & JUVENILE COURT CASES MEDIATED

15,796

MEDIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION CASES

8,451

COMMUNITY MEMBERS TRAINED



EVICITION RESOLUTION PILOT PROGRAM IMPACT

*Where outcome known.

NOVEMBER 2021 - JUNE 2023

208,847

PEOPLE SERVED WITH ERPP (TENANTS AND LANDLORDS)

72%

OF ERPP MEDIATIONS SETTLED

94%

OF TENANTS CONTINUED TENANCY*



Resolution Washington and the state's 21 Dispute Resolution Centers empower people to resolve disputes with community-based mediation services and training. Building the skills to navigate conflict and communicate about disagreements profoundly strengthens our relationships, our workplaces, and our communities.

"The courts of this country should not be the place where resolution of disputes begins. They should be the place where disputes end after alternative methods of resolving disputes have been considered and tried."

--Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

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A MESSAGE FROM RESOLUTION WASHINGTON'S CO-PRESIDENTS

The past year was one of significant and positive change for Resolution Washington: building internal capacity, bolstering resources, engaging a new permanent Executive Director, and successfully closing the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP) when the state statute expired in June 2023.



Throughout the two years of the ERPP, our state's Dispute Resolution Centers (DRCs) supported the largest program in our association's history—serving over two hundred thousand people with housing stability services and providing a path for trauma-informed access to justice outside of the court system. The ERPP heightened awareness of the value and efficacy of a collaborative conflict resolution model. It simultaneously built momentum to continue to foster innovative ways to serve our communities from growing restorative practices to creatively integrating dispute resolution into policy and services.

In recognition of the powerful impact DRCs have demonstrated, the Washington state legislature further invested in the wellbeing of communities statewide by maintaining funding for core dispute resolution services, training, and access to justice—foundational support for addressing conflict in our communities.

Leveraging these moments of growth and development, Resolution Washington is engaged in long-term work to expand the potential of dispute resolution and strengthen our collective impact and offerings across the state. Over the last year, we have:

- Engaged in internal collaborative dialogue on complex issues that impact our services, clients, and communities including equity, working with trauma, and housing stability.
- Strengthened cross-DRC learning and collaboration on best practices, effective programs, and community partnerships including case management, program development, and issue-area expertise.
- Enhanced our data collection to better evaluate impact and understand clients' needs and outcomes.
- Continued to work toward equity implementation throughout the network, including a toolkit for decision-making with an equity lens, internal review, and statewide training.

As our state and local communities continue to grapple with some of the most pressing and challenging issues we've encountered, we see in this moment an opportunity. The more we can invest in bringing people together across differences, in building skills to navigate conflict with curiosity and grace, and in seeking effective ways to integrate effective, proactive, and preventative strategies for resolving conflict, the more peace we can foster throughout our entire state. We invite you to join with us as we work to strengthen awareness and adoption of effective dispute resolution models statewide and transform conflict into opportunity throughout our communities.

CO-PRESIDENTS
Resolution Washington



Donnell Austin

Donnell Austin
Volunteers of America
Dispute Resolution
Center of Snohomish,
Island & Skagit County

Moonwater

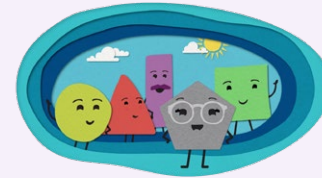
Moonwater
Whatcom Dispute
Resolution Center

EARLY HOUSING DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND THE EVICTION RESOLUTION PILOT PROGRAM

A first-of-its-kind program, the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP) brought landlords and tenants with rent owed together to resolve issues prior to an eviction filing. Established by the state legislature under RCW 59.18.660, the ERPP helped reduce evictions and burdens on courts from a potential landslide of unlawful detainer actions during the pandemic.

The state's 21 Dispute Resolution Centers (DRCs) served more than 208,000 tenants and landlords across the state through the ERPP from when the statewide eviction moratorium ended October 31, 2021, to June 30, 2023. ERPP services were offered for free and regardless of income and immigration status. A wide majority of clients served by the ERPP (73%) were at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level* and 36% reported a race or ethnicity other than White.**

Empowering tenants and landlords to find early resolution through access to resources, conflict resolution coaching, conciliation, and mediation, the program set a foundation for collaboration and common language between housing providers and renters and created pathways for access to justice in our communities.



**Read about the full impacts:
Early Housing Dispute Resolution during
the Pandemic: Eviction Resolution Pilot
Program Summary Report**

[Click Here](#)



The ERPP empowered people to find early resolution while addressing some of the deep challenges that the housing sector, courts, and individuals faced during the pandemic.

The ERPP:

- Helped many landlords get rent paid and maintain properties within the rental market.
- Helped tenants maintain stable housing.
- Reduced barriers to future housing that an eviction filing may cause.
- Resolved disputes without the cost and delay of going to court.
- Created a pathway to resources including rental assistance and legal aid.
- Contributed to a notable reduction in unlawful detainer dockets at Superior Courts.

* Excludes "No Response" and "unknown" categories for Race/Ethnicity and Annual Household Income.

** For reference, census data shows 32.5% of all residents statewide reported a race or ethnicity other than White.

HOUSING STABILITY SERVICES: LOOKING BEYOND ERPP

DRCs offer a continuum of cost-effective and efficient housing stability services, depending on the needs of the local community, including:

- Conflict coaching, mediation, and conciliation
- Eviction prevention
- Foreclosure negotiations
- Neighbor-to-neighbor and roommate mediations
- Multi-family housing community conflict resolution
- Housing resource coordination
- Facilitated community conversations
- Renter certification programs
- Housing stability programs for veterans
- Fair housing
- Training for housing sector professionals

DRCs have provided voluntary, dedicated housing stability programs outside of the ERPP for more than 37 years. During the pandemic, the DRCs turned significant resources, staffing, and capacity development to delivering the program to fully meet the high volume. In communities around the state, the ERPP strengthened the foundation of housing stability services already offered by DRCs, providing greater accessibility to housing services for Washingtonians. It also facilitated the expansion of local partnerships.

Housing stability services continue to be essential going forward in addressing long-term, critical housing challenges. Working with highly trained, impartial community mediators simplifies the complex processes, allowing for increased self-determination that empowers people to create solutions in their own best interests and connects them with local resources.

[The mediators] were very kind and professional and helped me and my neighbor work out some very difficult situations. Our mediation ended in a hug.

*- Neighbor-to-Neighbor Mediation Client,
Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center*

RESOLUTION WASHINGTON RESTORATIVE PRACTICES LEARNING COHORT



Resolution Washington strengthens the conflict resolution sector through collaborative learning processes among member DRCs of all sizes and across diverse communities and geography. In 2023, Resolution Washington's members formed internal learning cohorts around restorative practices—approaches that support community building, accountability, and the repair of harm.

Based on indigenous practices, restorative practices help design pathways for healing by collectively identifying and addressing harms, needs, and obligations. Restorative practices can take many forms, from informal interactions to more formal programs such as facilitated dialogue and circle processes. These approaches can help the people impacted create solutions that work for them and their respective communities. Restorative practices can be employed with youth and adults across multiple settings, including in schools and workplaces, criminal justice, and re-entry.

Local DRCs offer restorative practices in the community based on specific local needs. The learning cohorts enable DRCs to engage with peers on many different models and restorative practices, develop and share best practices, and establish restorative principles and policies. The learning cohorts also provide open space to allow themes and questions to arise, opportunities for collaboration, and dialogue on complex issues.

In 2023, Restorative Practice learning cohorts engaged on:

- *Restorative Justice Facilitated Dialogue Pilot with Drug Court - DRC of Thurston County*
- *Juvenile Department and School-based Restorative Practices - DRC of Kitsap County and Bremerton Schools*
- *Peer Mediation and Restorative Circles - King County DRC*
- *Washington Restorative Practices Policy Alignment Opportunities - DRC of Thurston County*
- *Community Violence Root Cause Analysis in Vancouver - Community Mediation Services (Clark County)*
- *Stronger Together Circles - DRC of Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties (Wahkiakum)*
- *Restorative Practices and Domestic and Sexual Violence Intersections - Whatcom DRC and Bellingham/Whatcom Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence*

Restorative Practices in the Community

Peer Mediation and Restorative Circles: Between 2019 and 2023, Tukwila School District and the Dispute Resolution Center of King County trained **127 students** to help youth resolve their own conflicts.

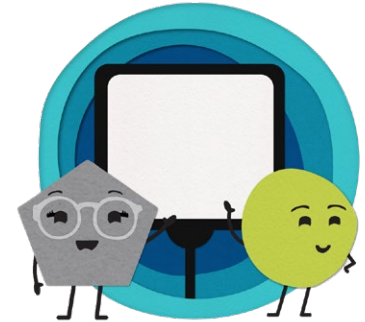
Peer Mediation graduates (who were **90+% BIPOC youth**) mediated hundreds of cases, supporting the skill development of other youth.

"It's a wonderful thing to experience as a mediator: two contentious clients begin mediation and end with deciding to meet for coffee."

--Certified Mediator, DRC of Yakima and Kittitas Counties

MEDIATION TRAINING: DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY AND COMMUNITY SKILLS

Mediation training builds capacity and capability in the community to resolve and manage conflict through effective communication skills, working with challenging behaviors, de-escalation, and facilitation. The 40-hour foundational conflict resolution curriculum, Basic Mediation Training, equips people for a practicum to become a certified mediator and teaches an interest-based, facilitative model for conflict resolution.



A core service of many DRCs, Basic Mediation Training builds community resources for conflict resolution and mediation across many sectors. After Basic Mediation Training, many participants become certified mediators by engaging in a practicum/internship program, providing mediation services not only at DRCs but also in workplaces and community organizations.

Many community members participate in Basic Mediation Training to enhance the conflict resolution skills they use in their work, homes, and communities. Across the state, local teachers, social service providers, health care and mental health providers, elected officials, businesspeople, retirees, and parents have participated in Basic Mediation Training, learning to work effectively with all conflict styles and handle challenging conversations.

DRCs also build community capacity for conflict navigation through affordable training in schools, youth programs, de-escalation and trauma-informed training, workplace conflict training, co-parenting workshops, and more. DRCs also provide advanced professional mediation training, including in family, workplace, and multi-party mediations.

**In 2023,
DRCs trained:**

378

NEW MEDIATORS

8,451

COMMUNITY MEMBERS,
INCLUDING:

1,053

YOUTH

Statewide Mediation & Conflict Resolution Training Calendar

Click Here

“

This training will change how you look at and deal with conflict. The skills I learned in Basic Mediation Training are life-changing.

-- Training participant, Grays Harbor & Pacific Counties Dispute Resolution Center

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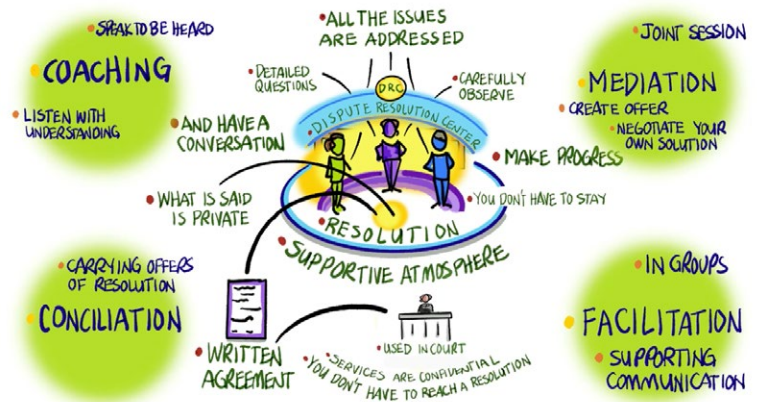
The Introduction to Interest-Based Mediation training opened doors to a new, hopeful world of work being done in our communities to strengthen relationships and help us understand and begin to forgive each other.”

-- Training participant, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center

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Essential skills fostered in conflict resolution training include:

- self-knowledge of personal conflict styles and attitudes;
- perceiving the conflict styles of others;
- managing the emotional climate to foster productive dialogue;
- identifying common interests and negotiation skills;
- facilitating effective communication;
- respecting those in conflict to know their best solutions;
- strategies to support equity in participation; and
- creating lasting agreements that are perceived as fair.



HOW ARE DRC MEDIATORS CERTIFIED AND TRAINED?

Mediator certification includes a minimum of 36 training hours, a written exam, 20 hours of supervised observations and mediation practice sessions, and a minimum 24 hours of supervised co-mediation experience, plus continuing education for all mediators. DRC mediators are certified according to the policies and requirements of Resolution Washington. Mediators must adhere to the Standards of Practice adopted by Resolution Washington and affirmed by state and national professional associations.

We've welcomed LaDessa Croucher as the new Executive Director of Resolution Washington. Croucher's 21 years of service in conflict resolution includes work as an Ombudsman, Certified Professional Mediator, Conflict Coach, and as Senior Director of Volunteers of America Western Washington Dispute Resolution Center, where she was responsible for program development and fundraising for the operation of the DRC in Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties.

With gratitude to Jody Suhrbier for her role as Interim Executive Director.

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS OF PUBLIC DOLLARS

DRCs provide cost-effective and efficient service alternatives to court and those services are delivered by a combination of highly trained staff and volunteers. DRCs delivered 408,350 hours of services across the state last year.

DRCs are funded by a combination of state, city, and county funds; grants and contributions; local court filing fees; and sliding scale fees for services from individuals and organizational contracts. Additionally, volunteers provide more than 22,082 service hours annually, for an in-kind value of \$1,320,684.

*Vision statement:
Communities thrive by transforming
conflict into opportunity.*

**OFFICERS
2023-2024**

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Donnell Austin
Volunteers of America
Dispute Resolution Center
of Snohomish, Island &
Skagit County

CO-PRESIDENT

Moonwater
Whatcom Dispute
Resolution Center

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Gayle Cooper
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Dispute Resolution Clinic

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

April Turner
Columbia Basin
Dispute Resolution Center

**STAFF
2023-2024**

LaDessa Croucher
Executive Director

Megan Johnston
Association Manager

Maartje Peters
Programs
Data Manager

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**DISPUTE
RESOLUTION
CENTERS
STATEWIDE**

BELLEVUE CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTER

CENTER FOR DIALOG & RESOLUTION | PIERCE COUNTY

COLUMBIA BASIN DRC | GRANT & ADAMS COUNTIES

COMMUNITY MEDIATION CENTER | LEWIS &

COWLITZ COUNTIES

COMMUNITY MEDIATION SERVICES | CLARK COUNTY

DRC OF GRAYS HARBOR & PACIFIC COUNTIES

DRC OF KING COUNTY

DRC OF KITSAP COUNTY | KITSAP &

NORTH MASON COUNTIES

DRC OF THURSTON COUNTY | THURSTON &

SOUTH MASON COUNTIES

DRC OF TRI-CITIES | BENTON & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

DRC OF YAKIMA & KITTITAS COUNTIES

FULCRUM INSTITUTE DRC | SPOKANE COUNTY

NEUTRAL GROUND | WALLA WALLA COUNTY

NORTHWEST MEDIATION CENTER | SPOKANE COUNTY

OKANOGAN COUNTY DRC

PENINSULA DRC | CLALLAM & JEFFERSON COUNTIES

SIX RIVERS DRC | KLINKITAT & SKAMANIA COUNTIES

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA DRC: SKAGIT COUNTY

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA DRC: SNOHOMISH &

ISLAND COUNTIES

WENATCHEE VALLEY DRC | CHELAN &

DOUGLAS COUNTIES

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