



May 8, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means Committee:

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and members of the committee:

We, the 15 providers of community dispute resolution services, write to request that the legislature fund Dispute Resolution/Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution (OOCDR) at no less than \$2.93 million for the 2021-23 biennium. OOCDR is a public service program that advances State investment in healthy communities by promoting dialogue and growth towards a connected human community.

In addition to the base funding, we ask that you support restoring \$349,000 of funding that was cut at the close of the 2019 session. This funding was restored in -6 amendments to HB 5204 adopted by the Ways and Means Committee on March 3rd 2020. Due to the manner in which the 2020 legislative session concluded, the funding was not restored because the bill did not make it to the Governor's desk. We ask the committee to support restoring this critical funding for dispute resolution programs across the state. Attached is the bipartisan Dear Colleagues letter submitted during the 2020 short session in support of restoring the mistaken transfer.

Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRCs) help create safer communities, contribute to school success, increase housing security, and improve access to justice by providing mediation, restorative justice, conflict resolution training and facilitation processes to community members and organizations. With a cadre of 650+ volunteer mediators, who provide \$800,000+ in volunteer services to contribute to more than 12,000 reduced and free mediations each biennium, CDRCs reduce negative or violent responses to conflict in families and help build and maintain community connections.

CDRCs provide mediation and facilitation processes that increase housing stability for Oregonians by mediating landlord/tenant disputes, including FED cases, facilitating living agreements for houseless youth and adults in the Metro HomeShare and Second Home programs, supporting mandatory mediations at manufactured communities (2019 session- SB 586), and helping Oregon families retain their homes through the Foreclosure Avoidance Program. CDRCs are well-prepared to continue their support of housing providers, tenants and courts with the backlog of cases that are waiting to be managed once the moratorium on evictions has ended.

CDRCs are at the forefront of implementation of restorative justice procedures, which is a key strategy of the Oregon Department of Education for strengthening school communities and raising graduation rates to 100% by 2025. CDRCs currently partner with many schools and school districts to provide on-site programming and/or support the school's onsite staff.

Thank you for your service in the legislature during these challenging times.

Sincerely,
Community Dispute Resolution Center service providers



**OREGON STATE LEGISLATURE**

November 2019

Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-chair
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Haywrad, Co-chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-chair
Co-Chairs, Joint Ways and Means Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield,

As your colleagues who represent rural and urban districts across Oregon, we are writing to request that the Legislature take action in the 2020 session to restore \$349,000 for the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution (OOCDR). OOCDR is a State Program funded through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and administered by the University of Oregon and Portland State University. As you know, the funding was reduced during the 2019 session.

OOCDR is a public service program that makes an important impact on the lives of low-income Oregonians. It supports a network of 16 dispute resolution centers that serve urban and rural communities across the state through centralized grant-making. These centers provide trained experts in mediation, facilitation, education, restorative justice and other programs designed to provide conflict resolution skills to individuals and groups. They also provide an opportunity for students at the UO School of Law to get hands on pro-bono experience.

In the 2017-19 biennium, these centers mediated or facilitated more than 12,000 cases affecting over 55,000 Oregonians. Over 75% of cases were resolved through the dispute resolution process.

Community dispute resolution centers are uniquely positioned to efficiently provide resources and mitigate issues facing Oregonians. For example, during the Great Recession and the foreclosure crisis, which impacted Oregon acutely, community dispute resolution centers trained mediators and facilitated conversations that allowed homeowners and their families to stay in their homes. The program continues to help low income Oregonians stay in their homes. Foreclosure, landlord-tenant disputes and other housing related challenges are just some of the many issues that OOCDR addresses in our communities.

If the Legislature is unable to restore funding, Oregonians from every corner of the state will suffer from reduced service levels from these providers.

It is our sincere belief that this was not an intended outcome, and we hope legislative leaders will join us in supporting restoring these funds during the upcoming February 2020 legislative session.

Sincerely,



Representative Pam Marsh, HD 5



Senator Arnie Roblin, SD 5



Senator Bill Hansell, SD 29



Senator Sara Gelsler, SD 8



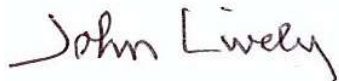
Senator Lew Frederick, SD 22



Senator Shemia Fagan, SD 24



Senator Jeff Golden, SD 3



Representative John Lively, HD 12



Representative Paul Evans, HD 20



Representative Ron Noble, HD 24



Representative Caddy McKeown, HD 9



Representative Alisa Keny-Guyer, HD 46



Representative Gary Leif, HD 2



Representative Jack Zika, HD 53



Representative Marty Wilde, HD 11



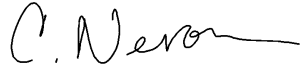
Representative Tiffany Mitchell, HD 32



Representative Mitch Greenlick, HD 33



Representative Rob Nosse, HD 41



Representative Courtney Neron, HD 26



Representative Sheri Schouten, HD 27



Representative Ken Helm, HD 34



Representative Mark W. Meek, HD 40