

Creative Financing for Professional Mediation Training
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I receive calls and emails daily from people interested in learning mediation skills. A few months ago, I spoke with someone who said that he had considered attending our summer training for the last five years. Yesterday, I spoke with a woman who was excited that she now has the time in her calendar to actually commit to one of our week-long 40-Hour Trainings. The enthusiasm, interest and dedication people share is remarkable- and sometimes not matched by their financial resources. Every year, we have the joy of training about 600 people through our Training Department, both through our custom trainings and our set calendar. We here at the DRC have been exploring ways to help subsidize trainings so that even more community members can achieve their hopes and dreams of attending training and becoming mediators. We do this in a number of ways:

1. *WA State Workforce Training and Education Board:* As of March 2009, the DRC is one of the few mediation programs recognized as an Eligible Training Provider through this Washington State program. Among the services offered, WTB can recommend many ways to fund training including scholarships, loans and work study. Also, DRC training can be paid for through worker retraining and/or unemployment programs for eligible displaced workers. Explore their website at <http://www.careerbridge.wa.gov/> for more information.
2. *Employer Funds:* Ask your company, agency or organization to pay for a portion or all of your training. If you are in a profession that already requires continuing education, like a Disability Management Specialist or a Mental Health Counselor, we can assist you in obtaining credits. We currently offer Continuing Legal Education credits for attorneys and Clock Hours for school administrators and teachers. Also, the Training Department can supply you with DRC training brochures, syllabi, agenda and other materials. In addition, we offer discounts for groups. For more details, talk to the Training Department staff.
3. *Community Support:* When you are involved and dedicated to a community, the community will want to help you learn life skills. Local Clubs (such as Rotary, Elks, and Moose), church groups, Foundations (such as the Pride Foundation, WA Area Women's Foundation, and Pacific NW Scholarships) and even banks want to help. Connect with community resources in-person, on-line and over the phone to find out what is available and brainstorm ideas with us, if you want our 2 cents.
4. *DRC volunteering:* We ask that anyone interested in seeking any scholarship amount from the DRC, first consider volunteering as a phone conciliator, on a space available basis, as a way to reduce fees. We offer excellent on-the-job training and ask for 4 volunteer hours per week for a minimum of 6 months, after which you become eligible for ½ off the fee for the 40-hour Mediation Training. For more information, talk with our Volunteer Manager, Joan Swanson.

5. *DRC Scholarship Funds:*

The Dorothy Hiroko Sato Brooks Memorial Scholarship Fund

Donations from staff members of the DRC established a scholarship fund in March 2002 to honor the memory of a dedicated board member we lost to cancer. The Fund is used to enhance the diversity of the DRC mediator pool by providing training fee support for adults from diverse backgrounds that are underrepresented among our group of volunteers. Over the years, we have gathered and distributed over \$2,500 through this fund. For more information about eligibility and applying, talk to the Training Department staff, me or Margie Schubert.

Bruce Bergquist Youth Scholarship Fund

In honor of one of the founding fathers of the DRC, this fund exists to support youth (ages 14-19) by providing training fee assistance. Teen mediators are essential for Victim/Offender cases, as well as Family cases involving a conflict between parent(s) and teen children. Scholarship recipients' and their families are asked to pay at least half of the training fees (\$315) and the other half is supplemented through this scholarship. For more information about eligibility and applying, talk to the Training Department staff, me or Margie Schubert.

6. *Payment Plans:* On a case-by-case basis, we offer a payment plan option. At least 50% of the course fees are paid in advance of the first day of the training, along with a signed payment arrangement. For more information, or to make a payment plan proposal, contact me.

We all know these are challenging economic times and it is also a time of peaking creativity! So, explore your funding options and I look forward to seeing you at training.