

Report on Post-Mediation Surveys: 2022

This brief report presents an assessment of client experience of service delivered by New York's Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRCs), a mediation program funded and administered by the NYS Unified Court System. During the course of calendar year 2022, clients engaged in court-referred mediation at CDRCs were invited to participate in a standardized post-mediation survey. Paper surveys were utilized for in-person mediations, while online surveys were deployed for cases mediated remotely. The study encompassed a diverse range of matters referred by Family, City, Town and Village, Supreme, and Surrogates Courts.

Client satisfaction with the CDRC mediation process was notably high, as indicated by clients' agreement or strong agreement with the following key statements. This excellent level of satisfaction is particularly noteworthy, as it closely aligns with the CDRC's steadfast commitment to the principles of client self-determination, procedural justice, and trauma-informed services:

93 %

The mediation process was clearly explained to me.

92 %

The mediator(s) were neutral and fair.

91 %

I was able to explain my point of view and how I felt.

91 %

The mediator(s) listened to me and understood my concerns.

89 %

I would recommend mediation to others.

Established in 1981, the Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program represents a collaborative initiative between the New York State Unified Court System (UCS) and independent not-for-profit organizations. This statewide network of CDRCs offers mediation, conciliation, restorative practices, and other alternative dispute resolution methods to foster constructive responses to conflict among individuals, families, and communities. The CDRCP has garnered international recognition as a model for providing free and affordable access to high-quality ADR services for residents across New York's 62 counties.

“

The mediator was very responsive, respectful and extremely nice. This was a great process to go through . . . the mediator wasn't biased or took sides, she was very helpful. It was the best experience I've ever had in a court proceeding.

”

-Custody and Parenting Plan client
from New Justice Services

“

The entire process from inquiry, setting an appointment, and mediation was professional, courteous, and efficient. I would highly recommend it!

”

-Custody and Parenting Plan
client from Common Ground

About the Mediation Exit Survey Data

Between January and December 2022, a total of 796 surveys were submitted, with 714 of them considered for the final analysis. Surveys lacking complete data were excluded from the sample. Noteworthy features of the survey sample include:

- 93.9% of the surveys pertained to Financial Disputes or Custody and Parenting Plan cases. The remaining cases encompass housing, divorce, and other matters.
- The sample includes clients from 48 of New York's 62 counties.
- The sample is slightly skewed toward clients who initiated the petition in court, comprising 54% of the surveys collected.
- In terms of service delivery method, the survey sample aligns with the CDRC caseload, with 60% of the surveys representing in-person cases, whereas 54% of CDRC mediations are conducted in-person.
- The survey sample includes a significantly higher percentage of mediated cases resulting in an agreement (83%) compared to the total CDRC mediated caseload for the same period (70.7%). Since cases with an agreement receive higher ratings across all survey questions, this sample may not be fully representative.
- Whether online or in-person, CDRC clients consistently expressed high levels of satisfaction with mediators and the mediation process. However, survey responses unveiled a modest, but statistically significant, adverse impact on clients' perception of both mediator and process when engaging in online services. Although online mediation offers convenience to CDRC clients, in-person sessions received higher ratings across all survey questions.
- CDRC clients demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with mediators and the mediation process, irrespective of the nature of the dispute being mediated. An analysis of client surveys encompassing Financial Disputes in comparison to Custody, Parenting Plan, and Child Support cases revealed no statistically significant effects on clients' perception of the process based on the type of dispute addressed.

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The experience was amazing and we were able to come to an agreement with the help of mediation! I'm extremely appreciative of the help you were able to give us.

”

-Custody and Parenting Plan client
from Dispute Resolution Center

“

I was worried about zoom, but it was easy. The mediator was clear and kept us on task. He was never rushed and was calm and friendly. I had wanted to go to court, but I'm so glad we could agree through mediation.

”

-Financial Mediation client
from Center for Resolution and Justice

About New York's Community Dispute Resolution Center Mediators

CDRC mediations are facilitated by skilled CDRC staff members, as well as over 750 volunteer mediators who receive professional training and supervision while generously donating their time and expertise to serve their communities. Annually, these dedicated volunteer mediators contribute more than 18,000 hours of service. While CDRC volunteers encompass individuals from diverse backgrounds, with varied professional experiences and personal life journeys, all volunteer mediators undergo a rigorous certification process, which entails:

- A minimum of thirty hours of initial professional mediation training conducted by a UCS ADR certified trainer (additional training in specific case matters is also required).
- Experiential apprenticeship, wherein trainees mediate alongside experienced mediators.
- Performance-based assessment by CDRC staff members, who observe each apprentice, assess their mediation abilities, and determine their eligibility for CDRC certification.

A dedicated group, more than 200 volunteers and staff have served at their CDRC for over a decade.