

**NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM**

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**Community Dispute Resolution  
Centers Program**

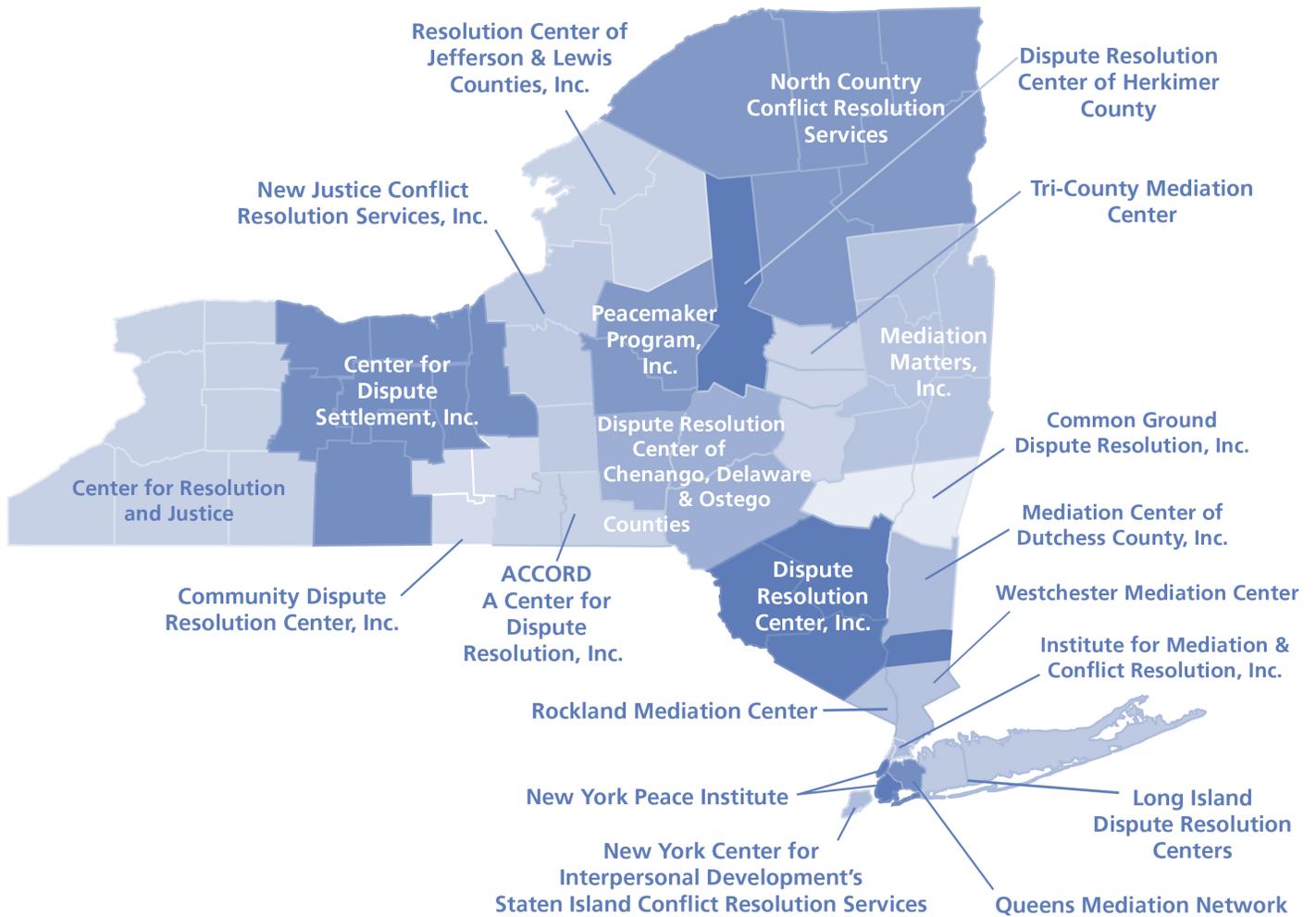
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**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**2013-2014**

# New York State's Community Dispute Resolution Centers



2013-14



*New York State  
Unified Court System  
25 Beaver Street  
New York, New York 10004*

*A. Gail Prudenti  
Chief Administrative Judge*

212-428-2120

November 10, 2014

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of the State of New York  
Executive Chamber  
State Capital  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Pursuant to Chapter 524 of the laws of 2005, I transmit the annual report of the activities of the Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program covering fiscal period April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

The Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program, a public-private partnership in its 32<sup>nd</sup> year, is available to every citizen in the 62 New York counties as a resource to resolve legal and community disputes. This cost-effective and nationally recognized program serves nearly 80,000 New Yorkers each year. The New York State Unified Court System is indebted to the more than 1,400 professionally-trained volunteer mediators across our state, in conjunction with Community Dispute Resolution Center staff, who help parties communicate, allowing them to resolve their conflicts in a peaceful and meaningful way.

We very much appreciate your support of this valuable program.

Very truly yours,

A. GAIL PRUDENTI  
Chief Administrative Judge

Enclosure



## New York State Unified Court System

**HON. JONATHAN LIPPMAN**

*Chief Judge of the State of New York*

**HON. A. GAIL PRUDENTI**

*Chief Administrative Judge*

## Office of Court Administration

**RONALD P. YOUNKINS, ESQ.**

*Executive Director*

**EUGENE W. MYERS**

*Chief of Operations*

## Division of Professional and Court Services

**NANCY M. MANGOLD**

*Director*

**DANIEL M. WEITZ, ESQ.**

*Deputy Director*

## Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution Programs

**DANIEL M. WEITZ, ESQ.**

*Coordinator*

**MARK V. COLLINS**

*Assistant Coordinator*

## MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR



Before participating in mediation, Maria and Tiffany had an angry, hostile relationship. With the assistance of their local Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC), this mom and her teen daughter were given a forum for clarifying their perspectives, allowing the two to negotiate a curfew and take other steps towards a more trusting relationship. Now, Tiffany keeps her mother informed of her whereabouts and Maria has come to accept Tiffany's activities.

After their breakup, Susan and John would get into a heated exchange – usually ending in tears – each time their five-year-old son Justin was scheduled to spend time at the other parent's home. Once these parents engaged in mediation and began working through their issues, their son became less anxious about transferring from home to home and even began looking forward to being with both parents simultaneously. Now, while Susan's and John's conversations are kept to a minimum, they are at least cordial.

These are just two of the thousands of real-life examples that demonstrate the value of the mediation and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services offered by New York's CDRCs. In 1981, Article 21-A of the New York State Judiciary Law established the Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program (CDRCP), setting forth a vision of a forum for the resolution of conflicts. Today, the CDRCP is an internationally renowned public-private partnership, supporting a statewide network of CDRCs that meets the highest standards for the delivery of mediation and ADR services. Every CDRC offers free or low-cost mediation or ADR services to parties in dispute.

This report, which covers the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014, highlights the wide range of ADR services available to New Yorkers, many of whom lack the financial resources to access ADR on their own. Between April 2013 and March 2014, CDRCs served **70,602** individuals, screening **28,792** cases and conducting **15,394** mediations and other ADR sessions statewide.

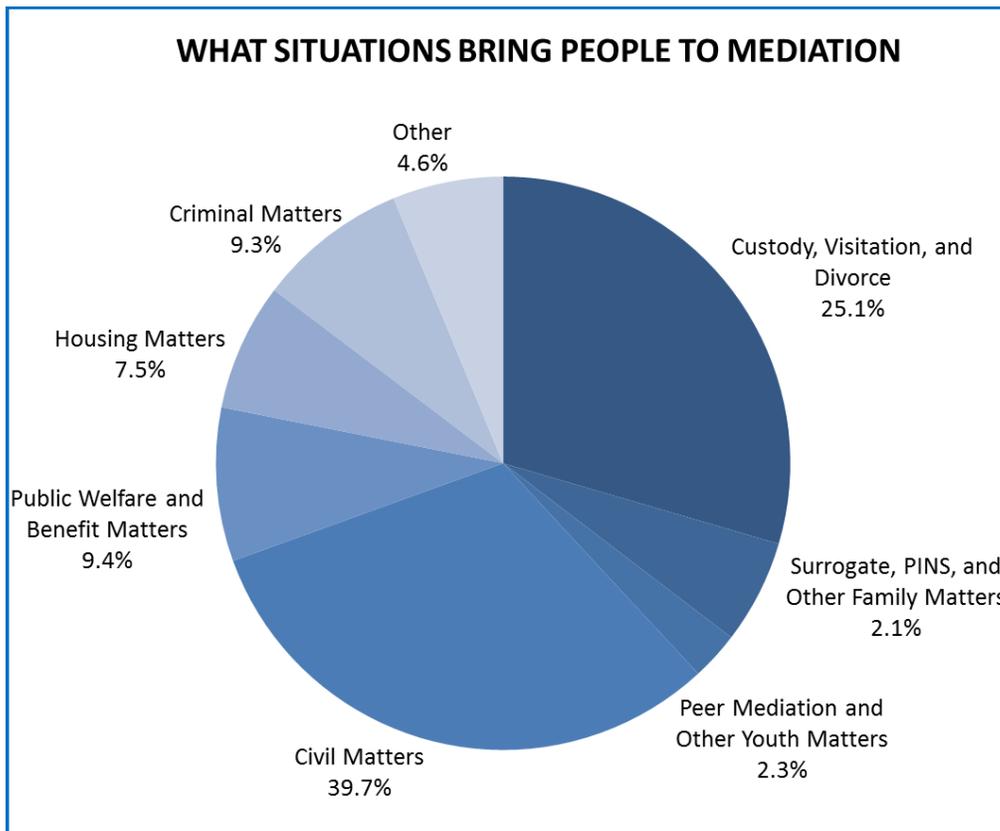
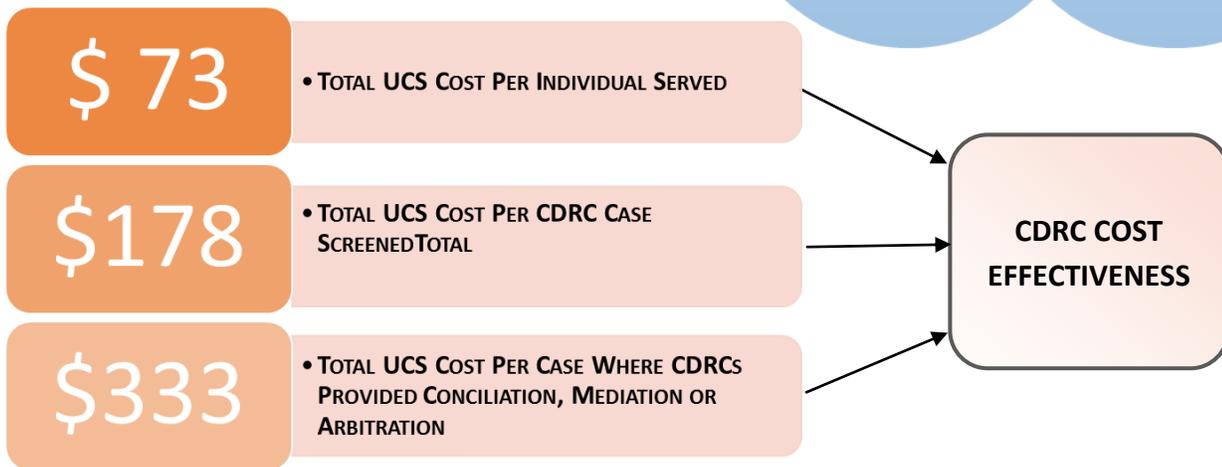
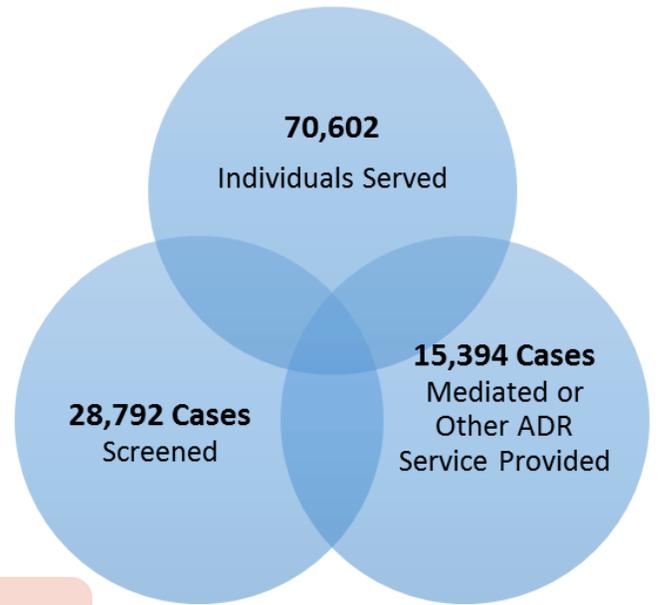
In the pages that follow, you will learn about the strong community and court partnerships that our CDRCs continue to forge, and the positive impact of their work on urban, suburban and rural neighborhoods across our state, including the centers' ongoing dedication to the delivery of quality services focusing on issues affecting the stability and well-being of families and children. This report also includes information regarding CDRCP funding and pays tribute to the CDRCP's volunteer mediators – the backbone of this critical program.

Looking forward, we remain steadfast in our support of the vital services offered through the CDRCP. A statistical supplement with information pertaining to the CDRC Program's cost effectiveness, case types and referral sources, among other data, is available online at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/Publications.shtml>.

**Daniel Weitz**

Deputy Director, Division of Professional and Court Services;  
Statewide ADR Coordinator

## 2013-14 CASE DATA



## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

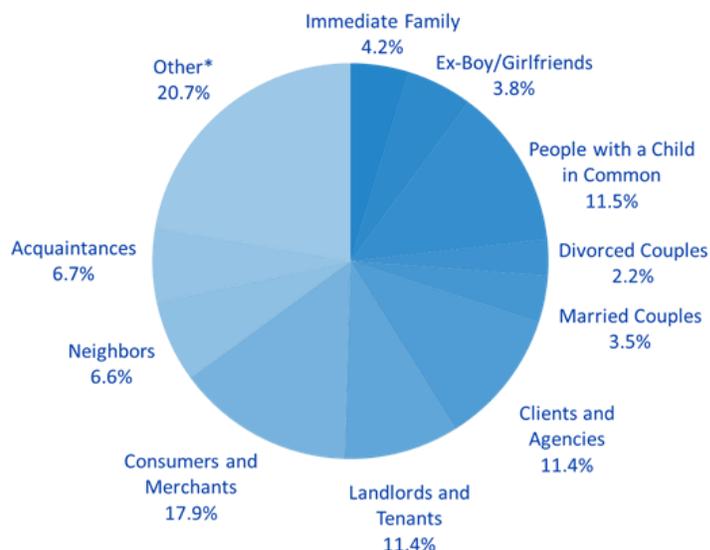
The Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program (CDRCP) is an initiative of the New York State Unified Court System's (UCS) Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program. The CDRCP was established in 1981 to offer ADR services to facilitate the resolution of conflicts between individuals and help avert unproductive conflict avoidance, destructive confrontation, prolonged litigation, and even violence. Mediation, the most common form of ADR provided by CDRCs, is a process in which a neutral third party helps people in conflict talk through their differences and, if possible, come up with their own solution. Mediators, unlike judges or arbitrators, do not make decisions for people in conflict, but empower the parties to discuss or resolve conflict in ways that work for them.

CDRCs mediate a wide range of disputes, from disagreements between neighbors to custody and visitation disputes, landlord-tenant matters, student conflicts, juvenile delinquency and status offense issues involving youth, and even matters involving low-level crimes. Any New Yorker may use the services of his or her local CDRC whether or not the individual has a case pending in court. In addition to providing conflict resolution services, CDRCs develop partnerships with local agencies, schools and other groups to meet the needs of local residents.

Once a case is referred to mediation, a CDRC staff member performs a full intake and screening to determine whether the dispute is amenable to mediation. If so, and both parties agree to mediate, the CDRC assigns a professionally trained volunteer to mediate the case. The vast majority of cases handled by CDRCs are mediated by volunteers from the local community. To promote high quality services, the ADR Office sets training requirements, develops curriculum guidelines, certifies trainers and requires that volunteers complete a CDRC apprenticeship before mediating cases. The CDRCP funds independent not-for-profit agencies (CDRCs) in every county of New York State. The CDRCs received **\$5,121,042** in New York State court system funds between April 2013 and March 2014, nearly the entire amount of which was matched by various funding sources on the local level.

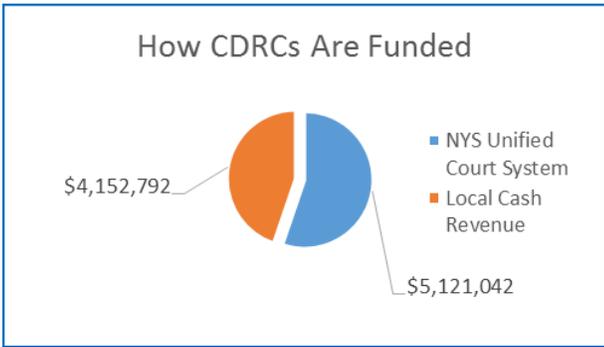
In 2013, CDRCs provided services to the courts and individuals in **11,584** civil matters, **6,635** custody and visitation (parenting) matters, **767** matrimonial disputes, **576** juvenile delinquency and Persons in Need of Supervision matters; **2,279** public welfare and benefit matters, **2,232** housing disputes, **2,570** criminal matters and **153** surrogate matters.

### WHO THE CDRCs SERVE



\*CDRCs track an additional 19 types of party relationships including Parents and Children, Co-Workers, Employers and Employees, and Schoolmates

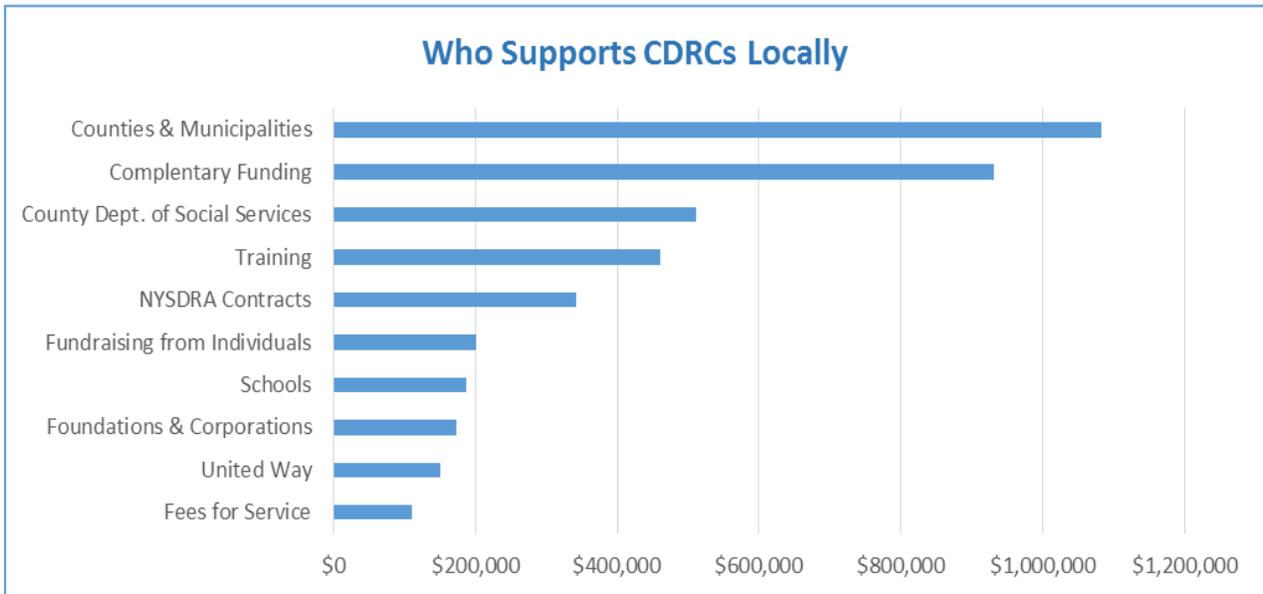
### STATE – LOCAL PARTNERSHIP



The Community Dispute Resolution Centers were founded based on a funding model that encourages state and local partnerships. The New York State Unified Court System’s 2013-2014 contribution of 5.1 million dollars leveraged an additional 4.1 million dollars of local cash support and 4 million dollars in donated in-kind contributions.

The local cash support is delineated in the “Who Supports CDRCs Locally”, in the chart below. This variety of financial support enables local centers to begin to meet the conflict resolution needs of their communities. And

this does not include the more than 4 million in non-cash in-kind support from the more than 1,400 volunteer mediators, in addition to \$192,499 in donated office space that was used for administrative office work or the convening of mediations. This successful leveraging of NYS Unified Court System revenue has made it possible for local CDRCs to meet the many challenges that conflict presents.



To better understand the true diversity of local funding to the CDRCs as depicted above, the following information is provided to explain the different categories. Counties and Municipalities refers to funding that includes general conflict resolution services; Complementary Funding refers to funding for services that include employee assistance programs, civilian initiated complaints against police, and Surrogate Decision-Making Committees; County Department of Social Services funding refers to funding that includes parent-child and other conflict management services; Training fees refer to funding obtained for mediation and conflict management services; NYSDRA contracts include funding for mediation services involving agriculture, early intervention, special education and vocational rehabilitation in addition to Lemon Law arbitration; Fundraising includes individual contributions; Schools funding refers to funding focused on peer mediation and general conflict resolution education; Foundations and Corporations refers to grants for alternative dispute resolution programming; United Way funding refers to funding used to promote core conflict resolution services including mediation; and Fees for Service funding includes fees collected from clients of ADR services, e.g. case filing fees, divorce mediation services, and workplace interventions.

## WHAT UCS FUNDING TO CDRCs HAS LEVERAGED

The ADR Office's funding provides CDRCs with the necessary infrastructure to provide free or low—cost mediation and ADR services to individuals and families throughout the state. The primary goal of this funding is to empower parties to play a greater role in deciding the outcome of their disputes and perhaps through a positive “ripple effect”, promote effective communication and harmony within our communities, one conflict at a time.

This potential “ripple effect” can also be seen more broadly through the leveraging of the CDRC infrastructure. The funding that UCS provides to CDRCs for ADR services can only extend so far. As a result, CDRCs must leverage UCS funds in order to respond more fully to the dispute resolution needs of their communities. For example, some CDRCs provide fee-based trainings and consulting work to individuals and businesses within the larger community and then use those funds to hire additional staff. CDRCs also leverage UCS funds to broaden the scope of their services by collaborating with other local social service agencies and municipal governments to address pressing social needs beyond the resolution of specific conflicts. For example, through funding from local school districts, CDRCs provide peer mediation and conflict resolution education for youth in various communities throughout the state. Furthermore, with funding from municipal governments and their homeless services programs, CDRCs address bullying and homelessness prevention through conflict prevention programs. The NYS Attorney General's Lemon Law Arbitration Program is provided through the CDRC network as is the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Mediation Program. These services are provided at far less cost to the funding source as a result of the existing CDRC network. Finally, not only do CDRCs leverage UCS funds to more fully respond to the conflict resolution needs of their communities, but other worthwhile community services are often made possible through the CDRC infrastructure as well. UCS funds may even be utilized to meet county needs outside the scope of services CDRCs traditionally provide. For example, several CDRCs are housed in organizations that also provide valuable services such Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). These programs require far less investment of community or agency funding as the services are leveraged through the CDRC but fulfill a real need and provide great value to the local community. Other programs have thrived due to this funding synergy including civilian-initiated complaints against the police and surrogate decision-making programs. The New York State Unified Court System is proud to be an active partner with CDRCs in promoting conflict resolution and supporting communities in New York State.

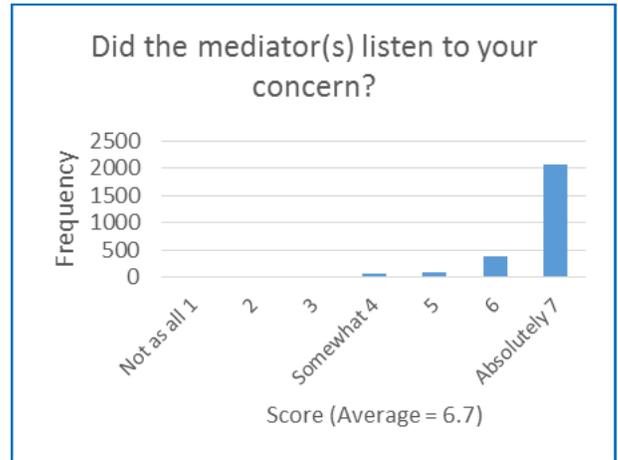
## CDRCs ATTAIN HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFIED OUTCOMES



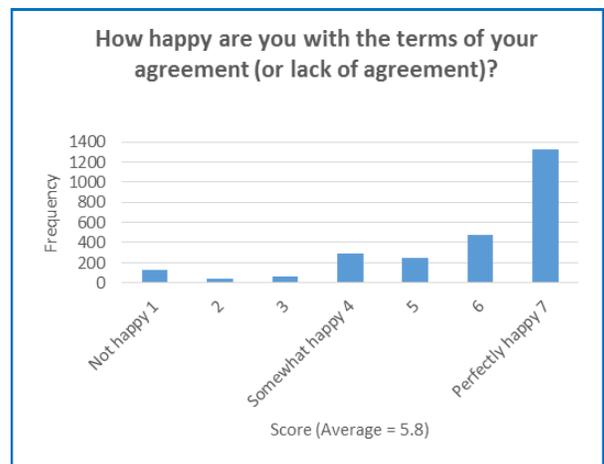
The NYS UCS ADR Office has been collaborating with researchers from Stanford University to conduct a study examining mediation services provided by CDRCs. For years, our own statistics have shown that mediation is effective in resolving disputes. In FY 2013-2014, **more than 74% of cases** that participated in a mediation session resulted in an agreement. However, objective outcomes such as resolution rates are only part of the story. Wanting to study how individual parties experience the process in a subjective dimension, the Stanford research team developed a survey instrument to measure the subjective experience of mediation. The survey asked participants to report on their impressions of the mediator, the process, the outcome, and the other party and was administered in more than 1,500 mediated cases. The data is being analyzed to address a number of research questions, but an early review of the data suggests that mediation participants experience the process in very positive way.

Below is a sampling of the aggregate responses to some of the questions researchers posed to participants:

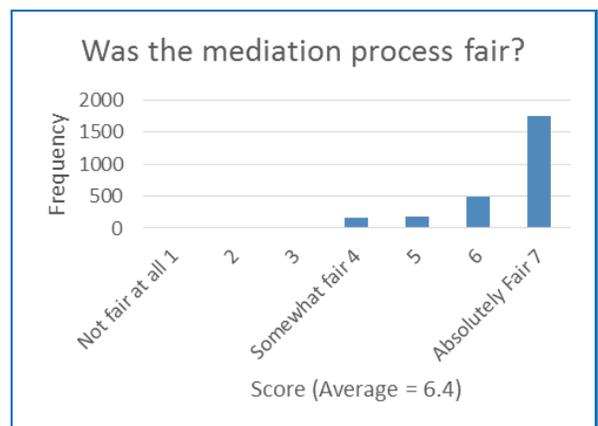
The study included data drawn from more than ten different types of situations, with the majority of case types categorized as parenting plan, misdemeanor criminal, housing, and Juvenile Delinquency/Pre-PINS matters. Regardless of the type of dispute, **89%** of participants felt that mediators listened to their concerns. These results are consistent with one of the primary features of the mediation process. Mediation provides a forum where both parties can share their ideas and concerns and feel heard by a neutral mediator.



Research around the country has shown that mediation is effective in resolving cases. The research team was curious, however, to study how participants actually felt about those agreements. They discovered that parties participating in mediation were predominantly happy with the terms of their agreements. The mediation process supports self-determination, allowing parties to decide what to discuss and the terms of their agreements. Parties often experience a high level of disagreement prompting them to file a case in court, and the mediation process provides a venue where parties can come to mutually satisfying agreements on highly contentious issues.



The study was conducted in more than fifteen locations around the state, including urban, rural, and suburban based CDRCs. Across the state, and regardless of the matter being discussed; more than **92%** of the participants felt overwhelmingly that the mediation process was fair. When parties are involved in the resolution of their own dispute through a CDRC, data demonstrates that parties achieve high satisfaction levels, which also contributes to the high level of compliance with mediated agreements.



## TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR CDRC VOLUNTEER MEDIATORS AND UCS-CERTIFIED TRAINERS

The more than **1,400** New Yorkers who volunteer their time and expertise as mediators are the core of the CDRC, providing communities with access to mediation services in every corner of the state. Collectively, these highly trained volunteers form one of the most vibrant statewide networks of mediators in the nation.

CDRC mediators undergo a demanding certification process. First they must complete a minimum of 30 hours of mediation training provided by a Unified Court System (UCS) ADR Office-certified trainer, covering subjects that include the dynamics of conflict; the goals of the mediation process; effective listening and questioning skills; diversity-related issues; ethics; and agreement writing. In addition to successfully completing this initial training, volunteers must complete an apprenticeship with their local CDRC, with the apprentice learning from experienced mediators and CDRC staff by role playing, as well as observing and co-mediating actual disputes. After the trainee has co-mediated a minimum of five cases, CDRC staff members observe the apprentice and provide a written assessment. If ready, the novice mediator is then certified by the local CDRC, becoming eligible to mediate cases without a mentor. To remain certified, CDRC mediators must mediate a minimum of three cases and complete at least six hours of continuing education each year. To become a volunteer mediator, contact your local CDRC by visiting <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/ogramlist.shtml>.

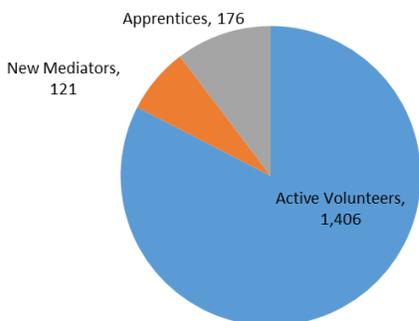
**Total Volunteer Hours Spent in Training: 1,212**  
**Total Number of New and Active Volunteers Trained: 2,304**



UCS mediation trainers also undergo a rigorous and lengthy process to become certified. These trainers work closely with an ADR Office staff member for six months or more to prepare their curriculum and review each aspect of their training. UCS certified trainers are among the best qualified in the country, equipped with the tools and expertise to provide CDRC volunteer mediators with a solid foundation in the skills and principles of mediation. There are currently **21** certified basic mediation

trainers; **ten** of whom are also certified custody-visitation (or parenting plan) mediation trainers. To view a current list of certified trainers, visit <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/Publications/InfoforPrograms/CertifiedTrainers.pdf>.

**2013 Statewide Volunteer Numbers**



**Stephen Slate trains new mediators.**

## CDRCs CONTINUE TO HELP FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITIONS

*From Brooklyn to Buffalo and beyond, CDRCs are helping families navigate through a wide range of difficult transitions and overcome a variety of challenges.*

CDRCs provided tailored, affordable mediation and ADR services in **6,635** matters relating to child custody, visitation, support, and **767** matrimonial disputes to those individuals willing to resolve these issues collaboratively outside the courtroom. Beyond these cases, CDRCs also provided family transition services in a wide range of areas; some of which are included herein.

In Queens County, Community Mediation Services Inc. (CMS) launched a groundbreaking pilot, the Parent Pledge Project (PPP), offering parents living apart the opportunity to participate in mediation – free of cost – to establish voluntary child support and parenting agreements. The program is a collaboration of CMS, the New York City Human Resources Administration, the New York City Office of Child Support Enforcement, the Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative, The Children’s Aid Society and other partners. Additionally, the Center for Dispute Settlement offers a fee-for-service binding arbitration program to divorcing couples with personal property disputes through its Family Divorce Arbitration Program, recommended to parties by Supreme Court judges and matrimonial attorneys in order to avoid costly and lengthy litigation. The arbitration is offered in each of the eight counties comprising the Seventh Judicial District and is served by specially trained staff and volunteer arbitrators.



### SURROGATE COURT DECISION MAKING Case Numbers

52

- Center for Dispute Settlement

83

- Child and Family Services

141

- Peacemaker Program

217

- Common Ground

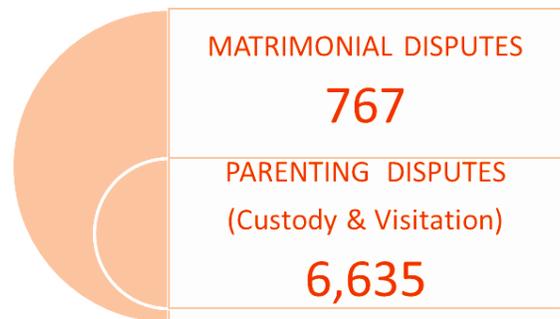
379

- Long Island Dispute Resolution Center

Five CDRCs handled **872** Surrogate Court Decision Making (SCDM) cases during the reporting period. SCDM is a process whereby specially trained volunteers who serve in this program make major medical treatment decisions on behalf of people who lack the capacity to make their own medical decisions and who have no legally authorized and willing surrogate to make decisions on their behalf. At the Long Island Dispute Resolution Center, volunteers assist developmentally disabled individuals who reside in state-funded facilities. As in all SCDM cases, these volunteers serve on a team comprised of an attorney, a medical professional and a family member of the client to assist in making critical decisions affecting the individual’s healthcare needs.

This year, CDRCs continued to partner with local social services organizations to better respond to the needs of families in crisis. For instance, Ontario County’s Center for Dispute Settlement Transition Circles program helps women, upon their release from the Ontario County jail, rebuild their lives. This initiative brings former inmates together with their loved ones to talk about the pain suffered by these families and how the women can work to help repair the damage they caused. With the help of the Center’s skilled volunteers and staff, these women, perhaps for the first time in their lives, are able to create a vision for their future by devising a transition plan. Additionally, in Columbia and Greene counties, Common Ground volunteers help facilitate the resolution of disputes among adult siblings regarding their parents’ finances, residence, respite care, safety, medical care and other sensitive matters.

CDRCs also provide tailored ADR services to address the unique issues facing veterans returning from service. Through a grant from the New York State Interest on Lawyer Account Fund and the New York State Dispute Resolution Association, CMS in Queens County operates a mediation program that combines the skills of veteran – mediators and experienced family mediators to effectively respond to the needs of veterans struggling to re-enter civilian life and their families. The Peacemaker Program, which serves Oneida and Madison counties, has also developed a mediation program, “Combat to Clarity: Collaborative Problem-Solving With and For Veterans,” that utilizes veteran-mediators. Former servicemen and women trained as mediators – because they have a firsthand understanding of the types of difficulties faced by those returning home from duty – bring greater trust and credibility to the mediation process.



**CDRCs SERVE AS A RESOURCE TO ONE ANOTHER...**

**JEFF SHEPARDSON OF COMMUNITY DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER OF CHEMUNG, SCHUYLER AND TOMPKINS COUNTIES**  
*featured as Nonprofit Member in the Spotlight for the Institute for Human Services’ May 2013 Newsletter:*

***Asked how other nonprofits in the region benefit from CDRC’s work, Jeff responded:***

*“Other non-profits should have CDRC on their speed-dial for situations where conflict is often a challenge for interpersonal interactions where their clients are involved. CDRC can provide mediation services at no cost for clients in conflict with service providers, family members, neighbors, supervisors, etc. Wherever conflict is presenting obstacles to your work with your clients, CDRC can help. CDRC can also be a valuable resource for agencies, businesses and organizations. Many such entities are in a real pressure cooker with increased demands and decreased resources. As a result tempers can flare and frustrations increase, setting the stage for conflict becoming an on-going, negative, counter-productive dynamic. CDRC offers facilitation services for these situations (think of it as mediation for groups).”*

## CDRCS CONTINUE TO OFFER CRITICAL SUPPORT TO LOCAL YOUTH

*Just as Maria and Tiffany, mentioned in the “Message from the Coordinator”, received mediation services for their parent-teen issues, Community Dispute Resolution Centers have traditionally offered a wide variety of services to youth. This article outlines some examples of how CDRCs provided services to youth over the reporting period.*

New York’s CDRCs have a long history of incorporating restorative justice principles to address juvenile delinquency and other youth-related problems. These principles of holding offenders accountable, repairing harm to the victims and reintegrating both into the community take various forms, but the focus is on encouraging young people to meet with their peers, parents, community members, and service professionals to address behaviors that negatively impact individuals, families and communities and, by managing constructively, to support healthy individual development and relationships.

CDRCS offer conflict management and dispute resolution training for students, teachers and school administrators in **168 schools** and **166 school districts** statewide. The number of peer mediation cases this year totaled 432, and there were

*This year, 2,317 student-mediators and school administrators statewide received 685 hours of training.*

1,291 school referrals. In addition, CDRCs provide conflict resolution and anger management education, alternative suspension programs, mediation to Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS), victim or community impact panels, family-group or accountability conferencing, community service reparations, mentoring, and youth court coordination. CDRCs also partner with schools to provide conflict-resolution training and other educational services.

Peer mediation programs continue to flourish, with trained student-mediators assisting their elementary, middle and high school peers in a range of conflicts. This year, **2,317** student-mediators and school administrators statewide received **685 hours** of training. Westchester County’s CLUSTER Peer Mediation Program, for instance, which has been in operation for over 15 years and has grown from a part-time initiative in four high schools to a firmly established resource for school districts countywide, now has on-site coordinators stationed at eleven middle and high schools.

Through the Community Dispute Resolution Center of Herkimer County’s school-based conflict resolution program, The TREATY Program (Teaching Reconciliation in Education to Administrators, Teachers and Youth), 1,095 young people aged nine to twelve received ten one-hour lessons in violence prevention and bullying prevention during the school year. Funded by the CDRC, United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Area, Herkimer County, participating schools, and Catholic Charities of Herkimer County, students learn to identify bullying behavior and cyber-bullying and how to deal effectively with it through collaborative projects and role-playing. They also learn to discover the sources and elements of conflict, how emotions affect their behavior, how to manage anger, how to make decisions that produce positive consequences, and how to communicate effectively.

The Mediation Center of Dutchess County's Anti-Bullying Initiative is also addressing the troubling rise in bullying. Through its program, young people experiencing or otherwise impacted by bullying are receiving support and services, and awareness is being raised regarding the devastating rise in suicides by youngsters who may have been victims of bullying.

Pictures from Dutchess Mediation's 2013 Anti-bullying Walkathon.

CDRCs statewide are also providing services in cases involving youthful offenders and addressing issues impacting young people at risk of becoming offenders. CDRCs have developed dynamic partnerships with local law enforcement agencies to create restorative justice-based programming for youths who have committed minor criminal offenses, offering mediation, dialogue and other assistance. For example, at the New York Peace Institute in Manhattan and Brooklyn, through their Community Conferencing program, a trained facilitator helps crime victims, offenders and others decide how to repair harm, prevent low-level crimes and resolve community conflicts. Problems addressed include property damage and assaults committed by local youth. Upstate, in Steuben County, the Center for Dispute Settlement offers Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) mediation as an alternative to the court process for youngsters ages 8 to 17 in conflict with their parent(s) or school. Mediators assist youngsters, parents and others involved in the child's life to identify concerns and develop solutions.



At the Westchester and Rockland Mediation Centers of CLUSTER, youth arrested for bringing a weapon to school can participate in a program called "Weapons Group Conferencing." This program allows the young person to meet with members of the Guardians Association – a fraternal organization of African-American law enforcement officers – to discuss why the child brought a weapon into the school as well as the risks and consequences of such an action.

Lastly, in Onondaga County, young men ages 16 to 21 at risk of gang activity and gang-like violence are finding help at New Justice Conflict Resolution Services and the Onondaga Department of Probation through Project RESTORE. This program, reinstated this year because of its previous success, assists at-risk youngsters obtain employment or enroll in school or job training. In addition to a \$50 stipend to those who successfully complete the program, the Department of Probation consider graduation from the program a factor when deciding to adjust an individual's probation. Data gathered on graduates revealed that after completing the class, 48 percent were employed, 33 percent were enrolled in an educational program and 60 percent had reduced law enforcement contact for six months following the program.

CDRCs throughout the state are offering effective interventions to address the myriad problems of youthful offenders and at-risk youngsters, helping them to lead productive, law-abiding lives. These efforts prove the veracity of the old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."



Dear Sir/Madam:

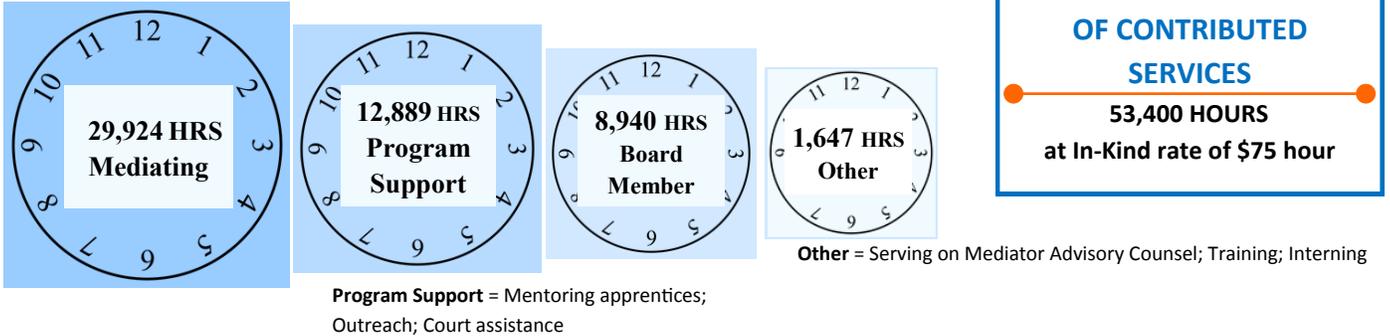
This past October, there was an incident in which a young male Spanish-speaking student was assaulted on the way home from school by a young male African-American student. The assaulter physically punched the other student in the face, resulting in the student's nose being broken. Once the victim was brought to the TEAM Center by a teacher, he explained to the Social Work Intern that he was assaulted by another student. We informed him that he could notify the police and file an assault charge, but he feared that retaliation would take place and he would be further injured. With that, someone suggested we bring both parties together in a room for peer mediation/ conflict resolution. Once together, the victim asked why he was physically assaulted, and was told because he was "talking trash." The victim did not know what the assaulter was talking about, but asked the Social Work Intern to translate something for him: "Please forgive me for whatever it is I did to make you hit me." No one in the room expected that statement to be made, including the assaulter. The student was speechless, stood up out of his chair and shook the hand of the student he had punched in the face and apologized.

Later on in the week, the young Spanish student had a separate incident involving a different group of students, in which the other student, who had assaulted him earlier, came to his defense and intervened on his behalf. This incident shows how strong conflict resolution can be. Two young men, who had no reason to have any kind of issues with one another, left the TEAM Center as peers who respected one another. Both students, teachers, and other school faculty should be able to realize that talking out issues can avoid major problems.

**Letter from Hempstead High School to Long Island Dispute Resolution Centers**

## THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS OF CDRCP VOLUNTEERS

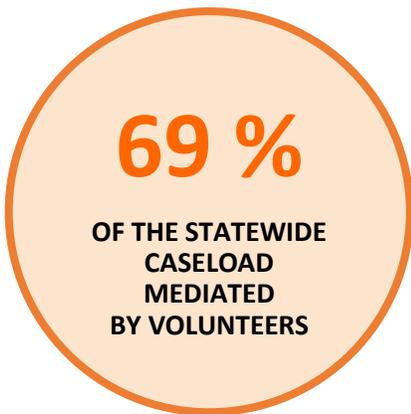
**In 2013-14, VOLUNTEER DONATED 250,449 HOURS COMBINED**



CDRC mediators constitute one of the most vibrant statewide networks of volunteers in the country. By conservative estimates, these generous in-kind contributions would total \$17,022,975 million of contributed services in donated in-kind contributions. This energetic and dedicated group of individuals – who hail from all parts of the state – work diligently to uphold and promote the values of the CDRCs, utilizing their special training and skills to help resolve a wide range of conflicts and to build bridges within their respective communities. The CDRC volunteers give generously of their time and talents so that individuals and families throughout the state may avail themselves of free or low-cost services, at convenient locations and during day and evening hours.

Beyond mediation, CDRC volunteers contribute in many other ways to the work and mission of the centers, serving as board members, donors, informal ambassadors and – as in the case of some senior volunteers at Common Ground in Columbia County – members of an Elder Program Advisory Panel. They also serve as volunteers in other programs funded by the Unified Court System, such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and mediators or arbitrators for the Part 137 Attorney-Client Fee Dispute Program.

Through the years, CDRC volunteers have been honored both locally and nationally for their extraordinary work and commitment. Recently, volunteer Raymond “Bud” Baker, of The Center for Resolution and Justice, became the first recipient of the “Outstanding Volunteer” award presented by the National Association for Community Mediators (NAFCM), an organization dedicated to supporting peacemakers around the globe. The ADR Office proudly acknowledges and supports the outstanding individuals who comprise the CDRC Program’s volunteer network.



***"Overall, focusing on conflict management skills has profoundly enriched my life, personally and professionally."***

**Bud Baker,  
 NAFCM'S "Outstanding Volunteer"**

### MEDIATOR ETHICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Mediator Ethics Advisory Committee (MEAC) responds to ethics-related inquiries from CDRC mediators and staff, and promotes professional development and consistent practice in the ADR field. Chaired by ADR Office staff, the committee also recommends changes to the Standards of Conduct for CDRC Mediators, which governs the actions of CDRC mediators through the State. MEAC members are drawn from throughout New York State and include CDRC staff members, volunteer mediators, ADR scholars and practitioners.

To read MEAC’s published opinions and the Standards of Conduct for CDRC Mediators, please visit [www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/meac.shtml](http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/meac.shtml) or contact Sheila M. Sproule at [ssproule@nycourts.gov](mailto:ssproule@nycourts.gov).

### CDRCS COLLABORATE TO ASSIST WOMEN OPERATING AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES

In March 2014, eight CDRCs collaborated with The New York State Agricultural Mediation Program (NYSAMP) on “Annie’s Project” – a partnership of the ADR Office, the New York State Dispute Resolution Association (NYSdra) and the Cornell Cooperative Extension. Through this national educational program dedicated to strengthening women’s roles

*“Using mediation...can save your business time and money.”*

- Training participant

in the modern farm enterprise, CDRC staff and volunteers offered workshops to 170 businesswomen at 13 host sites statewide on the principles and techniques of ADR, illustrating its effective use as a risk management tool. Participating centers included ACCORD, Center for Dispute Settlement, the Center for Resolution and Justice, Community Dispute Resolution Center, Dispute Resolution Center, Mediation Matters, The Peacemaker Program, Rural Law Center of New York, and Tri-County Mediation Center.

### ADR OFFICE SPONSORS ADVANCED TRAININGS FOR CDRC MEDIATORS

<b>Advanced Training on Issues, Framing and Agenda-Setting</b> with Rebecca Price at the New York Peace Institute	<b>Advancing Transformative Mediation Interventions</b> with Judy Saul at Community Dispute Resolution Center
<b>Co-Mediation Models</b> with Michelle Leonard Smith at Community Mediation Services	<b>Effectively Working with High Conflict Parties</b> with Jody Miller at Center for Dispute Settlement
<b>Generating Movement</b> in Mediation with Rebecca Price Mediation Matters	<b>Improving Understanding Between Parties in Conflict</b> with Sequoia Stalder at Common Ground, Dispute Resolution Center, and CLUSTER
<b>Intentional Mediation Practice: Lessons from the Transformative Framework</b> with Judy Saul at Catholic Charities – Delaware	<b>Relational Approaches to Workplace Conflict: The Relational Approach</b> with Joseph Folger at Mediation Center of Dutchess
<b>Transformational Communication in Mediation</b> with Richard Orth at ACCORD	

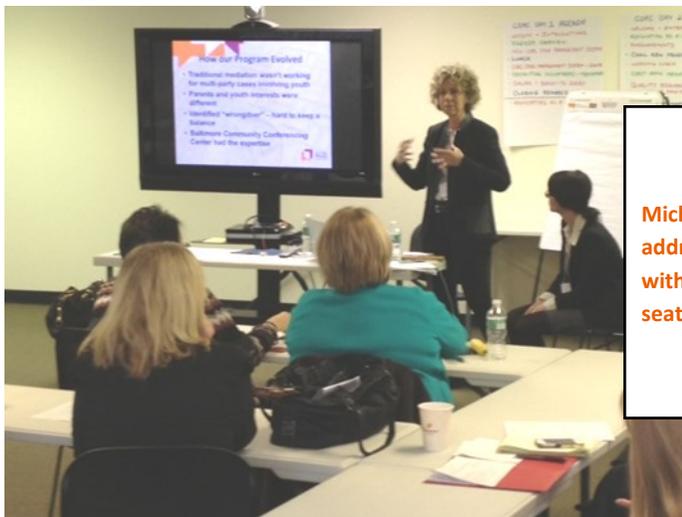
The ADR Office supports ongoing volunteer – mediator education efforts, providing grants to CDRCs for programs that foster professional growth and development. This year, the ADR Office funded **14** training workshops that were attended by **307** mediators from **43** counties statewide.



Judy Saul conducts advanced training.

## CDRC DIRECTORS EXPLORE TIMELY TOPICS AT ANNUAL MEETING

In March 2014, the Office of ADR Programs hosted a two-day meeting for CDRC directors to explore a wide range of topics, engage in dialogue with peers, and share resources with the assistance of a planning committee of CDRC Directors. Ray Patterson, an experienced trainer and business consultant of The Stakeholders, Inc., led a discussion with the directors on how to best attract CDRC volunteers who have a passion and interest in providing mediation and other dispute resolution services to their clients, and also how to support, evaluate and celebrate the volunteers. CDRC staff members Jody Miller (Dutchess Mediation Center), Michele Kirschbaum and Carrie McCann (New York Peace Institute) and Peggy Russell (Community Mediation Services) shared their centers' "cool new programming" in areas of elder abuse prevention and anti-bullying initiatives; community conferencing; and veterans mediation programming. And the ADR Office provided an overview of the new CDRC case management system, under development, as well as a report on statewide CDRC salaries and benefits.



**Michele Kirschbaum addresses CDRC staff, with Carrie McCann, seated.**

The ADR Office thanks the planning committee for organizing the meeting — Jenny Besch of CLUSTER's Westchester and Rockland Mediation Centers, Christy Houck of the Dispute Resolution Center of Delaware, Otsego, and Chenango Counties, Peggy Russell and Paula Wright of Community Dispute Resolution Center.

## CHANGES TO THE STATEWIDE NETWORK OF CDRC PROVIDERS

Sadly, this year saw the closing of Washington Heights-Inwood Coalition and its mediation program. The accumulation of the loss of funding from a number of state, local and private funding proved just too much for this 34-year old grass roots community organization to sustain. Colleague and Executive Director Stephen E. Slate of Bronx County's Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution (IMCR) said, "Under the leadership of [Mediation Director] Dr. Mary Gratereaux, the Coalition was pivotal in its provision of mediation services to the Hispanic community, including its collaborative efforts with IMCR on the production of a Spanish-language mediation DVD and its involvement with local schools on ADR programs. Mary's ADR-related contributions to northern Manhattan's Hispanic community are worthy of emulation."

In addition, Mediation Matters is now the CDRC Program provider in Schenectady County, which was previously served by The Center for Community Justice; and The Peacemaker Program replaces New Justice Conflict Resolution Services as Madison County's CDRC Program provider.

To view this and past annual reports, locate your local CDRC, and learn more about the ADR Office, please visit our website at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/adr/aboutus.shtml>.

