

# **Austin Dispute Resolution Center**

## **Strategic Plan**

**2024-2027**

## Mission

The Austin Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) is an independent, nonprofit organization that provides and promotes accessible, high-quality dispute resolution services for all people in the Travis County Area and surrounding areas.

## Vision

The DRC empowers people to resolve their own disputes, reconcile relationships and avoid the court system.

## Philosophy

The DRC believes:

- People in our diverse community can best be served through a diverse organization.
- People can resolve their own disputes, and the DRC can encourage resolution by providing trained volunteers who are impartial.
- People who develop their own resolutions are more likely to do what they have agreed to do.
- People can use the experience gained at the DRC to resolve future disputes.

## Clients

The DRC's clients are those in the Travis County region who need affordable mediation services that the DRC can offer. We strive to collaborate with private sector professionals, not to compete with them.

## Organizational Status

The DRC should maintain its current status as an independent nonprofit organization. This allows geographic flexibility for programs and clients, freedom in determining programs, independent decision-making, and the ability to determine the cost of its services.

## Core Programs

The DRC provides several basic services that have long defined it:

- Community mediations
- Civil Litigation mediations
- Juvenile court mediations
- Group facilitations
- Training for mediators, facilitators, and the community

## **Implementation of the Strategic Plan**

The Board of Directors will provide oversight to the Strategic Goals as outlined in this plan. The Board may assign Committees and staff liaisons to those committees to track individual goals and/or strategies, as necessary and appropriate. The Executive Director will provide an overview to the Board of Directors at regular Board meetings which will report on the overall progress toward each goal providing:

- Overall progress of each goal
- Discussion of what is working (or not working)
- Recommended changes or additions to the plan

The Board reserves the right to amend this plan as needed throughout the three-year implementation timeframe.

Participants in the strategic planning process include 2024 Board member and DRC staff members.

Dispute Resolution Center  
Three Year Strategic Goals  
2024-2027

**Mediation Services and Education**

**Strategic Goal:** Expand community-wide conflict resolution and education with the broad diversity of individuals, families and organizations in Texas.

**Volunteer Mediator Pool**

**Strategic Goal:** Increase the mediator pool by 10 new volunteers per year. Maintain the highest levels of competency and readiness in DRC mediators to provide the highest level of service to our clients.

**Financial Viability**

**Strategic Goal:** Identify and diversify consistent funding sources to ensure financial stability for the DRC.

**Marketing**

**Strategic Goal:** Develop, implement and maintain a marketing program that will inform the community and promote the services of the DRC.

**Facility Relocation**

**Strategic Goal:** Research, locate and facilitate a proposed office relocation while considering overall ongoing expense, staff/mediator/client safety, mediation/training accommodations, transportation affordability and our presence in the community.

## **Mediation Services and Education**

*Expand community-wide conflict resolution and education with the broad diversity of individuals, families and organizations within our service area.*

### **Strategy 1:**

Conduct targeted outreach into the community to recruit a more diverse volunteer and client pool. Promote outreach to diverse communities, especially underserved areas.

The DRC recognizes the importance of diversifying our organization at every level. We will strive to develop and conduct targeted outreach to a variety of community areas and organizations in an effort to expand our services. The ED and Board will reach out to resources which includes contacting and partnering with community leaders and associations, area businesses, cultural leaders and other representatives.

## **Volunteer Mediator Pool**

*Increase the mediator pool by 10 new volunteers per year.  
Maintain the highest levels of competency and readiness in DRC mediators to provide the highest level of service to our clients.*

### **Strategy 1:**

Develop and implement a targeted recruitment process to expand the volunteer pool.

The DRC will establish and implement a volunteer recruitment process that broadens the volunteer base of the organization. We will focus on recruiting volunteers who have diverse skills, training, background and experience. The recruitment will also focus on selecting volunteers that accurately represent the communities we serve.

### **Strategy 2:**

Develop a quality assurance and improvement process for mediators and mediations.

To ensure the DRC Board is providing open communication channels to our mediators, our Volunteer Mediator Representative will provide opportunities for constructive feedback. This communication loop will ensure mediators can share learnings and challenges with the staff and Board.

## **Financial Viability**

*Identify and diversify consistent funding sources to ensure financial stability for the DRC. Enhance financial sustainability in order to maintain, improve and expand core programs.*

### **Strategy 1:**

Program maintenance – Continue to maintain current revenue generating service levels of our core programs; mediation trainings, facilitation trainings and room rentals.

### **Strategy 2:**

Research, identify and apply for potential grant opportunities.

### **Strategy 3:**

Maintain productive relationships with Travis County in order to ensure continued financial support via the General Fund.

### **Strategy 4:**

Marketing – Social media development which incorporates an donation/matching webpage.

## **Marketing**

*Develop, implement and maintain a marketing program that will inform the community and promote the services of the DRC.*

### **Strategy 1:**

Identify and hire a website designer with experience in the non-profit industry. While working with staff, mediators and Board members, develop a fresh new look for the organizational website that will convey our Mission to the community.

### **Strategy 2:**

Develop a social media presence by utilizing the current social media platforms. Examples would include such sites as Facebook, LinkedIn, "X" and Instagram. Explore using an outside consultant to assist or hiring a full-time marketing employee that is experienced in this field within the Austin area.

### **Strategy 3:**

Conduct targeted outreach into the community to recruit a more diverse client pool. Promote outreach to diverse communities, especially underserved areas. Explore speaking opportunities within the area we serve in order to educate the public as to who we are and the services we offer. Examples would include the Austin Bar Association/Young Lawyers Association, Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Austin Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, AISD, etc....



## **Facility Relocation**

Research, locate and facilitate a proposed office relocation while considering overall ongoing expense, staff/mediator/client safety, mediation/training accommodations, transportation affordability and our presence in the community.

The Board recognizes the need to improve the DRC office location and facilities. The daily working environment is important for our staff, our mediators and for those we serve.

### **Strategy 1:**

Review the Austin property market on a continual basis, with support from an established real estate agent, in search of a location that will meet our needs and financial allowances.

### **Strategy 2:**

Facilitate continual communication with the Travis County Commissioner's Court on a potential location in the downtown Austin area into a County owned property. Determine ongoing General Fund contributions and the long-term effect this will have on the DRC.