

Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration Final Impact Report October 1, 2023

"Without [the mediators'] extra effort, that you were not required to do, it is very possible that my 13-year-old child and I may have lost the apartment."
-Renter

"I appreciate the mediators very much. Everyone is kind and respectful. More mediators please."
- Housing Provider

"The hard work of the mediators has helped connect parties to services, enabled tenants to remain in their homes, and gotten landlords paid."
-Court Staff

Overview

The Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration (EPMD) provided no-cost services from November 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023¹ in 13 Oregon counties (Benton, Clackamas, Gilliam, Hood River, Jackson, Josephine, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Sherman, Wasco, Washington, and Wheeler) with funding from a legislative investment (SB 5561- Dec. '21) to Oregon Housing and Community Services. Community Resolution Centers integrated mediation services within a community response with local renter assistance programs, such as legal aid, rehousing programs, community action agencies, and the courts. The Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution, per ORS 36.175, set the standards for the project, coordinated the project, and led mediation-specific data collection efforts.

Estimated downstream cost-savings

With a legislative investment of \$1.2M, community mediation services stabilized housing and saved communities \$9.5M to \$29.5M in shelter costs, medical costs, foster care costs, and juvenile delinquency costs that are a direct result of an eviction. This calculation is possible by using the values determined by Portland State University's Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative² and the "The Cost of Eviction Calculator" developed by the Innovation for Justice lab at University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law and University of Utah David Eccles School of Business³. This

Completed cases
1,638

People served
5,097

Downstream cost-savings
\$9.5M – \$29.5M

Return on investment
700% – 2,357%

¹ Minimal data during program scale up from August 2022-October 2022 may be included.

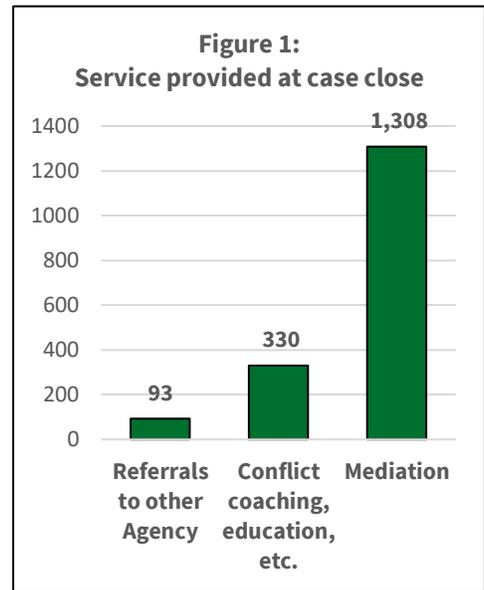
² Bates, Lisa K. et al "Cost of Oregon Evictions." Portland State University's Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative. Portland State University. February 9, 2021. <https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness/cost-oregon-evictions>.

³ "The Cost of Eviction Calculator." Innovation for Justice. University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law and University of Utah David Eccles School of Business. Accessed September 29, 2023. <https://uarizona.neotalogic.com/a/costofevictioncalculator>.

value represents a conservative estimate of the mediation centers' cost-savings as the estimate only uses a few of the known downstream effects of evictions, and only reflects cases that resulted in a written mediated agreement. Not included in this estimate is the work Community Resolution Center mediators do to help community members avoid an eviction in concert with other community agencies.

Housing stability services

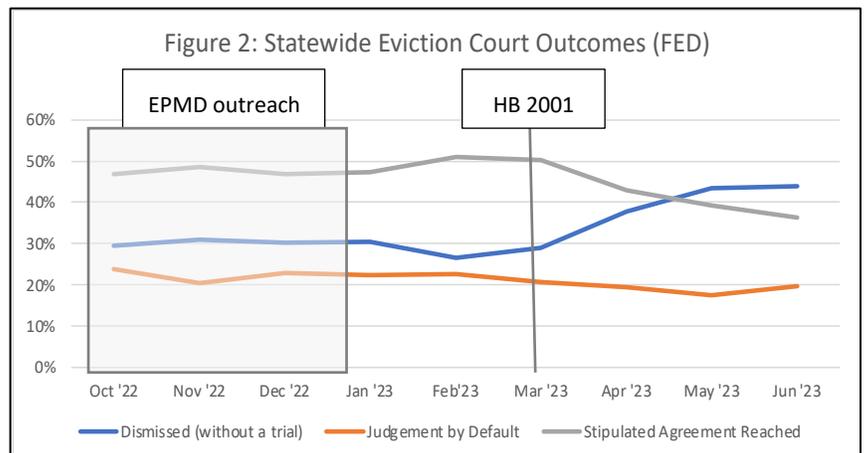
Resolution Centers provide referrals to other agencies, conflict coaching, and/or mediation to help stabilize housing for both the renter and the housing provider. Conflict coaching helps a party to anticipate problems, reality test options, and strategize a solution. In mediation, two or more parties are assisted by a mediator to reach a mutually acceptable resolution to the dispute. During the EPMD reporting period, Resolution Centers served approximately 5,097 people in 1,308 mediations and 330 conflict coachings. Mediation has a long history in Oregon as an effective housing stability tool before an eviction is filed as well as part of the court process on the day of first appearance. Due to demonstrated success, there are presiding judges who do require mediation as part of the court process. To increase access to justice through mediation, a statewide requirement, or incentive, would increase access to justice for more community members.



Mediation Resolution Rates
78%

Reductions in default judgements and increases in dismissed cases and stipulated agreements

Community Resolution centers stabilized housing by contributing to the reduction in the percentage of default judgements against renters, as well as contributing to the increase in the percentage of stipulated agreements and dismissed cases from November 2022 through June 2023. The trends in the overall eviction outcome data for the past year overlaps onto the timeline of the



Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration. Figure 2⁴ shows a downward trend in default judgements over the period of the Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration. As pandemic protections were lifted, Resolution Centers contributed to an increase in mediated stipulated agreements set in court. Once HB 2001 took effect in March 2023, which required housing providers to accept late payments up to the trial date, Resolution Centers helped set agreements and get payments made right up to the court date which contributed to the increase in cases being dismissed in court.

Specialized trainings

EPMD Resolution Centers implemented 55 training events for mediators and community members, and 182 outreach events where they educated community partners about how mediation is complementary to other avenues of justice. All the EPMD Resolution Centers collaborated on the creation of marketing materials specifically for Spanish language community members. OOCDR-approved lead trainers participated in a 40-hour equity in mediation training. To increase access to justice for Spanish speaking community members, OOCDR sponsored a Spanish language mediation training that will increase awareness of mediation and increase the number of Spanish speaking mediators.

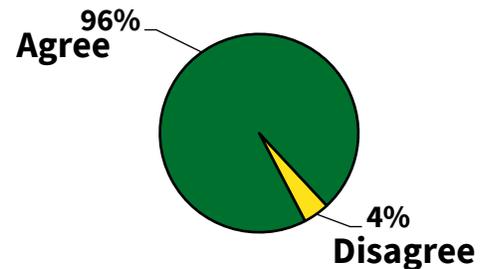
“Process was fairly quick, thanks to the mediator, who was very knowledgeable and helpful.”

-Housing Provider

“[The mediators] help keep people housed and teach people how to constructively resolve problems with one another, contributing to healthier, safer, and more peaceful communities.”

- Court staff

The mediation process was fair.



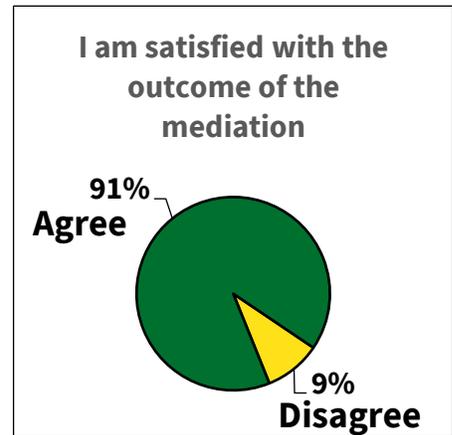
Eviction Diversion Case Study
Connected community and a canceled court date

The school district connected a Community Resolution Center with a group of renters facing eviction. Three undocumented single fathers, each raising one child, none of whom speak English were facing eviction. One of the fathers was badly injured and could not contribute to the household bills. The others pooled their resources to cover his medical expenses but still came up short. With help from community resources, an anonymous donor, and the promise of the state-wide rent assistance program, the amount owed became manageable. After understanding the circumstances that caused the delay in payment, the housing provider became more sympathetic and more comfortable with dismissing the eviction before the remaining rent was paid, and the court date was canceled.

⁴ Bates, Lisa K. et al “Eviction Defense and Diversion.” Center for Urban Studies. Portland State University. Monthly data. Accessed September 29, 2023. <https://www.pdx.edu/urban-studies/eviction-defense-and-diversion-evaluation>.

Focused outreach & marketing increased participation

Resolution Centers focused marketing and outreach to community members who historically have not used mediation as a housing stability tool in high rates. The largest campaign focused on radio ads, video production and translation of materials for Spanish language community members. From March 2023 to July 2023, the percentage of Latinx participants went up by 5 percentage points, suggesting that outreach and marketing may have increased participation.



Participation by those most at-risk of eviction

Latinx, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander households have been found to have 10-20% less income than white Oregon households⁵. Figure 3 shows that the percentage of EPMD participants from lower income groups was greater than the percentage of individuals from the Oregon Census⁶ group. For example, participation of Latinx community members was six percentage points higher than census data. American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander all had greater rates of participation than the census data, suggesting financially at-risk community members were participating in mediation.

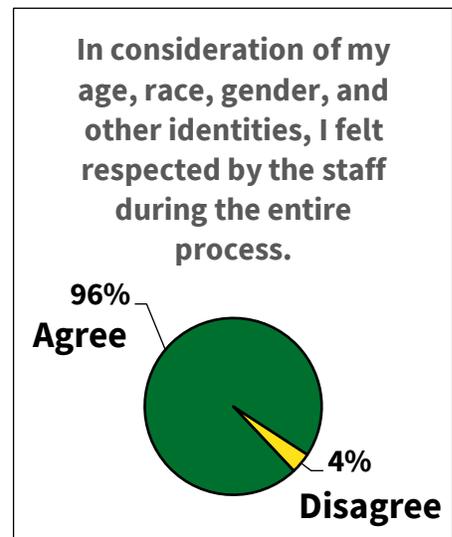
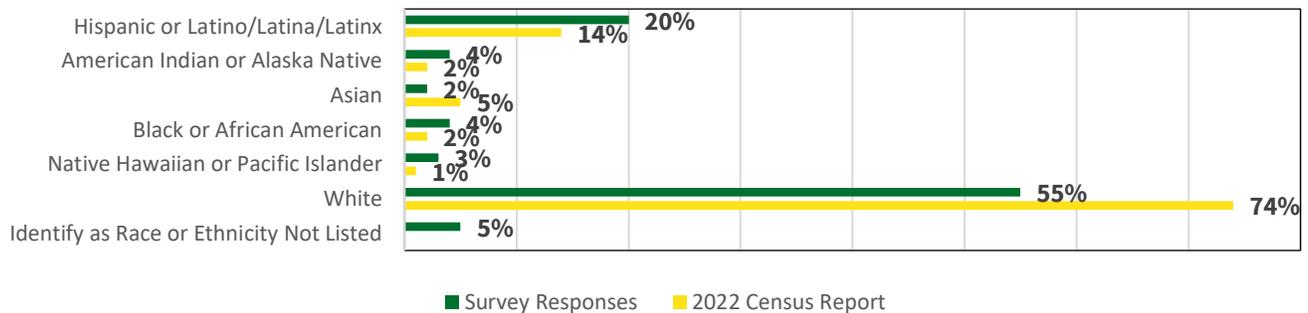


Figure 3: Renter Demographics of Surveyed Parties and Oregon Census Data



⁵ “Racial and Ethnic Economic Disparities in Oregon, an Update.” Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, December 14, 2022. <https://oregoneconomicanalysis.com/2022/12/14/racial-and-ethnic-economic-disparities-in-oregon-an-update/>.

⁶ “U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Oregon.” Quick Facts Oregon. Accessed April 29, 2023. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/OR/PST045222>.

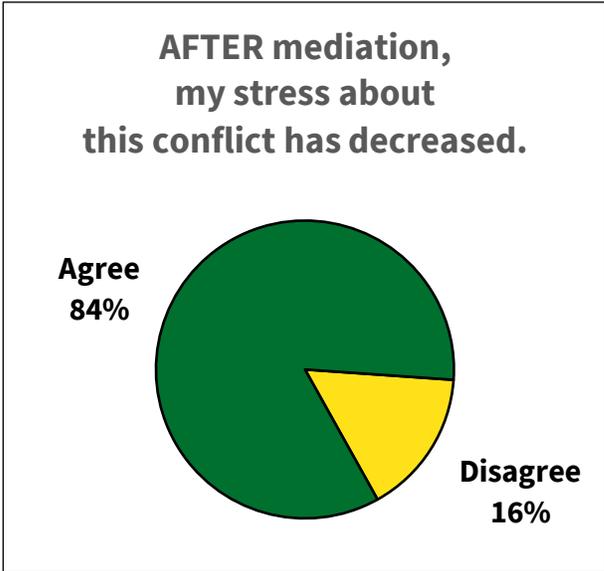
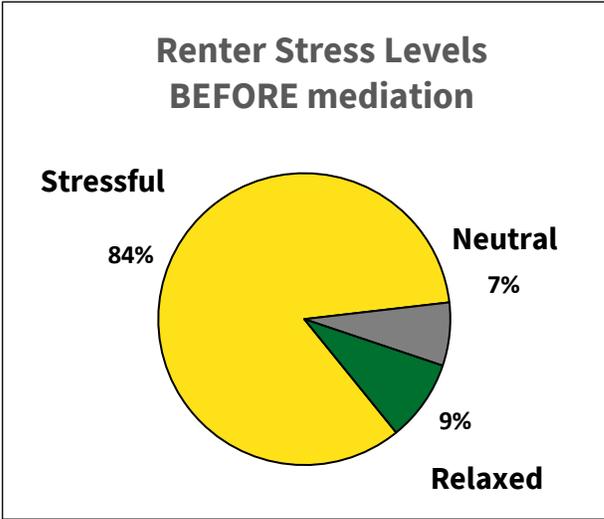
Immediate impact

Regardless of the outcome of the mediation, 91% of responding renters report that they are satisfied with the outcome. The high level of procedural satisfaction may positively impact their well-being after mediation. 84% of renters express that they experience an immediate reduction in stress levels after having gone through mediation.

3-month follow-up

Though the number of 3-month follow up survey responses prevented any analysis from being statistically significant, the experiences of respondents' post-mediation can be discussed. Twelve unique renters were tracked from their intake survey to their 3-month follow up survey and found that their individual stress levels as well as the relationship with their housing provider improved by two Likert scale levels, e.g. from neutral to positive, or somewhat stressed to somewhat relaxed, on average.

I felt safe to express what I really wanted to say. You restored my dignity.
- Renter

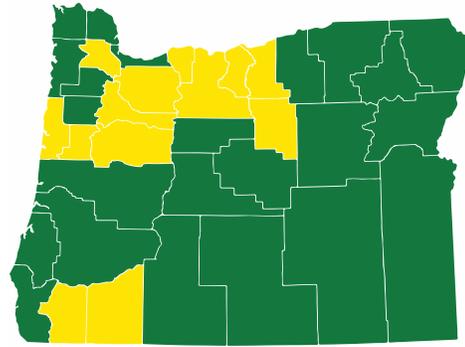


**Conflict Coaching Case Study
Communication Skill Building**

A Section 8 renter who was transitioning to new housing needed more time to move out and wanted to discuss the cost of the carpet cleaning. Recognizing the stress they were under, the renter contacted a Resolution Center for support in communicating with the housing provider. While management was open to mediation, the renter was equipped with new ways to communicate and spoke with management themselves. The two agreed to a move out date that one day later than originally stated and on the cost of carpet cleaning. The renter expressed appreciation for the mediator's support, and management said that they would seek out Resolution Services in the future as issues arise with other renters.

Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration Sites

The EPMD Sites cover 13 counties that include rural and urban communities, indicated in yellow on the map. All EPMD Sites are part of Resolution Oregon – the network of community resolution centers. The EPMD Sites and county service areas are:



Community Resolution Center

Counties served

Center for Mediation and Dialogue,
The City of Beaverton

Washington

Clackamas County Resolution Services

Clackamas

Neighbor-to-Neighbor

Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Marion

Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center

Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wheeler, Wasco

Resolve Center for Dispute Resolution
and Restorative Justice

Jackson, Josephine

**Eviction Prevention Case Study
Creating Assurances for Full Payment**

Despite the renter having partial rental assistance from a church, a property manager was only allowed to accept full payment all at once. Neither the renter nor the church could submit their partial payment to the manager. The church would only send their portion to the manager if they affirmed that it was paying off the rent in full, which would not be the case if the manager would not first receive the renter’s portion of the rent. The mediator worked with all three parties to help craft an agreement that created assurances for both the church and the manager that the rent would be paid in full. Through a creative plan, mediation stabilized housing and all the parties’ needs were met.

*“Polite, informative, and helpful!
- Housing Provider*

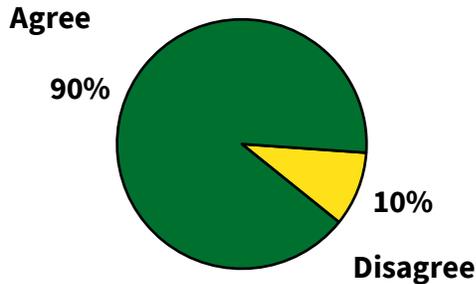
“The process was very straightforward and easy. The client remained in housing and the property manager was now aware of another resource to avoid evictions.”

-Social Service Case Manager

*“Allowed me to create a realistic payment plan for the near future.”
-Renter*

Additional information

I was able to talk about the issues that were important to me in mediation.



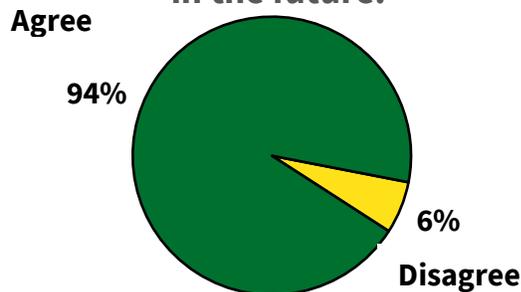
“While trying to solve this issue in the past, I was not able to what [the mediators] did. The third party helped.”

- Housing Provider

“[Mediator] was great and helped prevent my eviction! She helped me get on disability and snap benefits and now I can afford my rent! I had to move but that's ok because this place is better. “

-Renter

After participating in mediation I feel confident I could handle a similar conflict in the future.



“We made it to our new home safe and sound and on schedule. We appreciate all that [the mediators] did for us.”

- Renter

“I am grateful no one gave up on my situation and instead looked to help me. It was a very stressful situation. My life, my home and my neighborhood are more peaceful because of this service. Thank you so much!”

-Renter

**Eviction Prevention Case Study
Opportunity to Build Community**

In a tight housing community, neighbors’ repeatedly filed complaints about harassment from a youth and their friends. With police already involved, an eviction notice was not far away. The manager requested mediation, where the youth’s parents identified specific supports that were needed as well as ways the community could work together. An agreement was set where the youth would be enrolled in a ‘big sibling’ program, the community of parents would work together to avert potentially illegal behavior, and they all developed a plan of action to address the situation before it escalates again. Mediation prevented eviction and improved communication in support of a stronger community.