



Help Change the Culture of Conflict in Wayne County-- Become A Volunteer Mediator!

The stress and consequences of conflict take a terrible toll on many individuals and families in Wayne County. While many resort to the legal system, the time and costs can be severe and never-ending for those involved--both financially and emotionally.

As a community based nonprofit organization, Wayne County Dispute Resolution Center (WCDRC), also known as Wayne Mediation Center, empowers individuals and families in Wayne County to peacefully resolve their conflicts efficiently and effectively. Each year, WCDRC's staff and volunteers mediate or facilitate approximately 3,000 conflicts, with more than 60% leading to immediate resolution. Many more are assisted down a path toward eventual resolution.

WCDRC's mission is to change the culture of conflict resolution in Wayne County. **To do this, WCDRC relies upon the donation of time by individuals interested in impacting the lives of families and individuals in conflict--the overwhelming majority of whom have limited financial means.**

WCDRC mediates cases at our office in Dearborn and also in courthouses and schools throughout Wayne County. The key to WCDRC's success is offering volunteer mediators from diverse backgrounds and life experiences.

To become a WCDRC volunteer mediator, the process starts with an in person meeting with a WCDRC staff member to ensure a good fit. The next step is to complete a state approved 40 hour training session that we offer several times a year. Although there is an initial cost to take this training, we refund the cost to any participant once they have completed their volunteer commitment. Individuals may choose initially to take the training that qualifies them to mediate all "general" civil matters, such as contract or neighbor disputes, or they may elect to take the training that qualifies them to handle domestic matters, such as divorce and parenting time. Some of our mediators take both of these trainings, along with additional training classes in Special Education, Truancy Prevention or Restorative Practices.

GENERAL CIVIL MEDIATION VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The types of general civil cases WCDRC mediates include neighbor disputes, estate and guardianship disagreements, parenting disputes, school truancy issues, consumer disputes and civil rights complaints. Some of these mediation opportunities occur at local district courts, while others are held at our office in Dearborn.

DOMESTIC MEDIATION VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We have programs that take place in the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center and Penobscot Building in Detroit and at our offices in Dearborn. The majority of these programs specifically focus upon parenting time disputes, and several involve full divorces that may involve pensions, real estate, personal property or spousal support.

Learning to communicate effectively and resolve conflict is extremely rewarding. Mediations generally require a two to four hour commitment. Some individuals volunteer once a month, while others volunteer several times a week. To ensure success, all of our new mediators co-mediate with experienced mediators as often as they wish or prefer. **If you are an attorney, mediating for us counts as pro bono credit.** In addition, WCDRC offers regular two hour "roundtable" training sessions to its community of volunteer mediators on a variety of interesting topics.

Please contact Bern Dempsey, Executive Director, at bdempsey@mediation-wayne.org, (313) 561-3500 or visit our website at www.mediation-wayne.org if you are interested in additional information or a schedule of upcoming trainings!