



RESOLUTION SYSTEMS INSTITUTE

Strengthening Justice by Enhancing
Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Systems

NEED, MISSION, ACTION.

Unresolved conflict is costly in terms of time, resources and emotional upheaval. People turn to the courts to settle their disputes, but the litigation process offers few chances to address the full range of their needs and expectations. As litigation has become more expensive and time-consuming, access to justice has become increasingly determined by income. Courts, facing limited resources and increasing numbers of self-represented parties, are struggling to find ways to serve the public. The need for alternative methods of addressing conflict is growing exponentially. Those methods should be less expensive, less time-consuming and more satisfying.

MISSION

RSI's mission is to strengthen justice by enhancing court alternative dispute resolution (ADR) systems through expertise in program development, research and resources.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH & RESOURCES

RSI assists courts in making more effective and efficient use of alternative methods of resolving disputes by:

- Disseminating reliable information about court ADR
- Providing assistance developing court ADR programs
- Setting up monitoring systems for programs
- Evaluating programs
- Conducting independent research
- Educating individuals involved in court ADR

THE ROAD TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

To turn the potential costs of conflict into opportunities, Resolution Systems Institute (RSI) partners with courts to help them create alternative routes to resolving conflict, such as mediation. These routes are often more cost effective, less time-consuming, and more satisfying than traditional litigation for all involved. Alternative dispute resolution programs make justice more attainable through the courts, supporting the healthy justice system that is essential to civil society.



GETTING STARTED

SHARING EXPERTISE & INFORMATION

RSI provides expert advice through CourtADR.org, RSI's online national resource center, and directly to individual courts and ADR programs seeking assistance. RSI also disseminates the latest court ADR resources through two free newsletters, a blog and various social networks.

CONNECTING PEOPLE & PROGRAMS

Even with support from experts with solid information and resources, it is a challenge to build or expand a successful court ADR program. RSI connects neutrals, judges, lawyers, court personnel and others and provides guidance to develop new programs and improve existing ones.

"In my experience as a funder, I have never seen an organization get so much bang for the buck. I am proud to support the best source for expertise in court ADR."

— Kent Lawrence, President & Executive Director, M.R. Bauer Foundation



REACHING MILESTONES

COURT ADR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

RSI helps courts across Illinois develop mediation programs for a wide variety of disputes. This includes assistance with determining what types of cases to mediate, developing court rules, providing mediation training, and answering any and all questions along the way. Since its founding in 1995, RSI has helped launch nearly every civil mediation program in the Illinois courts.

One major focus of RSI's program development services in Illinois is the **Statewide Mediation Access Project (SMAP)**, which addresses the specific needs of poor and low-income disputants by developing accessible mediation services. SMAP focuses on housing, family and consumer disputes. RSI has worked with local courts and community mediation centers to develop foreclosure, small claims and family mediation programs. These services are especially important because they provide access to justice for people who generally can't afford traditional litigation.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

As programs get off the ground, RSI is there to help establish systems to monitor and evaluate their quality – providing helpful information to program managers and to the mediation field at large to ensure quality programs. Seeing the need for good evaluation instruments, RSI partnered with the American Bar Association to create national model forms. These can be used by courts looking to establish or improve their evaluation processes. The forms also improve and standardize data collection across courts, allowing for better insight into what works.

"It was not until we were offered the opportunity to collaborate with RSI and receive professional mediation training that we were able to create this unique program."

— Chief Judge Elizabeth Robb, Illinois 11th Judicial Circuit, on the circuit's small claims mediation program for pro se litigants



● ATTAINING GOALS

RESEARCH

RSI also conducts in-depth research on court ADR programs and collects others' research and makes it available to those involved with court ADR. RSI's research has been used to argue successfully for more funding for ADR programs. For example, RSI's study of the benefits of mediation for poor and low-income disputants led to increased funding for mediation in Illinois.

RESOURCES

CourtADR.org is the most comprehensive source for information about court ADR. It provides thousands of abstracts of articles, studies, books, websites, organizations and other resources, along with original content providing guidance on court ADR. RSI's newsletters and blog are read by thousands of judges, administrators and ADR professionals.

Thanks to those who support RSI's mission, quality court ADR is being developed throughout Illinois, reaching disputants of all backgrounds engaged in a vast array of disputes. Beyond Illinois, courts are providing quality ADR services with the advice and assistance of RSI.

"This is a great program. We wouldn't have been able to stay in our home without it."

— *Mediation participant in an RSI-assisted foreclosure mediation program*

COURT ADR RESOURCES

COURTADR.ORG

RSI's National Court ADR Resource Center is the most comprehensive collection of court ADR resources available anywhere.

COURT ADR ACROSS THE U.S.

RSI's latest expansion of Court ADR.org includes a compendium of court ADR resources from every state in the country.

ANALYZING THE ALTERNATIVES

RSI's semiannual newsletter covers important topics in court ADR and provides in-depth analysis and practical, expert advice, highlighting activities and programs in Illinois.

COURT ADR CONNECTION

RSI's monthly enewsletter gives updates on the latest news and events in court ADR from around the U.S., as well as recently published research on court ADR.

JUST COURT ADR

RSI's blog brings a unique, professional perspective on current ADR news, events, issues and ideas.

Subscribe to RSI publications online at AboutRSI.org.

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RSI would not be able to provide resources or develop programs without generous support from organizations and individuals. Resolution Systems Institute is not-for-profit and affiliated with the Center for Conflict Resolution.

For more information on how to make a donation, go to AboutRSI.org and click on Support RSI, or send your tax-deductible contribution to the address above.