

## How to Contact CIRP

Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division  
410 E St, NW, Rm. 1700  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Walk-ins Welcome: Monday-Friday,  
8:30 am—3:00 pm  
Phone: 202-879-3180  
Fax: 202-879-9458

CIRP has been in existence since 1985. It is the first alternative dispute resolution program created at DC Superior Court. The program has helped thousands of people resolve their disputes. If you are involved in a dispute and would like to know your options, call us and speak with a Dispute Resolution Specialist today!

### YOUR NOTES

Dispute Resolution Specialist's Name:

Dispute Resolution Specialist's Phone Number:

Options/Referral/Contact Information:

## How to Resolve Conflicts

**TALK DIRECTLY:** Assuming that there is no threat of physical violence, talk directly to the person with whom you have the problem. Direct conversation is much more effective than sending a letter, banging on the wall, throwing a rock or complaining to everyone else.

**CHOOSE A GOOD TIME:** Plan to talk to the other person at the right time and allow yourselves time for a thorough discussion. Do not start talking about the conflict just as the other person is leaving for work, after you have had a terrible day, or right before you have to make dinner. Try to talk in a quiet place where you can both be comfortable and undisturbed for as long as the discussion takes.

**PLAN AHEAD:** Think out what you want to say ahead of time. Then clearly state the problem, and how it affects you.

**DON'T BLAME OR NAME CALL:** Making the other person angry only makes it harder for him or her to hear you. Do not blame the other person for everything or begin the conversation with your opinion of what should be done.

**GIVE INFORMATION:** Do not interpret the other person's behavior: "you are blocking my driveway on purpose just to make me mad." Instead, give information about your own feelings: "When your car blocks my driveway, I get angry because I can't get to work on time."

**LISTEN:** Give the other person a chance to tell his or her side of the conflict completely. Relax and listen; try to learn how the other person feels.

**SHOW THAT YOU ARE LISTENING:** Although you may not agree with what is being said, tell the other person that you hear him or her and are glad that you are discussing the problem together.

**TALK IT ALL THROUGH:** Once you start, get all of the issues and feelings out into the open. Do not leave out the part that seems too "difficult" to discuss or too "insignificant" to be important. Your solution will work best if all issues are discussed thoroughly.

**WORK ON A SOLUTION:** When you have reached this point in the discussion, start working on a solution. Two or more people cooperating are much more effective than one person telling another to change. Be specific: "I will turn my music off at midnight" is better than an unclear statement: "I won't play loud music anymore."

**FOLLOW THROUGH:** Agree to check with each other at specific times to make sure that the agreement is still working.....then really do it.

*Courtesy of the Community Boards of San Francisco*

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[http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/public/aud\\_mediation/community.jsf](http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/public/aud_mediation/community.jsf)  
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## Community Information & Referral Program



Jeannie M. Adams, Division Director

## What is the Community Information and Referral Program?

The Community Information and Referral Program (CIRP) is a free program for people seeking help with all types of disputes. CIRP tries to help people resolve their disputes before they get worse, or become court cases. CIRP provides a confidential, caring, and professional atmosphere for people who want to resolve their disputes.

When you reach CIRP you will talk to a Dispute Resolution Specialist (DRS). The DRS will conduct an intake interview with you. During the intake interview, the DRS will ask questions about the history of the dispute, the relationship between you and the other person, and each person's willingness to resolve the dispute. After you select an option, you and the DRS will work out a step-by-step plan of action.

## What types of disputes can CIRP help resolve?

- Consumer—merchant, home improvement and auto repair.
- Landlord/Tenant—security deposits and repair work
- Neighbor disputes—dogs, loud noises, trees and property
- Family problems—child or spousal support, custody, visitation and divorce

CIRP does not handle criminal matters.

## Is the intake interview process private?

The intake interview is private. The information you share with the DRS is not a public court record and is not shared with anyone outside the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division.

## The Dispute Resolution Specialist

The Dispute Resolution Specialist (DRS) is a neutral person who will educate you about appropriate options/referrals that may help resolve your dispute. The DRS does not take sides, is not an attorney, and cannot give legal advice. The DRS will suggest several options, but you choose the option you feel is most appropriate for you.

## What are the options CIRP offers?

When considering the appropriate option for you, the DRS determines whether CIRP is the best place to resolve your dispute or if it is better to refer you to an outside agency for assistance. Below are possible options that may be available to you through CIRP.

**Phone Conciliation** -The DRS contacts the other person involved in the dispute by phone to try to resolve the dispute informally.



**Pre-filing Mediation** - When appropriate, you and the other person can meet with a mediator before filing a court case. The mediator helps you and the other person to communicate what is important to each of you.



The mediator helps you and the other person come to your own agreement about how the matter will be resolved. The mediator

does not make recommendations or decisions for you. When you reach an agreement, the mediator will write up your agreement.

**Family Mediation** - Family mediation is a voluntary process that offers you the opportunity to work with a mediator to resolve



issues of communication, child support, child custody, visitation, alimony, debt, division of property and other family matters. Before starting

mediation, the DRS will meet with you and other parties involved in the dispute in separate intake interviews.

**Information and Referral** - The DRS does not provide legal advice but can provide you with information about services that may be available at the court and other agencies. CIRP has a database with over 300 organizations including legal, social service, government, and other community based dispute resolution programs from which you may choose.

