



Washington's Association of  
Dispute Resolution Centers

## 2021 Legislative Agenda

COVID-19 has increased the number and complexity of conflicts. Tenants and landlords, police and communities, workplaces, neighbors, and families continue to struggle as we work through these times.

Resolution Washington and the state's 21 Dispute Resolution Centers (DRCs) are here to help. DRCs facilitate communication and dispute resolution that:

- Supports equitable access to justice;
- Preserves and repairs relationships;
- Resolves disputes efficiently with self determination; and
- Promotes civility and compassion.

In 2020, DRCs across Washington State:

- Pivoted to provide remote services;
- Served at risk families, tenants, landlords and others directly affected by COVID-19;
- Launched the Eviction Resolution Program in six counties, serving tenants and landlords to prevent

*"I strongly encourage landlords and tenants to avail themselves of the services offered at existing dispute resolution centers to come to agreement on payment and repayment solutions" to overcome challenges that COVID-19 has imposed.*

Eviction Moratorium Exemption Proclamation by Governor Inslee

- Proclamation 20-19.3, July 24, 2020 (underlining added)

evictions in collaboration with Superior Courts, legal aid, and rental assistance organizations; and

- Reduced Court burdens and provided access to justice via remote mediation.

Annually DRCs:

- Directly serve 58,000 Washington residents including 3,300 youth; and
- Deliver over 37,000 skilled volunteer service hours to communities.

In 1984 the state Legislature established a framework for DRCs to "meet the needs of Washington's citizens by providing forums in which persons may voluntarily participate in



the resolution of disputes" at no charge or according to the participants' ability to pay (RCW 7.75). Our current state support is \$2 Million in total for 21 DRCs statewide for the 2019-2021 biennium.

***For the 2021-2023 biennium, leaders face a tough challenge to develop a state budget that responds to the financial and societal impacts of COVID-19. DRCs are integral to this response, and your support is essential.***

***As Washington navigates continued pandemic impacts, economic crises, and social unrest, dispute resolution services and training are essential to the stability of families, businesses and communities during the COVID response and beyond.***

### Our Ask

1. General operating DRC funding of \$17.1M per biennium
2. Statewide expansion of Eviction Resolution Program
3. Promote the role of DRCs to assist agencies with state priorities around housing, families, schools and justice

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