



**NEW YORK STATE  
DISPUTE  
RESOLUTION  
ASSOCIATION**

2022-2023

# OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

NYSDRA is the association of the statewide network of 20 Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRCs) throughout New York State. Under a service agreement, memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding between NYSDRA and each CDRC, services are provided in all 62 counties in New York State. NYSDRA’s programs, and by extension the services of the CDRCs, are available to all New Yorkers. These services are designed to provide the timely and satisfactory resolution to a wide range of conflicts. Such conflicts might otherwise be litigated, but as the costs and time required to pursue a court case is prohibitive to many low-income individuals, the services become vital in helping low-income New Yorkers access justice, often resulting in resolution of many contentious issues, that would otherwise have a negative impact on the social and financial circumstances of those individual accessing the services. NYSDRA’s programs, through subcontracted relationships with CDRCs, therefore, provide resolution to problems facing New Yorkers in rural, suburban, and urban areas, and offer access and opportunity for resolution to conflict in a wide range of issues faced by many low-income New Yorkers in areas of family, youth, disability services, property, and community disputes. In many cases, parties resolve their disputes leading to improved relationships, improved communication, time, and financial savings.

During the reporting period of April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, NYSDRA provided community legal education to approximately 332,634 individuals through community dispute resolution center trainings, live and recorded webinars, advertisements in various media outlets, print outreach materials distributed (e.g. brochures), social media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter), postings on the NYSDRA web site, community presentations about available services, trainings hosted by NYSDRA, and people reached at conferences attended and/or co-hosted.



**Population Served:** Community Dispute Resolution Centers

**Total Funding:** \$871,992

**Total IOLA Grant:** \$167,120

**Staffing Full Time Equivalent:**

- Total Staff: 6
- Paralegals: 0
- Lawyers: 0
- Other: 6

From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, the primary target population for NYSDRA programs included New Yorkers in need of conflict resolution services, including mediation, and other services aimed at improving New Yorkers' access to justice and meeting the need for quality means of conflict management and resolution. This includes the range of programs and services managed by NYSDRA and provided by the Community Dispute Resolution Centers, such as our Disability Mediation Programs (Early Intervention Mediation Program, Special Education Mediation, and ACCES-VR Mediation Program), the Community Mediation Service Corps Program (CMSC AmeriCorps), and the Lemon Law Arbitration Program.

Several years ago, in an effort to reduce court backlogs, improve case processing and deliver the highest quality justice to New Yorkers, the presumptive Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) initiative was introduced by former Chief Judge DiFiore. This transformed the culture of the courts from one of "litigate first" to "mediate first." Presumptive ADR opened the door that enables litigants to resolve their disputes using resolution strategies such as mediation, arbitration, neutral evaluation, restorative justice, and a host of alternative methods. Each county in New York State offers ADR options in its courts and communities.

An invaluable community resource, CDRCs provide a wide range of conflict resolution options including Conflict Coaching, Restorative Justice circles and a host of other services. CDRC services are provided at no or low cost to the people of New York State with the vast majority of services provided pro bono by volunteers professionally trained community mediators.

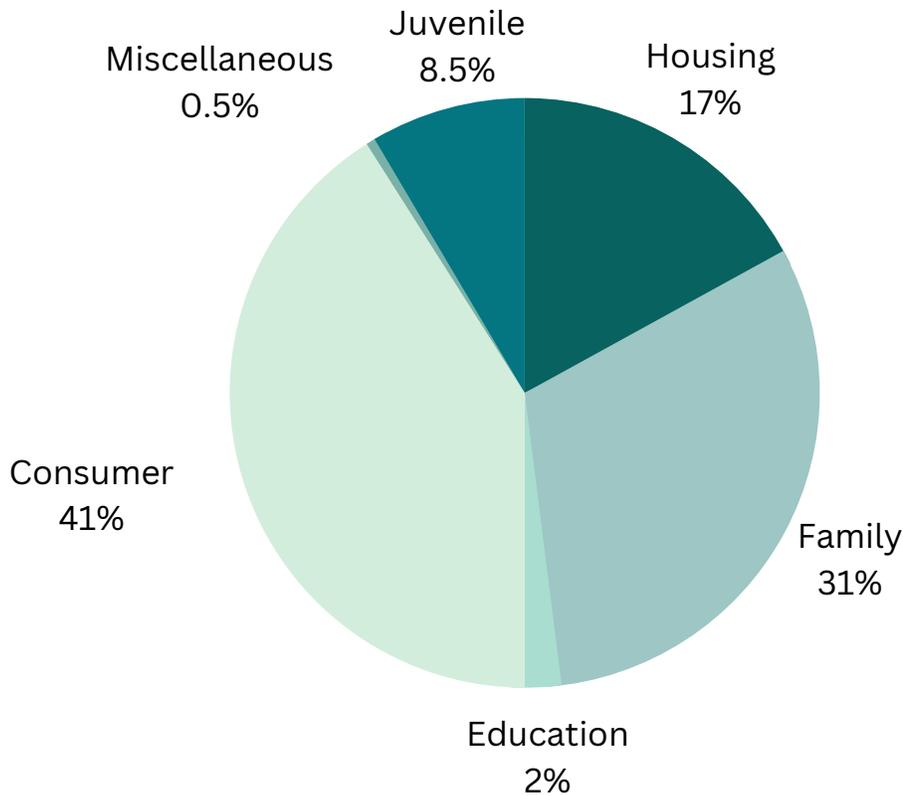
From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, 53,499 individuals were served by the CDRC network. Of the 53,499 served, it is estimated that 30,739 individuals were served by the CDRC network as a result of direct court referrals from judicial districts resulting in approximately 11,658 judicial-based mediation cases. Reporting for the fiscal year was retrieved from the Unified Court System's Office of Court Administration, Annual statistical report fiscal year 2022-2023, available [here](#).

According to the most recent data available by the NYS Unified Court System's Office of Court Administration, these 750 volunteers logged approximately 18,000 volunteer hours at an in-kind rate of \$75/hour.

# OTHER SERVICES: OVERVIEW

NYSDRA has several state contracts including the ACCES-VR Mediation Program, Special Education Mediation Program, AmeriCorps Community Mediation Service Corps, Developmental Disabilities Planning Council Project, Early Intervention Mediation Program, and the NYS Attorney General’s Lemon Law Arbitration Program. NYSDRA manages these state contracts for mediation programs and oversees the program service delivery through the network of CDRCs located throughout New York state. Each contract has case metrics and available funding for outreach efforts to increase awareness and usage of these community programs.

**52,078**  
people  
benefitted from  
**20,659**  
Alternative Dispute  
Resolution Matters



**ADR by Legal Problem Area**

For each of our programs we have an estimated caseload per year and have seen increases in certain programs as a result of community legal education through outreach, networking, informational materials, and online and print communications. Each program works closely with CDRCs and state partners to increase case load goals, refine service delivery, program improvements, and develop strategies to influence populations to utilize dispute resolution services as an alternative to other due process forums such as court processes and impartial hearings.

**332,634**  
people benefitted  
from *Community  
Legal Education  
Services*

## OTHER SERVICES: EXAMPLES

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- NYSDRA offered a virtual training for the New York State Education Department's Quality Assurance and Monitoring Unit to increase awareness about its mediation programs and expand the pool of trained mediators to support its mediation based work. This two-day training was held March 29 and 30, 2023 with a training class of 45 registrants.
- NYSDRA also offered a virtual training for the New York State Attorney General's Lemon Law Arbitration program. This two-day training was held March 6 and 7, 2023 and saw the largest training cohort to date, with 73 registrants.
- In Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programming and Community Legal Education, NYSDRA continued providing credit-bearing, certified programs throughout the reporting period for both attorneys and non-attorneys. Through the reporting period, a total 61 CLE credit certificates were issued.

## OTHER SERVICES: TECHNOLOGY

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With the support of IOLA funding, we also recently contracted with Language Line Services, Inc., to provide language interpretation (phone and video) and translation services to all of the CDRCs. In addition to providing all CDRCs with access to translators, they now also have the ability to submit hard copy marketing materials and other assets to the Language Line translation department so that materials can be translated into various languages at no cost to the centers.

NYSDRA's Disability Mediation Programs and Lemon Law program managers continue to host frequent meetings with CDRC staff and volunteers to discuss trends, best practices and provide a forum for problem solving.

We continue to analyze program data in order to identify trends, and areas of improvement to inform outreach efforts and program awareness initiatives. The goal is to standardize our data metrics and management systems in order to improve our ability to reference and utilize year over year data reporting.

NYSDRA is located at Hone Coworks, a collaborative co-working community in Albany, New York. This move was made several years ago, and allowed NYSDRA to downsize its annual rent expenditure and streamline daily operations to become more efficient.

## OTHER SERVICES: TRAININGS

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NYSDRA continues to prioritize training for staff and Board members, who regularly attended virtual trainings and webinars for professional development and skill development. Some of the trainings offered to CDRC staff, volunteers and Board members included:

- Basic Mediation Training (BMT) – presented in collaboration with Genesis Fisher of Fisher Law Firm (February 2023)
- EDNY ADR Department and Columbia Law School Ethics Colloquium: "A Deeper Dive into Mediating in the Age of Burnout" (April 2023)
- Board Fundamentals and Nonprofit Leadership (February 2023)
- Lemon Law Arbitration Training (March 2023)
- ACCES-VR Mediator Training (March 2023)

NYSDRA is actively developing a comprehensive training program that will serve the CDRC network, individual NYSDRA members, independent ADR practitioners and the general public. In the coming months, we plan to host several trainings aimed at increasing both CDRC capacity and competencies.

In January 2023, NYSDRA held its annual meeting with the full membership, where the election of new board members took place. At the annual meeting, NYSDRA's Executive Director delivered a "state of the association" update, and also provided insights into her vision for NYSDRA over the next three years. Several goals were

shared around increased advocacy, an expanded training program, improved member benefits, fundraising, refining of mission/vision and increasing the capacity and areas of competence of the CDRC network.

NYSDRA initiated its strategic planning process in early 2023 by securing the services of CapitalCFO, a local, woman-owned full-service accounting and association management firm located in Saratoga Springs, New York. The output will be our Three-Year strategic roadmap for Advancing the ADR Field.

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## PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS

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The work of the CDRC network is dependent on the work of community volunteer mediators and arbitrators. NYSDRA provides support and technical assistance to volunteers across the state as well as training and professional development opportunities in the form of in-person trainings, webinars, and sessions at the annual conference. NYSDRA highly values the work of volunteers throughout the CDRC network as mediators and arbitrators. The CDRC network has approximately 750 volunteers, who logged approximately 18,000 volunteer hours at an in-kind rate of \$75/hour.

NYSDRA continues to support CDRC work, focusing on volunteer recruitment and engagement and forging new relationships within communities to make CDRC services more widely known and accessible. NYSDRA actively recruits and encourages participation from students and membership is made available at a discounted rate.

**750 ADR Volunteers volunteered 18,000 hours**

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# SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATIONS

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NYSDRA collaborated with attorney Genesis Fisher of the Fisher Law Practice to co-host a Basic Mediation Training for the public. Training sessions took place on February 7 - 9th and February 14 - 16th. As an approved CLE provider, NYSDRA provided CLE credits for attendees.

In February 2023, we entered in an academic partnership with Marist College. The partnership offers special tuition pricing for all employees, members, volunteers, and immediate family members. This is part of our campaign to expand membership values and demonstrate value.

NYSDRA has been invited to be an in-kind sponsor partner for the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR-GNY)'s annual conference, which attracts approximately 200 attendees. NYSDRA's role would be our acting as the accrediting body for CLEs for the conference. This is an opportunity to further cultivate our partnership with ACR-GNY and to get NYSDRA's name out in front of this audience to promote our work and that of the network.

NYSDRA held a two-day virtual ACCES-VR Mediation Training with 45 attendees on March 29 and March 30 in partnership with ACCES-VR Central Office staff.

NYSDRA continued its collaborative work with schools through its AmeriCorps Community Mediation Service Corps (CMSC) program. In the fall, CMSC members were trained in Conflict Coaching and Restorative Circles. They worked with alumni mentors to practice and hone in on their skills that they will use to work with youth in school-based and community settings as they navigate conflict.

The Community Mediation Service Corps ("AmeriCorps") program is funded through the New York State Commission on National and Community Service for the AmeriCorps Community Mediation Service Corps program. The desired outcome of the program and logic model is to produce and analyze outcome data regarding the use of conflict coaching with youth in school-based and community settings to measure the impact on youth participant perspectives on the intensity of conflict, perception of others involved in the conflict, ability to plan for the management of conflict, and how conflict impacts the ability to focus on academics. As part of our evaluation, we measure youth participant perspectives prior to and post conflict coaching sessions.

NYSDRA was notified on August 10, 2022 by the NYS Commission on National and Community Service that our application for administration of the AmeriCorps Community Mediation Service Corps (CMSC) program was, once again, awarded for a contract period of 09/01/2022 - 08/31/2025, enabling NYSDRA and the CDRC network to continue its partnership under this federal program.

NYSDRA relies on expertise from professionals in many related organizations and engages in events sponsored by other dispute resolution organizations. NYSDRA is an active member of several organizations whose work is critical in enhancing and promoting the dispute resolution field as well as the nonprofit sector. These groups include The Association for Conflict Resolution Greater New York Chapter, Inc. (ACR-GNY), the New York Council of Nonprofits, Inc., the National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM), the National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education, New York State Council on Divorce Mediation, and the national Coalition of Agricultural Mediation Programs.

## SOURCES OF FUNDING

New York State Dispute Resolution Association received **\$871,992** in total funding this past year

Federal Funding	\$109,981
IOLA Grant	\$167,120
State Funding	\$515,351
Other	\$76,853
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$871,992</b>

