

Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration

March 1, 2023

"Thank you! I worked with my manager to have a little more time, and they kindly waited on eviction. All back rent is now paid!"

-Renter

"Mediator amazing at making sure both parties were heard and respected."

- Housing Provider

"The mediator let each party discuss their perspectives. The client said that this was the first time they had truly been heard."

-Social Service Case Manager

Summary

In December 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed SB 5561, which included State General Funds for eviction prevention and diversion services. The Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration (EPMD) formally launched in November 2022 in 13 Oregon counties with services provided by five community Resolution Centers. This report period includes data during the scale-up through January 31, 2023. EPMD sites are providing mediation services within an integrated upstream eviction prevention system in connected partnership with local renter assistance programs, such as legal aid, rehousing programs, community action agencies, and the courts.

Completed cases

713

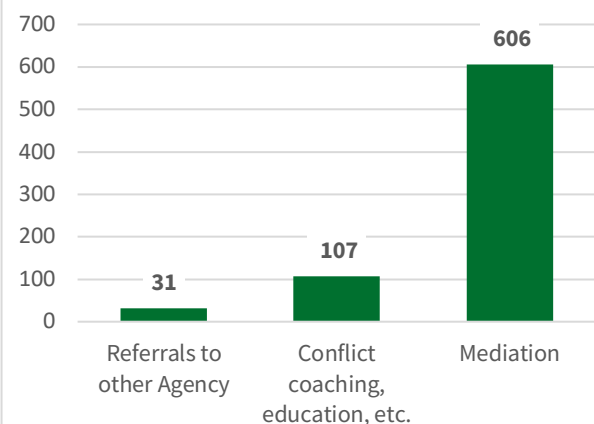
People served

2,892

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 2,892 people through 107 conflict coachings and 606 mediations.

Service Provided



Mediation has a long history in Oregon as an effective housing stability tool before an eviction is filed (prevention), as well as, after the eviction is filed (diversion). Currently, Oregon has no statewide formal requirement or incentive to mediate before an eviction is filed. There are a handful of Oregon courts that do require mediation prior to the trial. These policy differences (voluntary vs. required) create differing data flows and differing impacts on case outcomes. This report offers prevention and diversion details, respectively.

Integrated community response

Resolution Centers have established formal and informal pathways for service providers to stabilize housing efficiently and effectively. For example, Washington County's Center for Mediation and Dialogue participates in bi-monthly meetings with housing advocacy groups to share information and improve support systems.

Specialized trainings

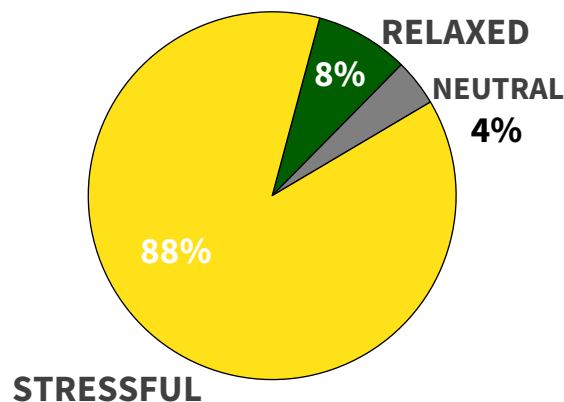
Resolution Centers provide continuing education opportunities directly to their local community mediators, and OOCDR supports development of the qualified basic mediation lead trainers and the statewide cadre of community mediators. In January 2023, qualified lead trainers (ORS 36.175) from EPDM sites participated in a 40-hour equity-in-mediation training to deepen accessible and inclusive services. In the next quarter, EPMD Sites are continuing to implement equity-in-mediation trainings for their community mediators. For example, Clackamas County Resolution Services has hired local and national trainers to facilitate a series that will cover topics such as: equity basics, equity in mediation, case development, equitable policies, and continued growth.

Training Events
12

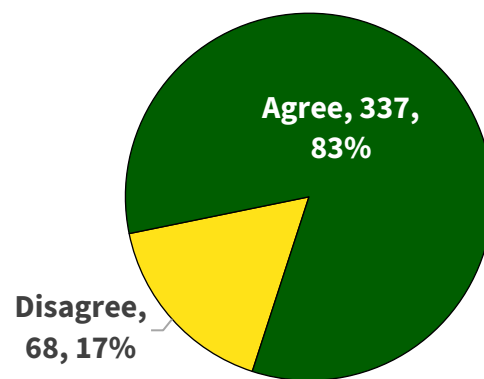
Outreach Events
36

Number of Volunteers
50

**Renter Stress Levels
before the mediation**



**After participating in
mediation, my stress about
this conflict has decreased.**

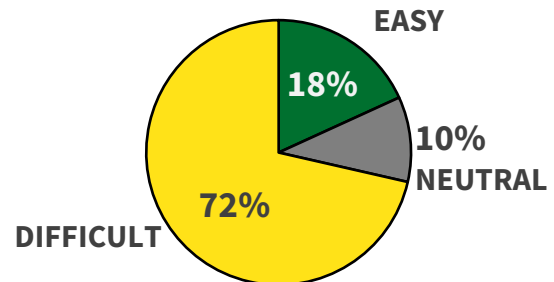


Eviction prevention details

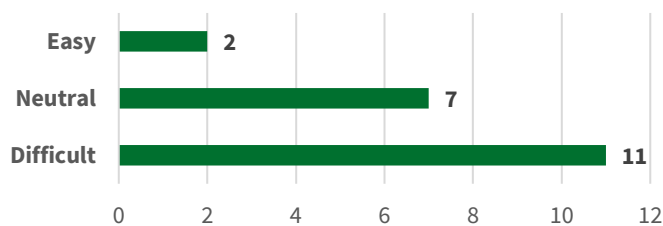
Renters are reporting high stress levels related to their housing, with 64% reporting 'Very Stressful'. 72% of renter respondents report that it is 'difficult' to afford their rent. 61% of Housing Providers are reporting that managing these rentals is 'difficult' and they are impacted with stress, loss of peace, loss of time, inordinate energy, and foreclosure.

63% of renter survey respondents identify as white, 15% identify as Latinx, 4% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 4% as Black or African American, and 8% identify as a race not listed on the survey. 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 (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/OR>).

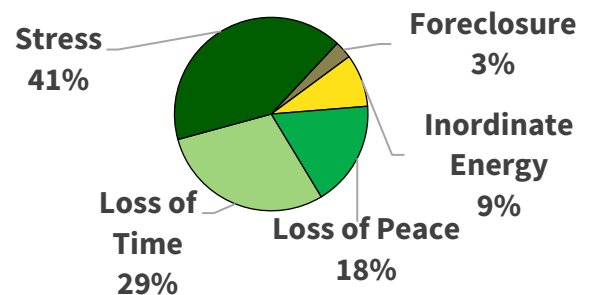
How easy is it to afford your Rent?



Housing Provider: How financially stressful is managing this rental?



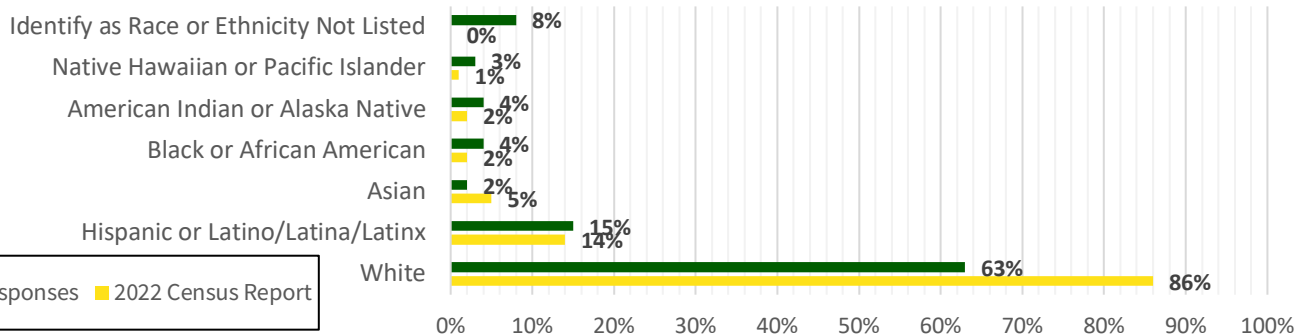
Housing Provider: How does this situation affect you?



Eviction Prevention Case Study Homelessness Prevention

A housing authority was striving to provide stable housing to an individual who had been in and out of homelessness. Unfortunately, there was a \$250 judgement on the renter's record from several years ago that prevented the housing agency from helping the renter. Bringing parties to the mediation table, the mediator helped the parties untangle much of the red tape and helped to find a way to reconcile the debt that was for a now deceased housing provider. Through mediation, the debt was settled, and a path was cleared for the renter to enter stable housing.

Participating Renter Demographics and Oregon Census Data



These service trends roughly align, when considering the median household income gap in Oregon between Black, American Indian, and Latinx households compared with white households. 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. (<https://oregoneconomicanalysis.com/2022/12/14/racial-and-ethnic-economic-disparities-in-oregon-an-update/>).

Mediators often find that the mediation is the first time the two parties have had an actual conversation. Often, overcoming the language and/or cultural barrier is the key to resolving the dispute and stabilizing housing. In eviction prevention cases, Resolution Centers report that 12 cases utilized Spanish language interpreters and one case utilized Russian language interpreters.

Many of both Renters (62%) and Housing Providers (69%) 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.

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

- Renter

Polite, informative, and helpful!
- Housing Provider

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

Waiting times are rough but everyone is kind and respectful. More mediators please.

-- Housing Provider

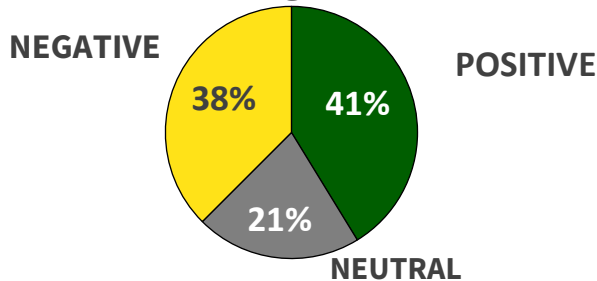
**Eviction Prevention
Resolution Rates**

72%

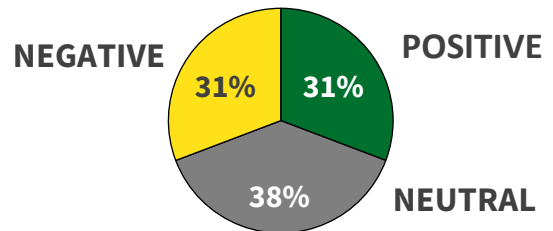
**Eviction Diversion
Resolution Rates**

79%

Renter: Relationship with Housing Provider



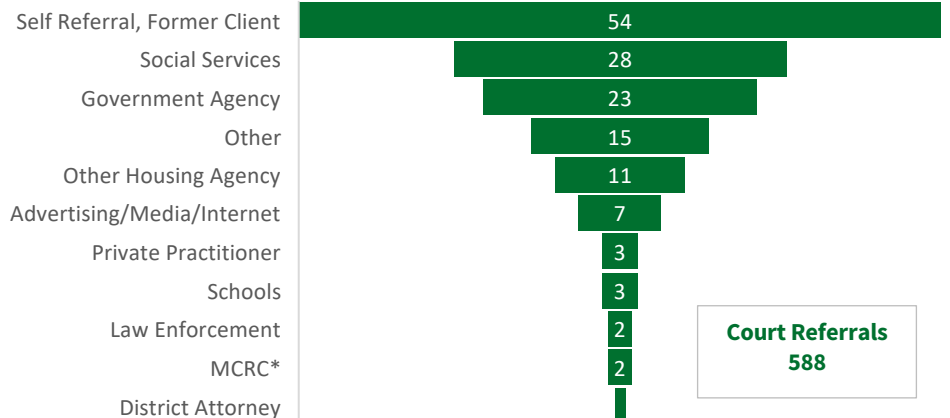
Housing Provider: Relationship with Renter



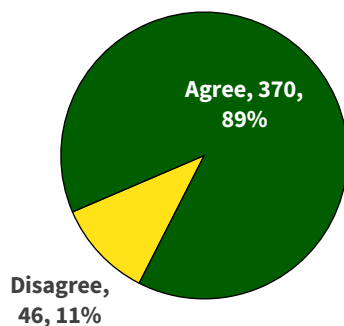
Eviction diversion detail

Eviction diversion mediation is well established in two of the five EPMD regions. 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.

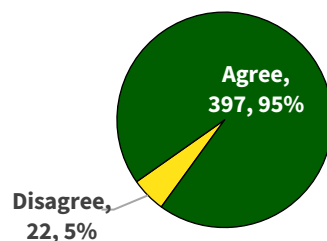
Referral Sources for New Mediation Cases



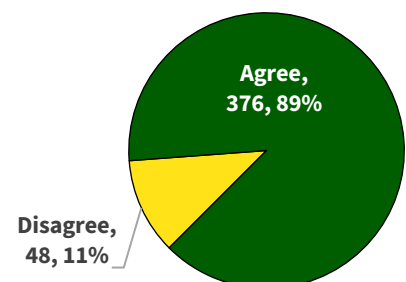
I am satisfied with the outcome of the mediation.



In consideration of my age, race, gender, and other identities, I felt respected by the staff during the entire process.



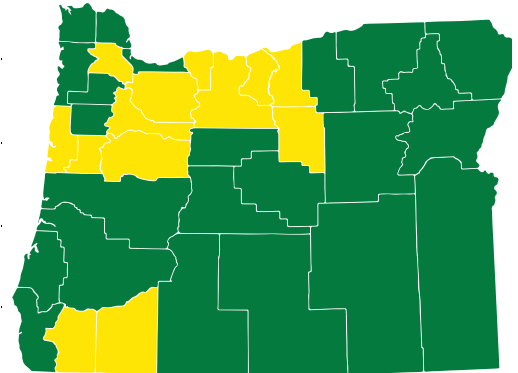
I was able to talk about the issues that were important to me in mediation.



Eviction Prevention Mediation Demonstration sites

The EPMD Sites cover 13 counties that include rural and urban communities, indicated in yellow on the map. The EPMD Sites and county service areas are:

The Center for Mediation and Dialogue	Washington
Clackamas County Resolution Services	Clackamas
Neighbor-2-Neighbor	Marion, Linn, Benton, Lincoln
Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center	Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler
Resolve Center for Dispute Resolution and Restorative Justice	Jackson and Josephine



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.

Eviction Diversion Case Study Helping to Create Access to Language Justice

A housing provider filed an FED for not receiving payment of rent. It quickly became clear that the renter and housing provider had had limited communication up to that point. The housing provider did not speak Spanish or have their written communications translated into Spanish. With the aid of a Spanish interpretation service, the mediation established that the renter had submitted the rent on time, but the records were stolen during a break-in at the rental office. With communication restored, the renter was able to resubmit rent to the housing provider, and the housing provider agreed to send letters in Spanish. Housing is stabilized and constructive communication pathways are open for future conversations.

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

