

Organization Race, Equity & Diversity Statement:

The Commitment to Anti-Racism

Systemic racism is real and it is harmful. At the Dispute Resolution Center (DRC), we are committed to taking steps to understand and take action to address systemic racism and oppression where it shows up individually and organizationally. We commit to do the work to discover how our experiences are intertwined with systemic oppression in America, how structural racism is different than individual racism, and how we can use what privilege we have to support the fight for justice. Being antiracist is not an on and off switch nor a badge worn for doing something right. It is a process that requires showing up regularly, learning and unlearning, self-reflection, and action.

The Value of Diversity

The DRC seeks to be a reflection of our community, including the multitude of traditions, customs, and values held by its many members. We believe that when any group of persons is treated with less value, dignity or respect than others there are negative impacts for humanity and society. We hold a commitment to honoring, embracing, and encouraging diversity in all aspects of our service provision, including our staff, board of directors and volunteers. It is our intention to consciously and assertively remove barriers to participation in all aspects of our work and to honor the distinctive customs, values and traditions that contribute to our community's strength. We seek to model and support respectful pluralism among all by identifying and implementing cross-culturally adaptive policies and practices.

The Role of Impartiality

We recognize that we, as individuals, have bias and are partial. We have personal experience and our own ideals. We are not objective, nor truly neutral. This is true for everyone living within their truth and living with authenticity. However, as representatives and providers of service to our community, in its entirety, we commit to holding space as third-party neutrals, where we show up with impartiality to the matter at hand and multi-partial interest in all perspectives having voice. We commit to recognizing and challenging bias, balancing power and interrupting oppression.

The Roots of these Commitments

These interests and commitments are embedded in the very roots of community mediation, as well as the practices upheld within the field today. Building individual and community capacity for conflict resolution in this way builds capacity for transformative justice, which is a series of practices and philosophies designed to create change in social systems.

1964 Civil Rights Act:

Section 10 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, embedded mediation in a community-led, process for dispute disruption and disturbance resolution. Neighborhood justice centers were created to focus on equal rights and democracy. This federal commitment remains significant to the peace-building infrastructure in the United States today. Though no longer housed within the Department of Justice, the neighborhood justice centers of that era are today's community

mediation centers, including the Dispute Resolution Center serving Thurston and Mason Counties.

National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM):

Community mediation is community mobilization. Community mediation centers have a vision of community where sustainable, transformative peace is possible. We seek to create brave spaces where everyone may express themselves, be collaborative and can influence the outcome. Community mediation centers are characterized by, and committed to the following nine hallmarks:

1. A private non-profit or public agency or program thereof, with mediators, staff and governing/advisory board representative of the diversity of the community served.
2. The use of trained community volunteers as providers of mediation services; the practice of mediation is open to all persons.
3. Providing direct access to the public through self-referral and striving to reduce barriers to service including physical, linguistic, cultural, programmatic and economic.
4. Providing service to clients regardless of their ability to pay.
5. Providing service and hiring without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, disabilities, national origin, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, source of income.
6. Providing a forum for dispute resolution at the earliest stage of conflict.
7. Providing an alternative to the judicial system at any stage of a conflict.
8. Initiating, facilitating and educating for collaborative community relationships to affect positive systemic change.
9. Engaging in public awareness and educational activities about the values and practices of mediation

Resolution Washington:

Resolution Washington is committed to equal justice for all marginalized community members and supports people of color and low-income residents in having access to equitable opportunities statewide.

Resolution Washington is a partner of the Washington Race Equity & Justice Initiative.

Resolution Washington was honored to receive a 2019 Access to Justice Award, in which the Access to Justice Board honors colleagues and partners who promote access to justice through their leadership, courage, and innovation.

Mediators in Washington are trained, certified and recertified with a commitment to uphold the Model Standards of Conduct created by the American Arbitration Association, the American Bar Association, and the Association for Conflict Resolution.

STANDARD I. SELF-DETERMINATION (voluntary, non-coercive participation)

STANDARD II. IMPARTIALITY (mediators act without bias, partiality or prejudice)

STANDARD III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (withdrawal if partiality is present)

STANDARD IV. COMPETENCE (trained, certified and recertified to shared standards)
STANDARD V. CONFIDENTIALITY (participant interests are protected)
STANDARD VI. QUALITY OF THE PROCESS (commitment to upholding best practices)
STANDARD VII. ADVERTISING AND SOLICITATION (trustworthy and honest promotion)
STANDARD VIII. FEES AND OTHER CHARGES (accessible access to services)
STANDARD IX. ADVANCEMENT OF MEDIATION PRACTICE (serving as a model to others)

What's Possible:

"It is time to take a transformational, systemic approach to chronic conflicts between police, political demonstrators, and communities of color. As mediators, dialogue facilitators and conflict resolution systems designers, we have had decades of experience addressing these issues in a variety of settings, and can propose options, based on these experiences. Communities must initiate a conflict resolution systems design process to identify the sources of chronic conflict involving the police and criminal prosecution, and propose alternatives, such as mediation, restorative justice, sentencing circles, and multi-door courthouses.

Excerpted from: A Transformational Approach to Conflicts Between Police, Demonstrators, and
Communities of Color
By Kenneth Cloke
internationally-renowned mediator & author

As our community's mediation center, the Dispute Resolution Center is committed to facilitating communication and dispute resolution that:

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