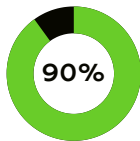






During a ten-month period between November 2020 and September 2021, the NYS Unified Court System administered a standardized post-mediation survey to study how clients experience the mediation process. Clients who participated in court-referred mediation at a Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC) were given a survey to complete after their mediation session. Paper surveys were administered for in-person mediations, and an online survey was utilized for cases mediated online. Cases included a variety of matters referred by Family Courts, City Courts, Town and Village Courts, Supreme Courts, and Surrogates Courts.



of CDRC mediation clients were satisfied with their mediation experience and

WOULD RECOMMEND MEDIATION TO OTHERS.

CDRC mediation clients also reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements. These high levels of CDRC client satisfaction are particularly notable because they align closely with the CDRC's commitment to the principles of client self-determination, procedural justice, and trauma-informed services.

-  **94%** The mediation process was clearly explained to me.
-  **93%** The mediator(s) were neutral and fair.
-  **92%** The mediator(s) listened to me and understood my concerns.
-  **91%** I was able to explain my point of view and how I felt.



CDRC clients indicated high levels of satisfaction with mediators and the mediation process, regardless of whether they participated online or in-person. However, survey responses indicate that participating in online services, as opposed to in-person services, has a small, but statistically significant, negative effect on client's perception of the mediator and the process. While online services can provide a convenient option for CDRC clients, in-person sessions were rated more highly across all questions on the survey.



CDRC clients indicated high levels of satisfaction with mediators and the mediation process, regardless of the type of dispute being mediated. We analyzed client surveys in Financial Disputes, compared them to Custody, Parenting Plan, and Child Support cases, and found that there was no statistically significant effect on the clients' perception of the process based on the type of dispute addressed in mediation.



Established in 1981, the Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program (CDRCP) is an initiative of the New York State Unified Court System (UCS) in collaboration with independent not-for-profit organizations. This statewide network of CDRCs provides mediation, conciliation, facilitation, arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to help individuals, families, and communities constructively respond to conflict. The CDRCP is internationally recognized as a model of providing free and low-cost access to high quality ADR services for residents in New York's 62 counties.

About the Mediation Exit Survey Data

A total of 1,038 surveys were submitted between November 2020 and September 2021 with 927 of them included in the final analysis; surveys that did not include complete data were eliminated from the sample. Notable features of the sample of surveys include:

- 88.5% of surveys submitted were for cases involving Financial Disputes or Custody, Parenting Plan, and Child Support cases. The remaining cases were split among housing, divorce, and other cases.
- Clients from 54 of New York's 62 counties are included in the sample, including surveys from every CDRC.
- 93.5% of surveys collected were completed by parties to the conflict, 5.0% were completed by attorneys representing parties, and 1.5% were completed by other supporting participants.
- The sample is slightly skewed to clients who filed the initial petition in court, making up 56% of the total collected surveys.
- Surveys were split relatively evenly for mediations conducted in-person cases (52.8%) and those cases mediated online (47.2%).
- The percentage of mediated cases that resulted in an agreement (79.8%) was slightly greater than the total CDRC mediated caseload for the same period (75.2%).

"I especially appreciated this. My experiences with court have been relatively traumatic and I don't enjoy going to the courthouse. This was so comfortable, effective and healing. Very grateful for this experience."

–Custody and Parenting Plan client
from the Center for Dispute Settlement

"I am very glad that I asked for mediation. I am glad I was able to use a process that was less contentious, less expensive, and highly successful."

–Financial Mediation client
from Mediation Matters

"Very helpful. Mediators were kind, insightful and fair."

–Custody and Parenting Plan client
from Resolution Center

"I truly appreciated the fact I could avoid going down to the court. It saved me a lot of time."

–Financial Mediation client
from Dispute Resolution Center

"I genuinely had a great experience and am very grateful for the opportunity to work with a mediator."

–Financial Mediation client
from New York Peace Institute

"I absolutely love the mediation center and the mediators. They are extremely professional, but also very kind and gentle. I finally feel heard for the first time ever and I have the mediation center to thank for that."

–Custody and Parenting Plan client
from Mediation Center of Dutchess County

About CDRC Mediators

CDRC mediations are facilitated by expert CDRC staff members as well as over 750 professionally trained and supervised volunteer mediators who donate their time and expertise to serve their communities. Each year, volunteer mediators donated more than 18,000 hours of service. While there is no minimum educational degree or professional experience needed to volunteer with a CDRC, volunteer mediators complete a rigorous certification process, which involves:

- At least thirty hours of an initial professional mediation training provided by a UCS ADR Office-certified trainer (advanced training in specific case matters is also required);
- Experiential apprenticeship in which the trainees mediate alongside experienced mediators; and
- Performance-based assessment by a CDRC staff who observes each apprentice, assesses their abilities as a mediator, and determines whether they can be awarded CDRC certification.

CDRC volunteers come from all walks of life with a variety of life experiences and professional backgrounds. Their diverse professional backgrounds, and personal life experiences, contribute to the quality and efficacy of their services. CDRC volunteers are a dedicated group, with 250 volunteers serving more than 10 years.



Established in 1981, the Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program (CDRCP) is an initiative of the New York State Unified Court System (UCS) in collaboration with independent not-for-profit organizations. This statewide network of CDRCs provides mediation, conciliation, facilitation, arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to help individuals, families, and communities constructively respond to conflict. The CDRCP is internationally recognized as a model of providing free and low-cost access to high quality ADR services for residents in New York's 62 counties.