Resolution Systems Institute

2019 ANNUAL REPORT: The Evolution of Dispute Resolution

www.aboutrsi.org
THE MISSION OF RESOLUTION SYSTEMS INSTITUTE
is to strengthen access to justice by enhancing court alternative dispute resolution

In 2019, we put a clear emphasis on
the future of court ADR

A few of the ways we did this were:

• Becoming a leading resource on online dispute resolution

• Exploring how technology could improve mediation outcomes for survivors of intimate partner violence

• Building up our online Resource Center to include a wealth of valuable new guides and articles
LEADING THE CHARGE ON COURT ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Courts are using online dispute resolution, or ODR, at an accelerating pace.

As both a clearinghouse of information and an adviser to courts, it is critical for us to make sure the courts have reliable information about how to implement and assess ODR.

To fill that void, we developed the ODR Special Topics, which provides courts with information on ODR, including its history, considerations for courts implementing ODR and links to helpful resources. As technology and best practices evolve, we plan to keep updating this resource to ensure it remains relevant.

RSI is also conducting an evaluation of ODR programs in certain small claims courts in Hawaii and Texas in partnership with the University of California, Davis, and The Pew Charitable Trusts. This evaluation examines the impact of ODR on the court and litigants.

For courts, the focus will be on efficiency. For litigants, the focus will be on access to justice with an eye toward determining whether certain groups within society tend to experience the benefits or costs associated with ODR more than others. An initial report is expected in mid-2021.
Could an online tool help improve the frequency and competency with which mediators screen for intimate partner violence prior to mediation?

This is the question we sought to explore in our report, *Pre-Mediation Screening For Intimate Partner Violence: Can A Tech Tool Help?*

We studied the current screening tools, surveyed family law practitioners and experts in IPV dynamics, and convened those experts to explore this tool in greater depth.

Our research found that there is a need for increased and improved screening. We also concluded that new mediators and those who mediate infrequently would be receptive to an online screening tool. Accordingly, we recommend development of a tool that has low barriers to use and is provided free of cost to mediators to encourage its wide adoption.
In 2019, we added more new original content to our digital court ADR resource center than ever before, including:

**Guide to Program Success**

Chapters 10-13

Our comprehensive manual on program design, management and evaluation received new content on writing court rules, data collection, form creation and program launch.

**Civil Stalking Mediation Program Evaluation**

Analyzing a ten-site pilot program in Ohio, this evaluation explores mediation outcomes, agreement sustainability, agreement provisions, and whether mediation diverted cases from full hearings.

**New Mediation Efficacy Studies**

We added a number of new evaluations to our extensive database, which looks at whether mediation really does save time and money, and improves procedural justice for litigants.
 Besides conducting research, evaluating programs and informing the field, RSI is making a real difference for those served by mediation programs we administer.

Foreclosure Mediation Programs 2019 Statistics

Kane County, IL
- 190 homeowners served
- 57 homes saved

Lake County, IL
- 192 homeowners served
- 41 homes saved

Child Protection Mediation Program 2019 Participant Testimonials

Kane County, IL
- "Gets to the issues"
- "I liked that mediation [allowed us] to come to an agreement."
- "Very productive"
THANKING OUR FUNDERS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT

Revenue

- Individual & Corporate Giving (7.94%)
- General Operating Grants (49.5%)
- Program Revenue (0.43%)
- Program Grants (4.07%)
- Government Grants/Contracts (35.89%)
- Donated Goods & Services (2.16%)

- Total Revenue: $185,596
  - $41,085
  - $256,000
  - $21,063
  - $2,238

Expenses

- General Operating (12.58%)
- Outreach & Education (10.56%)
- Resource Center (22.12%)
- Foreclosure Mediation (21.5%)
- Child Protection Mediation (5.09%)
- Other Mediation Programs (11.93%)
- Fundraising (0.94%)
- Research (15.28%)

- Total Expenses: $125,279
  - $121,746
  - $28,847
  - $12,746
  - $5,299
  - $59,811
  - $71,212

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Dear Friend of RSI,

Having worked in court ADR for decades, the questions about online dispute resolution (ODR) in 2019 remind me of the questions about mediation in the 1980s and 90s. How will self-represented litigants be protected? How will quality be ensured? Will lawyers accept it? What will it cost, and who will pay for it?

These were important questions to ask about mediation, and they are important to ask about ODR. Plus, now there are new questions. Will everyone be able to get online to access ODR? Will ODR be an addition to traditional litigation, or a replacement for it? What about data privacy?

We will not answer these questions by standing still. RSI is bringing to bear all our expertise to ensure ODR is created in ways that truly increase access to justice. We look to a future in which ODR can help improve the reach to people with limited literacy, people in rural settings, people for whom English is not their first language and people who are representing themselves.

I invite you to support RSI as we move forward into the future. You can make a donation at mightycause.com/organization/Resolution-Systems-Institute. RSI is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your contribution will be tax-deductible as permitted by law.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Yates
Executive Director