



Washington's Association of
Dispute Resolution Centers

It is the **role of the legislature** to “stimulate the establishment and use of dispute resolution centers to help meet the need for alternatives to the courts for the resolution of certain disputes.”

(RCW 7.75.010 (2)(a))

2020 Legislative Agenda

Conflict is normal, natural, and pervasive. The way in which we engage with conflict can either strengthen or erode relationships and resources – between family members, in workplaces, within our schools, and in our communities at large. Resolution Washington and the state's 21 Dispute Resolution Centers (DRCs) advocate for collaborative approaches to dispute resolution that:

- Support equitable access to justice;
- Preserve and repair relationships;
- Resolve disputes efficiently with self determination; and
- Promote civility and compassion during times of conflict.

In 2019, DRCs across Washington State:

- Directly served 58,368 residents including 3,322 youth;
- Engaged 1,022 volunteers in delivering over 37,000 skilled service hours to communities;
- Mediated 5,070 cases;
- Trained 12,147 residents; and
- Settled 77% of family mediation cases.



In 1984 the state Legislature established a framework for DRCs to provide a high-quality resolution alternative for disputes. DRCs “meet the needs of Washington’s citizens by providing forums in which persons may voluntarily participate in the resolution of disputes” at no charge or according to the participants’ ability to pay (RCW 7.75). Our current state appropriation is \$2 Million for the 2019-2021 biennium.



**Recipient of the
2019 Access to
Justice
Community
Leadership
Award**

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In 2020, Resolution Washington supports our strategic partners' initiatives, including:

Agenda Item 1: Housing Trust Fund

Invest \$10 million in the Housing Trust Fund to preserve affordable homes and prevent the displacement of people living in them.

This item preserves affordable homes already subsidized by at risk of loss to the for-profit market. DRCs often serve clients with insecure housing, providing services on a sliding scale for low-income clients, including many involving landlord/tenant or housing issues. (Washington Low Income Housing Alliance)

Agenda Item 2: Family Connections Program

Establish foster parent/parent ally teams to facilitate relationship building between caregivers with whom the child is placed and the parent(s). (SB 6422/HB 2525)

Developing teams to promote dialogue between parents and foster parents aligns with the DRC approach to communication. (Partners for our Children)

Agenda Item 3: Educator Professional Training

Professional development for educators with training on racial literacy and cultural responsiveness to help close opportunity gaps for Washington students and promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

Resolution Washington recognizes the power of educator training and support with a racial equity focus, as well as utilizing restorative practices. (Governor's Office)

Agenda Item 4: Juvenile Records

Stop juvenile records from shaping the future of young people (SB 5182/SB 5837).

The DRC philosophy is driven by restorative practices. Washington should improve its juvenile record sealing laws to reduce the impact of youthful mistakes on adults throughout their lifetime. The issue relates to DRCs through the many youth programs they operate, especially those working with juvenile courts. (Columbia Legal Services)

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.



Resolving conflicts. Strengthening communities.

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