

Our Mission and Vision

The Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County empowers people to resolve their disputes by providing conflict resolution services and training community members in those skills. We envision a South Sound Community that has and uses healthy and respectful conflict resolution skills.

Each year we help more than 5,000 people repair relationships, resolve disagreements and communicate more effectively.

Meeting Conflict with Courage

Many of us do our best to avoid conflict. If you don't, someone close to you probably does. The wonderful reality is that we all can learn how to truly be present with the conflict that arises in our lives, seeing it as an opportunity to move more closely together - to understand better - to step away from our polarized perspectives. We can reach out to one another and provide space to seek true understanding and find common ground with one another.



Thanks to the dedication and support of our community, the Dispute Resolution Center has been providing accessible and effective resources for more than twenty-five years. As you can see in this report, this includes not only resolution of conflict, but also prevention of conflict and a commitment to mentoring the next generation to have the skills needed for a thriving society.

Every one of us has the capacity to learn how to manage conflict in our lives more effectively. We are called to be courageous. Will you join us in this quest? You can volunteer, you can make a donation, and you can commit to seeking to understand those around you, one brave conversation at a time.

I look forward to creating this shared future with you.

Jody M. Suhrbier

Jody Suhrbier
Executive Director

Learn More
Call (360) 956-1155
Email us at info@mediatethurston.org
Visit MediateThurston.org



Get Involved!
Make a difference in your community.

Volunteer

The work of the Dispute Resolution Center would not be possible without the dedication of more than 100 volunteer mediators, phone conciliators and others who serve in key volunteer roles, collectively giving nearly 4,500 hours of their time each year.

If you enjoy helping others solve problems, please consider becoming a volunteer mediator or phone conciliator. The DRC provides training to become a certified mediator, as well as continuing education to advance your skills.

Give

Your financial support strengthens our shared community, making it possible for the DRC to reach out and serve all those who would benefit from our mediation, training and youth services. You can give:

- By mail
- Online at MediateThurston.org/Donate
- Through your United Way contributions
- By designating your Washington State Combined Fund Drive pledge



Dispute Resolution Center
OF THURSTON COUNTY
P. O. Box 6184
Olympia, WA 98507

Finding Common Ground

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



We empower people to restore and build relationships.



Dispute Resolution Center
OF THURSTON COUNTY

"The DRC is a resource that is vitally important to our community. It offers support to those who have decided to resolve their conflicts with civility; support that feels like a gentle hand on your shoulder, moving you forward."

—Former Mediation Client

Resolving Conflict through Mediation Services



Successfully resolving conflict hinges on engaging in difficult conversations in a safe and supportive environment.

Serving as neutral facilitators, our trained mediators hold a safe, productive space where people in conflict can express their needs and concerns, identify common ground and work toward mutually beneficial agreements.



Throughout the year, we mediate an average of one new case each day.

The DRC’s Call Center provides information and referrals, facilitates resolutions by phone, and arranges face-to-face mediation sessions. Our goal is to resolve conflicts at the least adversarial level possible.

Who Benefits From Mediation?

- Neighbors
- Business owners and their customers
- Tenants and landlords
- Divorcing couples
- Homeowners facing foreclosure
- Parents developing parenting plans
- Employees and supervisors
- Teens and their parents
- Work teams
- Elders, their families and caregivers

“The mediators helped keep the conversation going in a positive and productive direction. They also made sure that both sides remained respectful and heard what each other had to say.”

– Former Mediation Client

Preventing Conflict through Training Services



Improving communication and understanding are the keys to preventing conflict.

Businesses, organizations and government agencies reach out to the DRC for Custom Training to help manage workplace conflict, increase understanding, promote teamwork and improve customer service.



We also provide a continuum of Professional Mediation Training - from basic mediation skills to family mediation, multi-party mediation and group facilitation - for those wanting to become volunteer mediators, as well as those who want to utilize these skills in their professional and personal lives.

More than 800 people participated in DRC trainings in the past year, and over 1,200 attended community presentations.

Organizations sponsoring recent DRC trainings and workshops include:

- Washington State Agencies and Departments
- Community Youth Services
- Olympia, Tumwater, North Thurston, Nisqually and Shelton Schools
- Head Start
- Evergreen Student Civic Engagement Institute
- Lacey Timberland Library
- Morningside
- Nisqually Tribal Americorps
- Port of Olympia

“I may have a Ph.D. and two Master’s Degrees, but I consider my DRC training my most valuable educational experience.”

– Training Participant

Mentoring Future Peacemakers through Youth Empowerment Services



Learning and practicing conflict resolution skills at an early age has been shown to have a positive impact on young people’s relationships and success in school, as well as on their families and communities.



We partner with schools and youth service organizations to provide training that engages students and staff in authentic discussion that deepens understanding.

“I believe this work is necessary to achieving equity in education and a healthier world. I can see the impact it has on students.”

– Middle School Teacher

Our Peacemaker Clubs in local schools provide communication and conflict resolution skills through circle conversations, games and fun interactive activities.

Schools hosting Peacemaker Clubs include:

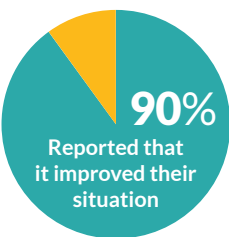
- Garfield Elementary
- Reeves Middle School
- Hansen Elementary
- Wa He Lut Indian School
- Oakland Bay Junior High, Shelton
- Yelm Middle School
- Olympia High School

“We weren’t getting along. I listened, told my story, she told her story, and we solved the problem.”

– Peacemaker Club Participant

☑ Mediation Works!

Of those who utilized our mediation services in the past year:



☑ Mediation Saves Money for Clients and Taxpayers

Mediation is a cost-effective and less-stressful alternative to litigation for many people. Costs are affordable and determined on a sliding fee scale.

Mediation typically resolves as many as 75% of Small Claims Court cases before they reach District Court. Referral to mediation saves the courts - and taxpayers - an average of \$750 per Small Claims Court case and \$4,000 per Superior Court case.

☑ Mediation Helps Businesses and Organizations

Conflict and incivility in the workplace have significant negative impacts on job performance, productivity, customer service, employee grievances and staff turn-over.

We assist businesses, organizations, State agencies and local governments in improving internal staff relations, efficiency and productivity through workplace conflict mediation and group facilitation.