

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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Low-cost mediation, related services highlighted on “Conflict Resolution Day”

LANSING, MI, October 14, 2013 – Michigan residents can use free or low-cost mediation, arbitration, and similar services to resolve their disputes – and state court officials hope more Michiganders will do so in the wake of “Conflict Resolution Day” this week.

Governor Rick Snyder and Senator Rick Jones, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, have signed a tribute declaring October 17th as “Conflict Resolution Day.”

Douglas Van Epps, director of the Office of Dispute Resolution, hopes the tribute boosts public awareness of Michigan’s 18 community dispute resolution centers and their services.

“The centers offer a wide range of services – mediation, arbitration, facilitation, and more – in matters ranging from divorces to small claims to contract disputes, and for low to no cost,” said Van Epps, whose office is a division of the State Court Administrative Office.

“It’s great that the centers’ work is being recognized,” Van Epps added. “But, more importantly, this tribute is an opportunity for us to raise awareness of these services and encourage more people to use them.”

Michigan Public Act 260 of 1988, the Community Dispute Resolution Act, authorized the Michigan Supreme Court to establish community dispute resolution centers throughout Michigan. SCAO’s Office of Dispute Resolution oversees the 18 centers, which offer mediation, arbitration, facilitation, restorative practices, collaborative decision making, and other responses to conflict for Michigan residents, schools and businesses.

The tribute recognizes the centers “for providing opportunities to increase public understanding of peaceful and constructive ways to resolve interpersonal and intergroup conflicts. Community-based programs fairly and equitably resolve interpersonal and intergroup conflicts.”

Alternative dispute resolution offers other benefits too, Van Epps explained. “It saves time, it’s less expensive, and it’s far less stressful than traditional litigation.”

For more information, contact the Office of Dispute Resolution at (517) 373-4839 or see <http://www.courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/OfficesPrograms/ODR/Pages/Community-Dispute-Resolution-Program.aspx>.

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