



Highlights from MACRO's Conflict Resolution Grant Programs Fiscal Year 2010

In Fiscal Year 2010 MACRO awarded 55 grants as part of its work to advance the appropriate use of alternative forms of conflict resolution in Maryland. An additional 24 grants were awarded to K-12 public schools as part of a partnership between MACRO, the Center for Dispute Resolution at the University of Maryland and the Maryland State Department of Education. In addition to funding, MACRO offers technical assistance to many conflict resolution programs and projects across the state and works to raise the quality of Maryland conflict resolution services and providers.

Here are some highlights from Fiscal Year 2010

★ In FY2010, MACRO Grantees Combined Conducted:

- 4,544 mediations
- 4,861 settlement conferences
- 270 community conferences
- 9,675 ADR sessions

★ A Total of 2,560 People Received ADR Training

*These numbers do not include either conflict resolution programs in the schools or ADR sessions in the District Court.

Courts

MACRO supported grants to the District Court, the Court of Special Appeals, and six Circuit Courts: Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick and Worcester Counties, and Baltimore City.

In addition to the ADR Sessions noted above, MACRO's 2010 support for the courts lead to several accomplishments, including the following:

- Significant progress was made on developing an ADR Evaluation Support System (ADRESS). This system is being piloted in the Circuit Courts for Baltimore County, Worcester County, and Baltimore City, and statewide in the District Court.
- Several advanced training programs were held to improve and maintain the quality of the mediators on the courts' rosters
- The Circuit Courts in Baltimore County, Howard County and Baltimore City created greater efficiency by collaborating to develop unified civil mediation instructions for mediators, which were adopted by all three Courts.
- The Court of Special Appeals created the first Maryland Appellate Mediation Program. In its first year, this program is on target to settle 90 cases per year in mediation.
- Contempt hearings were reduced in Baltimore County, and CINA petitions were reduced in Worcester County.

"[The] mediation program is a wonderful thing and it is well worthwhile to get all of the parties in the same room together because it greatly increases the chance of settlement." -Quoted from an attorney survey in the Court of Special Appeals

Community Mediation

MACRO supported grants to 15 community mediation centers and to Community Mediation Maryland to advance community-based conflict resolution services across the State. Community mediation centers provide volunteers to mediate District Court small claims, certain misdemeanors and other cases.

As a result of 2010 Community Mediation Grants:

- 15 community mediation centers across Maryland performed 3,068 mediations
- Community mediation services were available to Maryland citizens in 22 counties and in Baltimore City.
- A new performance-based evaluation system was developed to begin certifying community mediators who practice in the Inclusive mediation framework.
- Center volunteers and staff conducted 13,194 hours of outreach and community education, and worked closely with 632 partner agencies to promote the use of mediation
- Centers and facilities participating in prisoner re-entry mediation programs grew in 2010, expanding this work to a greater portion of the state. Inmates in pre-release mediate with family members and others to develop plans to help the inmate succeed in the community after they are released.
- A new partnership was developed between community mediation centers and family courts, enabling participating centers to assist the courts with custody/visitation cases involving pro se litigants.

Criminal/Juvenile Justice

MACRO supported conflict resolution services and skill building for youth and adult offenders through projects in state's attorney's offices, community conferencing providers, and in prisons.

As a result of 2010 Criminal/Juvenile Justice Grants:

- 338 state's attorney's misdemeanor cases were mediated
- 270 cases were diverted from the juvenile justice system to community conferences. These conferences serve many more people because they involve young offenders' families, as well as victims and their families, and others affected by the offense.
- Over 400 correctional officers and 400 inmates were trained in conflict management and de-escalation skills at two Maryland prisons – Jessup Correctional Institute and Eastern Correctional Institute.

“One inmate shared [that] the class had saved his life....He said before the class he was getting an infraction ticket every week, most of which were serious....Since the class he has been involved in one minor infraction....He said he just didn't know what to do different before the class.” -Quote from staff at Eastern Correctional Institute

Government

MACRO supported conflict resolution programs and trainings at six state and local government agencies to help citizens and employees resolve conflicts all across Maryland.

As a result of 2010 Government Grants:

- A statewide Shared Neutrals Pilot Program was established for resolving state employee disputes. In its first year 11 state agencies referred disputes to the program.
- Over 200 state, county and city employees received training in conflict management and de-escalation skills for dealing with angry members of the public.
- In Wicomico County, over 80 adults with developmental disabilities and 13 staff members from 7 different agencies received conflict resolution skills training.

“We have seen great improvement in our clients’ behavior. It’s very rewarding to see our clients have the skills to resolve their own conflicts in an appropriate manor.... [T]his training has made a wonderful change in our clients....it has brought a sense of calm to LSE.”

-Quote from a staff member at the Lower Shore Enterprise

Education and Schools

Macro supported projects to advance appropriate conflict resolution in both K-12 schools and in university-based programs. The K-12 grants are provided in partnership with the Center for Dispute Resolution at the University of Maryland, School of Law and the Maryland State Department of Education.

As a result of 2010 Education and School Grants:

- Comprehensive conflict resolution/management programs were supported in 24 schools located all across Maryland. These grants resulted in improved school and classroom environments, and decreased suspensions and office referrals.
- A series of focus group sessions in five targeted African American communities in Anne Arundel County were held to learn about and address the concerns of parents. This projects’ short term goal is removing those concerns and increasing African American parental involvement in their children’s education, with the long term goal of working toward closing the achievement gap between white and African American students within the Anne Arundel County Public School System.
- Two university conflict resolution programs trained students in mediation and representing clients in mediation, and offered conflict resolution services and skills trainings to campus staff, faculty and students.

School staff at Southern Middle School in Garrett County report that “the overall conflict resolution program...[has]created a “noticeable change in our student body....” Students have been heard correcting other students for misbehavior by stating “It’s not the Southern Middle School way.”