

Konstantyn Damas
324 Talent Ave Apt B
Talent OR 97540
May 6, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-chairs Frederick and McLain and committee members,

I write to request that you please fully fund Dispute Resolution in the State Programs at Universities section of the budget which funds community dispute resolution services across the state through the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution (OOCDR).

My name is Kon Damas and I live in Talent. I am a mediator with more than 30 years' experience handling a variety of cases, including evictions. I respectfully request that you support an investment in Mediation programs in Oregon.

A recent eviction mediation highlights the life-changing potential of mediation. A newly single parent of two children was facing eviction for failing to pay the space rent on their manufactured home. Landlord's agent wished to decline mediation and proceed to the eviction trial but the judge encouraged the parties to "at least try". At mediation, the tenant explained that the other parent had recently left the marriage, a child became ill, and tenant lost a job due to inability to find child care. The tenant acknowledged the late rent issue and thanked the agent for allowing a paying roommate without the usual application fees. Upon hearing these details, the agent softened and shared that they themselves had been raised by a single parent and had no desire to put children on the street.

The mediation took less than an hour, full payment over time was agreed to, and all left relieved and satisfied. This mediation avoided catastrophe for the family and financial loss for the landlord. This outcome could not happen in a trial as a judge is limited to deciding possession only.

The earlier we can bring those at-risk of eviction to a conversation with their housing provider, the more likely that the housing provider will get financial stability, and the more likely a tenant can achieve housing stability. A lack of investment in an eviction avoidance mediation program could further harm our strained housing sector for years to come.

Thank you for working on this aspect of Oregon's housing stability situation.

Sincerely,
Kon Damas



May 10, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-chairs Frederick and McLain and committee members,

The above letter of support highlights one of the fifteen community dispute resolution centers that receive grant funds through the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution. OOCDR uploaded the letter to OLIS on their behalf.

Best,

Patrick Sponsler, MPA
sponsler@uoregon.edu
OOCDR Administrator