



April 11, 2017

Co-Chairs, Barbara Smith-Warner and Rod Monroe,

Re: SB 5524

I am writing this letter on behalf of the 16 Community Dispute Resolution Centers who receive funding through this office.

Since 2003, the University of Oregon Law School, through the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution, has administered state funding for community dispute resolution centers. There are currently 16 community dispute resolution centers (CDRCs) serving 23 counties in the state providing free and reduced cost conflict resolution education and services to residents of Oregon. Since 1989 CDRCs have been part of the Governor's recommended budget and have received state funding that support mediation, facilitation, conflict coaching and conflict resolution education that enable residents of Oregon to achieve peaceful solutions to conflict and address unmet needs in our communities.

Community mediation reduces negative or violent responses to conflict in families, neighborhoods and communities providing an alternative to the adversarial courtroom. Services include neighbor-neighbor, landlord-tenant, home owner's association, truancy, small business, parent-teen, probate, small claims, land use, and workplace mediation as well as restorative justice programs for youth and adults, homeless student placement, home foreclosure avoidance, and elder fraud prevention.

Each year more than 14,600 Oregonians receive conflict resolution skills training focused on teaching more productive ways to manage conflict thereby preventing costly and destructive conflict in homes, schools, businesses and communities.

Approximately 8,000 neighborhood/community cases are mediated annually, impacting more than 41,000 Oregonians per year. 70% of those cases resolve with a 90% satisfaction rate. Many of the clients surveyed state that if mediation had not been available, they would have either stayed in the conflict, involved the police or pursued litigation.

Innovative programs such as truancy mediation, restorative justice in schools and homeless placement programs helps Oregon be an innovator in reducing the school to prison pipeline. Restorative justice practices reduce recidivism, stabilize housing, increase safety and save the state money by keeping individuals out of the court system for offenses that can be solved at the local level.

State resources are further leveraged using professionally trained volunteer community mediators who contribute more than 10,000 hours of direct service annually. Additionally, law school graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Oregon, Portland State University and Southern Oregon University gain experiential learning placements at community mediation programs across the state.

We appreciate your continuous support of community dispute resolution programs and ask that you continue to fund these innovative and worthwhile programs.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Ikard

Acting Contract Administrator
Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution
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