

The Office of Dispute Resolution

The Office of Dispute Resolution (ODR) was created by the Colorado Dispute Resolution Act in 1983. The ODR's mission is to establish or make available dispute resolution programs and related services throughout the state, as designated by the Chief Justice of Colorado's Supreme Court. The courts were encouraged to expand use of the Dispute Resolution Act by HJR 97-1020.

ODR assists the court in designing, implementing, and administering dispute resolution programs, including multi-door courthouse programs which provide case screening to assist in matching cases to an appropriate dispute resolution process. ODR provides services, including mediation, parenting coordination/decision making, parenting plan facilitation, family group conferencing, and settlement conferences. ODR also manages the federal Access & Visitation Grant for the State of Colorado providing support and funding for dispute resolution programs targeting never-married parents with the goal of increasing parenting time.

In addition to providing services, ODR helps establish Colorado's dispute resolution policies; provides information to the public; collaborates with other individuals and organizations, including government agencies, state and local bar associations, community mediation centers, schools, private and public dispute resolution programs, and others to increase access to dispute resolution services; consults with state and local governments regarding the design, implementation, and administration of dispute resolution programs; and provides dispute resolution education and training.

ODR neutrals first began mediating cases in Fiscal Year 1985, with 54 Domestic Relations cases. In Fiscal Year 2011, an estimated 7,707 cases were reported from Colorado's 22 judicial districts. These cases included Domestic Relations, Civil, Criminal, Juvenile, Dependency and Neglect, child support enforcement, County Court, Small Claims, and Probate. Mediation services constituted approximately 99 percent of ODR's services in Fiscal Year 2011.

ODR receives a General Fund appropriation for administrative and program costs. Parties pay the mediator directly for services. ODR continues to provide reduced-fee services for qualifying indigent parties based on its General Fund appropriation and continued receipt of the Federal Access and Visitation Program grant funds. General information regarding the Office of Dispute Resolution is available at www.colroadodr.org