



Dispute Resolution Center
OF THURSTON COUNTY

Principles supporting the DRC's Race, Equity, & Diversity Statement

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. It is our intention to consciously and assertively remove barriers to participation in all aspects of our work and to honor the diversity that contributes 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 each of us has and acts on biases, that biases are a natural outcome of our environment, experiences, and ideals. However, to provide services equitably to our community, we commit to creating and holding space as third-party neutrals. **When representing the DRC, we will provide unbiased consideration for each community member's perspectives, experiences, and interests.** We commit to recognizing and challenging bias, balancing power, and interrupting oppression as we support our community members in coming to their own solutions without interference, advocacy, or adjudication.

Unbiased support for conflict resolution is a keystone of transformative justice. Thus, a commitment to anti-bias services will grow our ability to develop and expand programs that divert conflicts from the criminal justice system.

The Roots of the DRC's Commitment to Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

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

Our work is built on these historical and structural frameworks:

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) membership:

NAFCM asserts that community mediation is community mobilization. Community mediation centers have a vision of community where sustainable, transformative peace is possible. We seek to create and hold space where individuals may feel most able to be brave, empowered, free to express themselves, collaborative, and influential on their outcome. NAFCM identifies community mediation centers as characterized by and committed to the following hallmarks:

1. A private non-profit or public agency or program thereof, with mediators, staff, and a 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 barriers.
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, or 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 membership:

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.

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 (accessibility to services)

STANDARD IX. ADVANCEMENT OF MEDIATION PRACTICE (serving as a model to others)