

## Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration

June 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 your mediators. While trying to solve this issue in the past, I was not able to what they did. The third party helped."*

- 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

### Summary

The Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration (EPMD) is operating in 13 Oregon counties (Benton, Clackamas, Gilliam, Hood River, Jackson, Josephine, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Sherman, Wasco, Washington, and Wheeler) with funding from legislative investment (SB 5561- Dec. '21) and will continue through June 30, 2023. This report includes data from program launch in November 2022 through April 30, 2023<sup>1</sup>. Resolution Centers (EPMD sites) are providing mediation services within an integrated community response with local renter assistance programs, such as legal aid, rehousing programs, community action agencies, and the courts.

**Completed cases**  
**1,336**

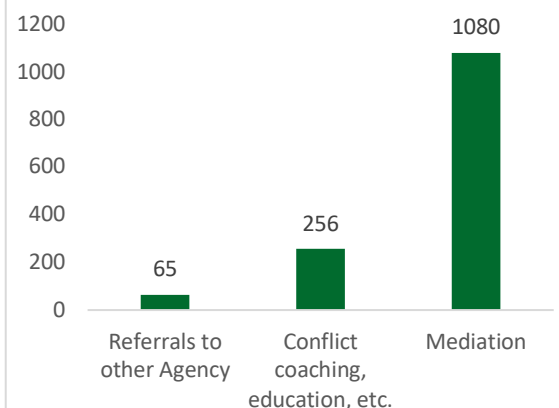
**People served**  
**4,008**

### 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 reporting period, Resolution Centers served approximately 4,008 people through 256 conflict coachings and 1,080 mediations.

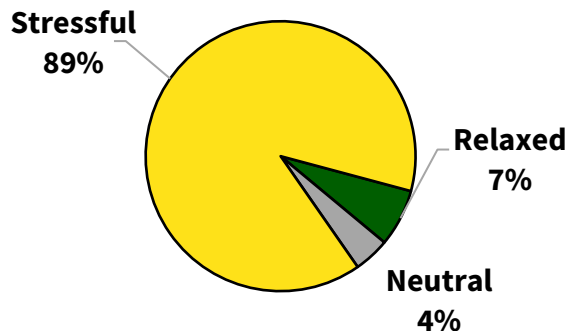
Mediation has a long history in Oregon as an effective housing stability tool. Currently, Oregon has no

Services provided

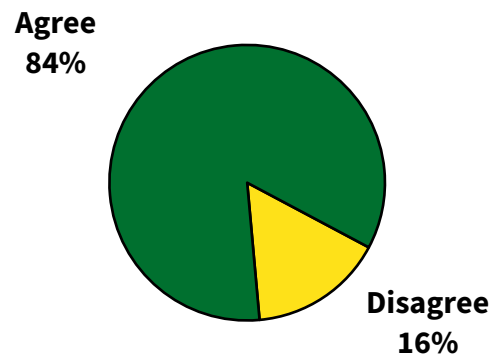


<sup>1</sup> Minimal data during program scale up from August 2022-October 2022 may be included.

### Renter Stress Levels before mediation



### After mediation, my stress about this conflict has decreased.



statewide formal requirement or incentive to mediate before an eviction is filed, although there are a handful of presiding judges who do require mediation prior to the trial in their courts. These policy differences (voluntary vs. required) create differing data flows and differing impacts on case outcomes. This report offers eviction prevention (before filing) and eviction diversion (after filing) details, respectively.

#### **Specialized outreach and education**

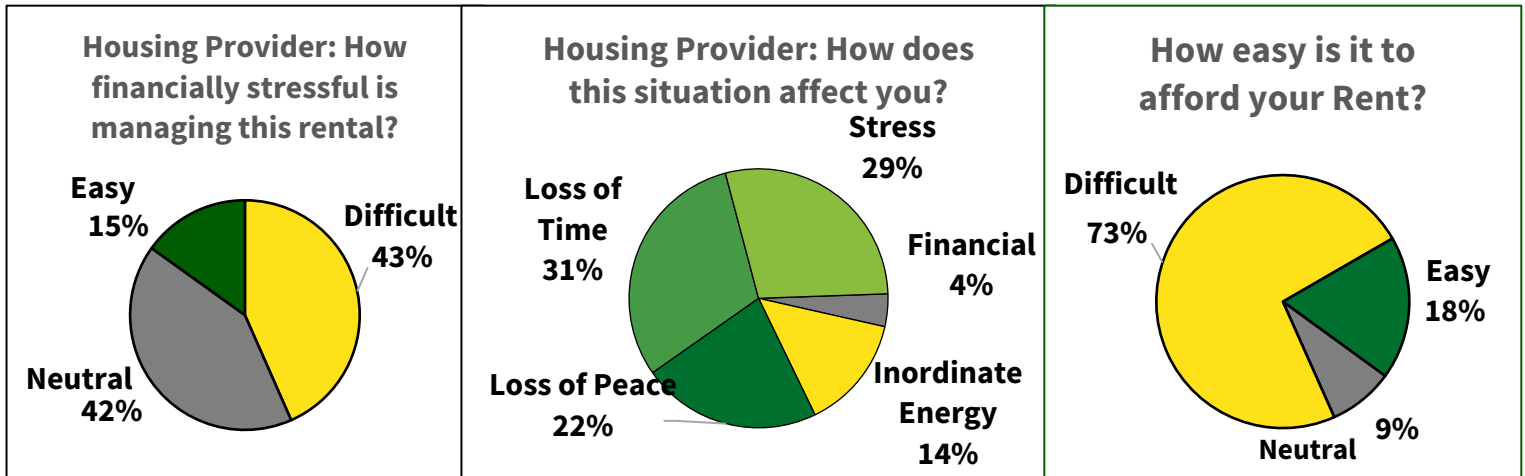
Specifically for the EPMD program, Resolution Centers have implemented 35 training events for mediators and community members, and 162 outreach events where they educate community partners about how mediation is complementary to other avenues of justice. All the EPMD Resolution Centers collaborated on the creation of marketing materials specifically focused on the Spanish speaking community. Beaverton Center for Mediation and Dialogue provided mediation skills training to colleagues from government agencies and nonprofits

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

*- 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, equipped with new ways to communicate, spoke with management themselves. The two agreed to a move out date that one day later 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.



that are part of the local housing stability response. To increase access to justice for Spanish speaking community members, OOCDR is sponsoring a Spanish language mediation training that will increase awareness and understanding of mediation and increase the number of Spanish speaking mediators.

### Eviction prevention details

89% of renters are reporting high stress levels related to their housing before mediation, and 84% of renters report that the stress levels have decreased after participating in mediation. 73% of renter respondents report that it is 'difficult' to afford their rent. 43% of housing providers are reporting that managing these rentals is 'difficult' and they are impacted with stress, loss of peace, loss of time, inordinate energy, and financial impacts.

59% of renter survey respondents identify as white, 23% identify as Latinx, 5% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 3% as Black or African American, and 6% identify as a race not listed on the survey. Through the mediation demonstration, access to justice for BIPOC community members is increasing, e.g., the percentage of Latinx participants went up by 7 percentage points over the last three months (15% to 23%), suggesting that the outreach efforts to local agencies and directly in those communities is making a positive impact.

*"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

*"[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

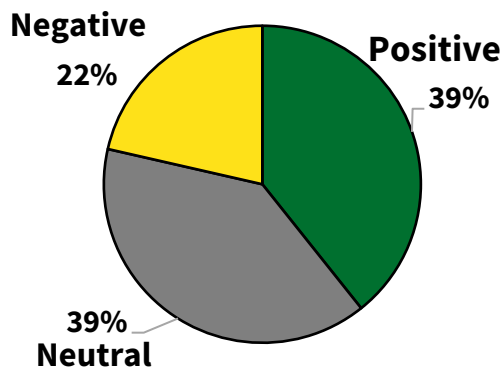
*"I can't really remember the last time I had a conversation with the property manager where they took what I said into consideration. [The mediators] let me say what I needed to say and helped prevent me from being evicted."*

- Renter

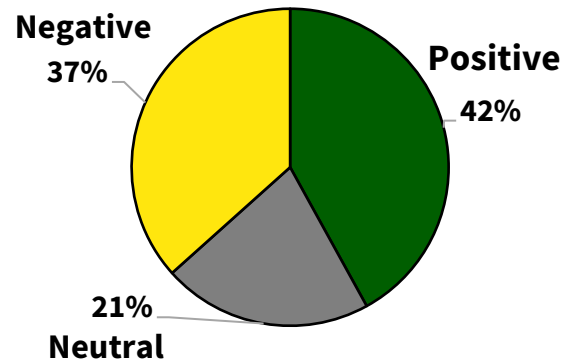
*"Our company manages 121 doors. I will use mediation again, and I will spread the word to other managers."*

- Housing Provider

### Housing Provider: Relationship with Renter



### Renter: Relationship with Housing Provider



Comparing the survey data with statewide data for Oregon in July 2022, resolution services are being provided slightly less to those who identify as white and Asian and are provided slightly more to those who identify as Latinx, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander<sup>2</sup>. As calculated by the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, Latinx, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander households tend to have 10-20% less income than white Oregon households<sup>3</sup>. These trends are roughly consistent with the median household income gap in Oregon between Black, American Indian, and Latinx households compared with white households and suggest mediation services are reaching those who are in need.

**Eviction Prevention &  
Diversion Mediation  
Resolution Rates**

**79%**

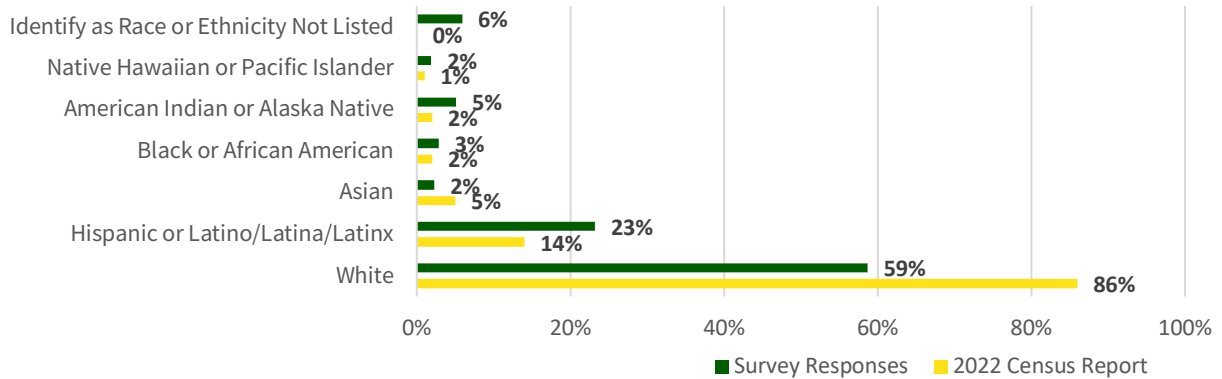
### Eviction Prevention Case Study Opportunity to Build Community

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.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/OR>

<sup>3</sup> <https://oregoneconomicanalysis.com/2022/12/14/racial-and-ethnic-economic-disparities-in-oregon-an-update/>.

## Renter Demographics of Surveyed Parties and Oregon Census Data

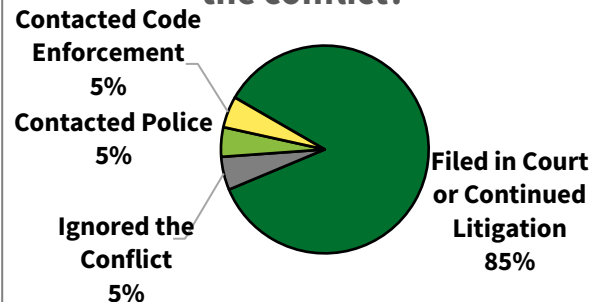


Renters (63%) and Housing Providers (78%) report that their relationship with the other party is positive or neutral. These amicable relationships may help to provide a foundation for seeing the struggles of the other party and helping to make an agreement that works for both parties.

### ***Eviction diversion details***

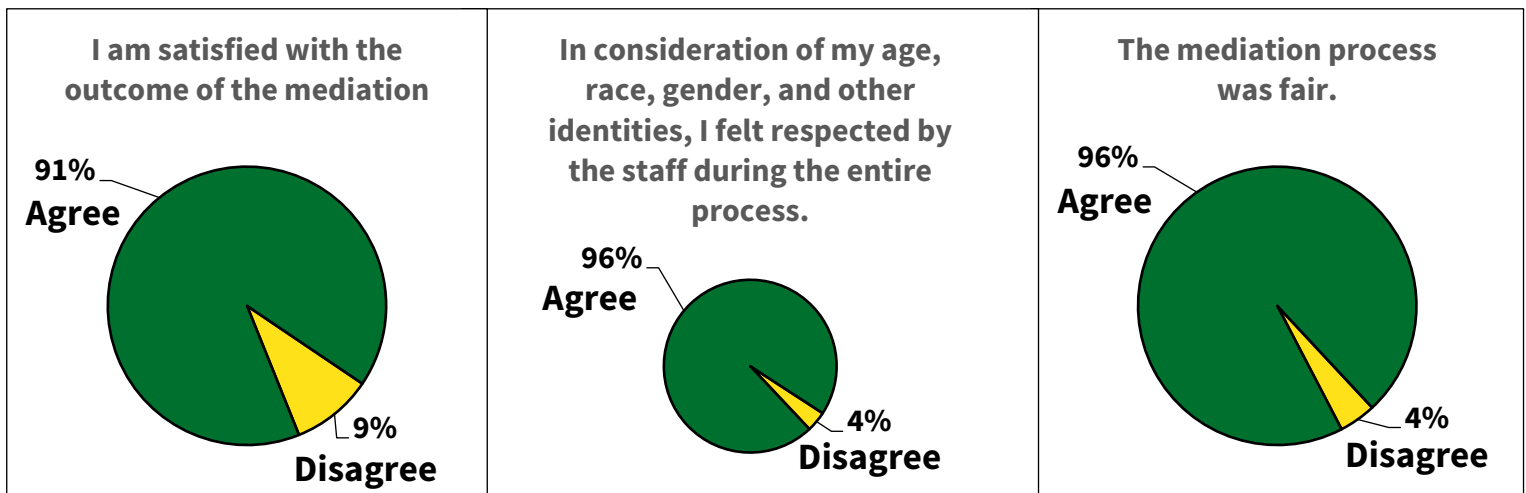
Due to the fast pace of court processes and the court's restrictions on the collection of certain data, diversion data is more reliant on the survey tools OOCDR uses for all case types. Court referrals will continue to be high, as some courts require mediation prior to the trial.

### **If mediation services had not been available, how would you have dealt with the conflict?**



### **Eviction Diversion Case Study Housing Stability in the final hour**

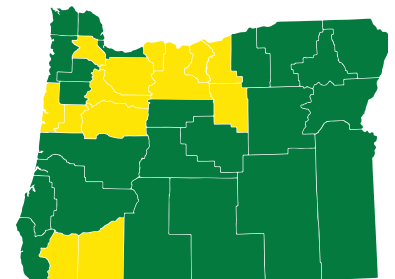
A retired renter had fallen behind on rent, and then received a 72-hour termination notice. After the renter reached out to the Resolution Center, a mediator connected with the housing provider before the court date. An agreement was set that considered the renter's regular, but fixed, social security income. In the final hour, the renter avoided eviction and remained housed, while the housing provider would recover lost revenue and avoided additional expenses associated with a move-out.



### 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 that provide cost-effective and complementary avenues for justice to all community members throughout Oregon. The EPMD Sites and county service areas are:

The Center for Mediation and Dialogue	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.