Resolution Virginia
an alliance for peaceful communities

Police-Referred Mediation Pilot Project

Law Enforcement Officer Training

1. **Briefly introduce self and center**

   Include how long the center has served the community and the number and types of conflicts mediated through the centers over the years

   Community mediation centers are non-profit agencies made up of community members specially trained to help people navigate conflicts. Our goal is to support resilient and successful communities by giving people a healthy way to work with conflict.

2. **Describe funding source**

   This project is supported by a grant awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the Department of Justice.

3. **Provide context**

   From talking with law enforcement leaders across the state, we know that you are often called to respond to situations for which you have no remedy. No crime has been committed and there is no one to charge with wrongdoing.

   We also know that some of the calls you receive involve issues that require a fair amount of unpacking to get to the root cause. It can be impossible for law enforcement personnel to do that during a service call.

   The practitioners who work with Virginia's community mediation centers are trained to help people 1) understand each person's concerns, and 2) work together to manage the disputes effectively. We can help strengthen relationships.

4. **Describe project**

   Through a partnership between your department and our local community mediation center, officers will refer citizens in conflict to resolution specialists affiliated with the center. Center

practitioners will contact the people referred and offer them a range of conflict resolution services including mediation, conciliation, restorative justice and other processes to help people manage conflict.

5. Describe benefits

1.) Trained center personnel can take the time to help people address the root of an issue, so it is settled for good.

2.) Gives law enforcement personnel another resource to share with people in conflict.

3.) Aligns with Community Oriented Policing Principles
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7_us_6AH9M

6. Describe services

- ***Mediation is the gold standard*** *- A trained mediator, impartial to the outcome of a conflict, facilitates communication between the parties and, without deciding the issues or imposing a solution, enables them to create a mutually agreeable resolution. Both parties need to be willing to meet together either in person or via Zoom. While this is our preferred process because it can be so impactful, we know from past experience and from colleagues across the country that this could, unfortunately, be our least-used process.*

- ***Conciliation (A Go-Between)*** *- An impartial conciliator facilitates management of a conflict by 1.) helping parties clarify issues and 2.) serving as an intermediary or go-between, exchanging information and offers between parties. Conciliation for this project could occur in center offices, in the community, or via telephone or Zoom.*

- ***Conflict Exploration*** *– This can work when the parties will not use conciliation or mediation, but still want help. A practitioner can work with one or both parties individually to explore how that person handled the situation and whether a different approach could be more productive. They might discuss a range of options that have helped others in difficult situations and conversations.*

- ***Restorative Justice (Accountability Conferencing & Victim/Offender Mediation)*** *– "Victim"-centered processes that support offender accountability. A conference can bring together the person who was harmed and the person who caused the harm (and their family and friends), and others impacted by the offense, with the person who caused the harm (and his or her family and supporters), in a facilitated dialogue. The trained, impartial conference facilitators – who are also members of the community –*

provide a safe and confidential environment for participants to review the facts of the offense, learn how each person was affected, and decide how to repair the harm.

Conflict resolution practitioners will also make referrals to other services as warranted.

7. Describe self-determination

The parties make the decisions - *In all these processes, the parties have the decision-making power. Center practitioners will not tell people what to do. When people create their own solutions, those solutions tend to work best.*

8. Describe types of referrals

- Domestic issues, including separation and divorce and co-parenting or elder care issues
- Neighbor disputes including noise and parking
- Disputes involving youth
- Housing issues
- Contracts of business disputes
- We've probably seen it all

What should not be referred

- Power imbalances (e.g. some domestic violence) that would make it impossible for a party to advocate for their needs.
- Real potential for violence – Do No Harm

Center staff will further screen out cases or put in place protective guardrails to help keep everyone safe.

9. Describe referral process

We have set up a link (via QR code or web address) to a referral form (view form). You would provide us with as much of this information as you can. We will take it from there.

Language you can use is: "I am going to ask someone from our local community mediation center to contact you and the other party to see if they can help. You can expect a call from them within 48 weekday hours".

If they are opposed, you don't need to make the referral. You can also share these program brochures and cards. They can call us if they want, but please get the referral to us so that we can contact them if they don't reach out.

10. Describe evaluation

Our law enforcement department liaison will be sending information to the project evaluator, Virginia Tech's Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention, to determine if people who used center services were less likely to call the police again for the same issue.

11. Share mediation sample (15. min.)

Mom and Dad seem to hate each other…

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYvrNQbwVwI&t=135s

12. Describe training availability

If you know of people in the community who would be great at helping people manage conflicts, send them our way as we will be training more practitioners.

13. Reiterate goals of project:

- Give law enforcement officers an effective conflict resolution resource to share with community members in conflict, thus freeing officer time to address higher level incidents.
- Give community members a free, effective and non-adversarial option for dispute resolution.

14. Questions or Concerns

Are there any disputes or people you can't wait to send our way?

Share brochures and cards

Outreach to Law Enforcement

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- Mediation demonstration (in person or video)

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOjGNNHaddM (Consider Community Mediation 40 sec.)

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7_us_6AH9M (Benefits of Mediation 40 sec.)

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYvrNQbwVwI&t=135s (Co-parenting mediation 15 min.)

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS-ykB7nYiY&t=26s (Neighbor to Neighbor mediation 30 min.)

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXJcil3TBN8 (Court-referred landlord/tenant 28 min.)

- Web form (See https://www.daytonmediationcenter.org/policereferrals)

Referrals

- VA 211 or others
- See Dayton's referral portal at https://www.daytonmediationcenter.org/policereferrals

See Dayton's postcard for police:

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/Janet.Mueller%40daytonohio.gov/KtbxLxGLgVNhsLMjjfHPsbppCwNXFJrzvV?projector=1&messagePartId=0.4