



AMERICAN
ARBITRATION
ASSOCIATION®

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION®

FOUNDATION

2025 Annual Report

A Decade of Giving

Expanding Access
to Alternative Dispute
Resolution Around the World

Our Mission

To support the prevention and resolution of conflicts by expanding access to alternative dispute resolution.



Table of Contents

	Ten Years of Impact	4
01	Chair's Letter	6
02	Support by the Numbers	9
03	Annual Grant Cycle	13
	Street Law Inc.	15
	National Civic League	17
04	Rapid Response Grants	20
	National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM)	21
	Western Justice Center	23
05	Special Initiative Grant	25
	Dignity Best Practices	26
06	Panel Partners Program	28
	Bar Association of San Francisco	29
07	ADR Scholarships	31
08	Foundation Leadership	35
09	Acknowledgement of Donors	37

Ten Years of Impact

Over the past decade, the AAA-ICDR Foundation has grown from an ambitious vision into a catalyst for expanding access to justice and strengthening how communities address conflict.

It has supported programs that bring practical, community-centered solutions where they are needed most, touching lives across the country in lasting and meaningful ways.

The Foundation has awarded more than 400 grants totaling over \$12.7 million, supporting initiatives that build conflict resolution capacity at every level, from classrooms to crisis response systems.

A significant portion of this work has centered on community-based mediation and access to justice. Through partnerships with organizations such as Dignity Best Practices and local mediation centers, the Foundation is helping expand field-based mediation programs in communities like Chicago and Iowa City by providing intensive implementation assistance, guiding the sites through the design and build phases of launching a mediation field program to equip responders with tools to de-escalate conflict and resolve disputes before they intensify and necessitate a police response.

The Foundation has also made sustained investments in youth conflict resolution education, supporting programs that integrate mediation and restorative practices into schools and youth justice systems, laying the groundwork for more resilient communities in the years ahead.

In times of urgent need, the Foundation has responded with targeted, rapid-response funding to help communities facing crises. From addressing community safety concerns to supporting mediation efforts following natural disasters such as the California wildfires, these grants (more than 19 in recent years alone) have provided timely resources to help communities stabilize, rebuild trust, and move forward.

The Foundation has invested in innovation and field-building, supporting pilot programs with the potential to reshape how conflict is addressed at a systems level. One notable example is the Dayton Mediation Response Unit, which integrates mediation into emergency response systems to address nonviolent disputes. This model demonstrates that mediation can reduce reliance on traditional law enforcement responses while improving outcomes and strengthening community trust.

In recent years, the Foundation has expanded its commitment to access and opportunity through scholarship programs, including support for students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In addition, it has funded more than 300 scholarships to support individuals pursuing degrees and participating in conferences and training programs in ADR. These efforts are helping to diversify encouraging broader participation and strengthen the next generation of ADR practitioners.

This work reflects a central lesson from the Foundation's first decade: effective conflict resolution requires more than individual programs.

It depends on an interconnected ecosystem of education, community practice, rapid response, and innovation to meet people where they are.

Building on this work, the Foundation is advancing a focused strategy to position mediation as a core component of alternative crisis response systems.

Over the next three to five years, it aims to expand and replicate models like Dayton by increasing awareness, supporting implementation in new jurisdictions, and addressing key barriers such as integration with 911 and other dispatch systems.

This next phase reflects a commitment to thoughtful, sustainable growth, investing in the conditions that allow programs to succeed and scale over time. It also underscores a broader belief: that mediation can play a vital role in creating more effective, humane responses to conflict.

The Foundation enters its second decade with a deeper understanding of what it takes to build lasting change, and with a renewed commitment to ensuring that more people, in more communities, have access to the tools they need to resolve conflict constructively.

Chair's Letter



As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the AAA-ICDR Foundation, I am honored to share the remarkable progress and meaningful impact the Foundation has achieved over the past decade.

During this time, the Foundation has steadily expanded its giving, programs, and reach to promote peaceful conflict resolution, foster access to justice, and drive innovative solutions in alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

We see every day how difficult it can be for people and communities to resolve conflict without the right tools or support. That's why this work matters. Our mission — to expand access to ADR and help prevent and resolve disputes — remains as important today as when the Foundation was established.

Over the last decade, the generosity of our donors, in particular the American Arbitration Association® (AAA®) and its panel members, and the commitment of our partners have enabled the Foundation to distribute more than \$12 million in grants across nearly 500 initiatives.

These investments have helped organizations strengthen mediation and restorative justice programs, expand youth conflict resolution education, support communities facing crisis, and advance research and innovation in ADR.

We also recognize the vision and commitment of our founding board members, whose leadership, time, and generosity helped bring the AAA-ICDR Foundation to life. Each gift has magnified the Foundation's collective impact, and throughout this report, we are proud to share the results of that support.



Hon. Bruce Meyerson (Ret.)
Chair, AAA-ICDR Foundation

This year, the Foundation launched the California Panel Partners Program, a grantmaking initiative that partners with AAA panelists to expand the Foundation's geographic reach and impact.

Through this program, panelists nominate mission-aligned organizations in their local communities for funding, directing resources to nonprofits that strengthen conflict-resolution capacity where it is most needed.

By connecting local leadership with national philanthropic support, the program broadens the Foundation's reach while amplifying the collective philanthropic impact of the AAA panel community. We are grateful to the panelists who participated in this inaugural effort and look forward to bringing this model to another U.S. city in 2026.

Special thanks to Neil Currie, AAA vice president, for his leadership, and to our AAA panel members for their participation.

The projects highlighted in this report demonstrate the breadth and creativity of the organizations we support. In Chicago and Iowa City, the Foundation is helping expand field mediation programs through a grant to Dignity Best Practices, which equips crisis response teams with mediation skills to resolve neighborhood conflicts.

In Southern California, our partnership with the National Association for Community Mediation and Western Justice Center helped mediation centers and schools collaborate to support communities recovering from devastating California wildfires.

Nationwide, Street Law, through the Youth Court Collaborative, is integrating ADR and restorative justice practices into justice programs serving thousands of young people each year. These initiatives illustrate how ADR can strengthen communities, improve civic dialogue, and equip people with the tools to resolve conflict with civility.



As we enter our second decade, we remain committed to strengthening the field of dispute resolution and expanding access to the tools that help people resolve conflict peacefully and constructively. Over the past year, the Foundation announced a new strategic priority for the next three to five years focused on integrating mediation into crisis response systems.

Through this focus, we aim to expand the use of mediation within alternative crisis response models across multiple jurisdictions.

Our goal is to demonstrate how mediation can serve as a frontline response to conflict: reducing escalation, strengthening community trust, and creating pathways to resolution.

None of this work would be possible without the generosity of our supporters, the leadership of our board, and the dedication of our grant partners and staff. We are especially grateful to our Executive Director, Tracey Frisch, and our Deputy Executive Director, Marilyn Duffy Grande.

Tracey and Marilyn, along with dedicated volunteers from the AAA, are the essential team that has made the Foundation an extraordinary resource supporting innovation in the field of ADR.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for helping make this work possible.

Sincerely,

Hon. Bruce Meyerson (Ret.)
Chair, AAA-ICDR Foundation

Support by the Numbers



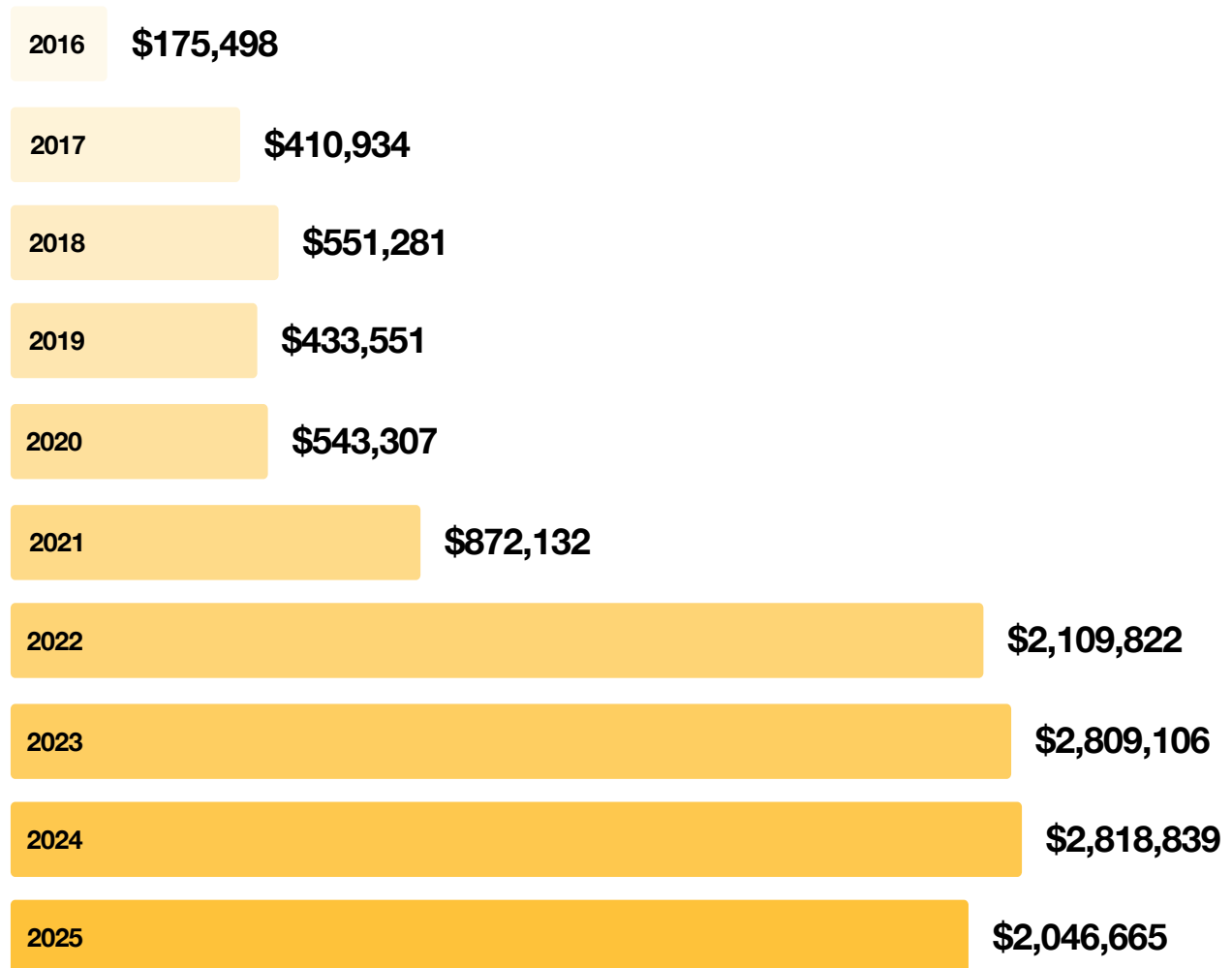
Support By the Numbers: 10 Years Summary



487 Grants



\$12,795,967



Support By the Numbers: 10 Years Summary

2016	Grants	\$	2017	Grants	\$
Annual Grant	6	\$175,498	Annual Grant	11	\$410,934
2018	Grants	\$	2019	Grants	\$
Annual Grant	19	\$551,281	Annual Grant	15	\$433,551
2020	Grants	\$	2021	Grants	\$
Annual Grant	16	\$530,844	Annual Grant	3	\$655,732
Scholarships	7	\$12,463	Rapid Response	8	\$200,000
Total	23	\$543,307	Scholarships	11	\$16,400
			Total	22	\$872,132
2022	Grants	\$	2023	Grants	\$
Annual Grant	7	\$741,005	Annual Grant	10	\$2,291,021
Rapid Response	2	\$100,000	Rapid Response	2	\$100,000
Scholarships	29	\$39,770	Scholarships	34	\$68,085
HBCU and NCCU	-	\$100,000	HBCU and NCCU	-	\$100,000
Special Initiatives	4	\$1,129,047	Special Initiatives	1	\$250,000
Total	35	\$2,109,822	Total	47	\$2,809,106
2024	Grants	\$	2025	Grants	\$
Annual Grant	10	\$1,838,189	Annual Grant	3	\$1,080,292
Rapid Response	6	\$350,000	Rapid Response	2	\$80,000
Scholarships	93	\$155,650	Scholarships	87	\$211,373
HBCU and NCCU	-	\$100,000	Howard and NCCU	-	\$100,000
Special Initiatives	1	\$375,000	CA Panel Partners	3	\$25,000
Total	110	\$2,818,839	Special Initiatives	1	\$550,000
			Total	96	\$2,046,665

Support By the Numbers: Annual Contributions

	Chair's Circle Minimum Contribution of \$2,000	Leadership Minimum Contribution of \$1,000	AAA Panelist Donations	American Arbitration Association	In-Kind Donations (AAA)	Other Unrestricted Donations	Total
2015	\$96,625	\$174,601	\$0	\$478,236	\$0	\$8,452	\$757,914
2016	\$83,654	\$55,500	\$412,018	\$21,764	\$195,616	\$1,854	\$779,406
2017	\$59,378	\$44,000	\$410,467	\$500,000	\$163,929	\$6,548	\$1,184,322
2018	\$66,878	\$84,288	\$458,656	\$750,000	\$218,562	\$11,216	\$1,589,600
2019	\$77,533	\$52,628	\$654,769	\$1,025,000	\$177,736	\$8,625	\$1,996,291
2020	\$57,683	\$49,425	\$608,375	\$2,065,000	\$158,460	\$6,500	\$2,945,443
2021	\$87,003	\$56,200	\$681,368	\$2,050,000	\$184,835	\$5,523	\$3,064,929
2022	\$63,500	\$33,500	\$624,279	\$1,500,000	\$233,798	\$5,603	\$2,460,680
2023	\$63,100	\$32,126	\$594,150	\$665,000	\$212,861	\$5,058	\$1,572,295
2024	\$49,602	\$39,227	\$288,732	\$0	\$226,666	\$60,567	\$664,794
2025	\$62,100	\$30,450	\$684,775	\$1,000,000	\$196,445	\$50,402	\$2,024,172

Annual Grant Cycle



Annual Grant Cycle

Since 2015, the Foundation's Annual Grant Cycle has awarded more than \$8.7 million to projects selected through a competitive review process.

For its 10th Annual Grant Cycle in 2025, the Foundation awarded more than \$1 million to three organizations. The grantees are:

Street Law **\$653,492**

Street Law, in partnership with the National Association of Youth Courts, will develop and assess resources and training for youth courts across the U.S., addressing gaps and improving outcomes for over 100,000 youth annually. The three-year initiative will strengthen how these courts resolve cases and support better outcomes for participating youth.

Street Law's Youth Court Collaborative will create a centralized network to address inconsistent practices — as requested by the National Association of Youth Courts — to enhance training, curriculum, and best practices in victim/offender ADR. This initiative empowers youth court participants to develop skills in negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution, and restorative justice. Street Law and its partners will create new curricula on ADR techniques, augment data on youth courts' use of best practices, integrate best practices where needed, and improve outcomes for youth nationwide.

National Civic League **\$244,800**

Through a 2023 Special Initiative Grant, the Foundation funded the National Civic League to help improve public meetings in three cities throughout the U.S. This next grant will build upon this foundation by supporting three new cases of strong civil discourse in local governance by establishing a new guide to embed civil discourse in city charters, holding workshops for community leaders, and utilizing the Civic Engagement Scorecard. The initiative aims to improve citizen-government relations in partnership with the SHIFT Family Foundation, the National League of Cities, and the International City/County Management Association.

Everyday Democracy **\$182,000**

Everyday Democracy, in partnership with the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), will train librarians in dialogue facilitation to promote civil discourse across 10-12 library systems.

Everyday Democracy will teach 30-50 librarians multi-partial facilitation, a dialogue method that encourages diverse viewpoints, addresses power imbalances, and challenges narratives to foster inclusive engagement.

Coaching and ongoing support will be offered to each library system. The project will wrap up with a webinar to share lessons learned and sustainability strategies with the full ULC member network.

This initiative provides library systems with tools and strategies to strengthen social cohesion and bridge societal divisions by engaging neighbors in conversations about topics that matter to them.

CASE STUDY

Organization
Street Law Inc.

Location
Nationwide (United States)

Project
Youth Court Collaborative

Dates
March 5, 2025 – April 28, 2028

Grant Amount
\$653,492



The Challenge

Youth courts provide youth-led adjudication, accountability, and restorative responses to minor offenses. Yet programs across the United States often operate in isolation, with inconsistent training, limited shared resources, and few mechanisms to evaluate outcomes or scale effective models.

More than 1,000 peer, school, teen, and youth court programs nationwide serve up to 125,000 young people annually, underscoring their reach and the opportunity to strengthen quality and consistency across the field.

Street Law recognized that many youth courts would benefit from stronger integration of ADR and restorative justice practices, as well as coordinated training and shared resources to support volunteers and program leaders. In response, Street Law launched the Youth Court Collaborative to address these gaps and strengthen youth court programs nationwide.

Participating Centers

The Youth Court Collaborative connects youth court programs across the United States through partnerships with the National Association of Youth Courts (NAYC) and a network of pilot sites.

By bringing together practitioners, educators, and youth court leaders, the Collaborative creates a shared platform for training, resource development, and peer learning across a diverse national field of youth justice programs.

CASE STUDY

Advancing the Field of ADR

The Youth Court Collaborative was designed to address fragmentation and strengthen youth court practice nationwide by embedding ADR and restorative justice principles directly into youth court operations. Key activities include:

- Developing an ADR-integrated curriculum and training model for youth courts
- Creating a national clearinghouse of tools and resources for program leaders and volunteers
- Training pilot sites to implement ADR and restorative practices effectively
- Partnering with NAYC to connect programs and share best practices across the field
- Establishing evaluation systems to measure outcomes and guide continuous improvement

These efforts help unify youth courts around evidence-based practices while supporting program growth and sustainability.

Impact and Outcomes

Through the Youth Court Collaborative, youth court volunteers and adult advisors gain practical skills in mediation, facilitation, and restorative conferencing, strengthening the quality and consistency of youth court hearings.

These approaches encourage accountability, dialogue, and repair rather than punitive responses alone. Youth respondents experience more constructive processes focused on rebuilding trust, while youth volunteers develop lasting skills in communication, ethical reasoning, and conflict resolution.

Over time, the Collaborative aims to strengthen youth court programs nationwide, improve youth outcomes, and contribute to healthier school and community climates.

Advancing the Field of ADR

The Youth Court Collaborative expands ADR practice by embedding mediation, facilitation, and restorative conferencing into youth-centered justice settings.

In addition to strengthening youth court programs, the initiative supports ADR workforce development by training young people and program leaders in practical conflict resolution skills. These experiences help build a pipeline of ADR-literate practitioners who carry these skills into schools, communities, and future careers.

The project also supports evidence generation through evaluation and data collection, helping demonstrate the impact of ADR practices in youth justice contexts.

The Role of the AAA-ICDR Foundation Grant

The AAA-ICDR Foundation grant provides critical support for launching and scaling the Youth Court Collaborative. Funding enables Street Law to develop ADR-focused curriculum, deliver national training, and build an evaluation framework to assess program impact.

The Foundation's investment also strengthens Street Law's capacity to sustain program staff, develop durable training resources, and expand collaboration across the youth court field.

By providing multi-year support, the grant allows Street Law to pilot, refine, and scale this work, building a sustainable national infrastructure for integrating ADR practices into youth courts.

CASE STUDY

Organization

National Civic League

Project

Better Public Meetings Initiative

The Challenge

Residents across the United States care deeply about their communities and regularly participate in civic life, yet many do not believe their participation meaningfully influences government decisions.

Research conducted through the National Civic League's Better Public Meetings initiative revealed a consistent pattern. In Anchorage, only 37.9% of survey respondents reported feeling heard by local government, and just 33.3% felt they could influence decision-makers. In Rochester, only about 36% reported feeling heard, and about 38% felt their voices were valued in city decision-making.

At the same time, civic participation is often concentrated among repeat attendees. In Anchorage, 83% of survey respondents were repeat participants, and 70% agreed that the same people do most of the work. In Rochester, 92% of respondents were repeat attendees.

The challenge is not a lack of civic motivation. In Anchorage, nearly 90% of respondents reported being motivated by the opportunity to make a difference locally, and in Rochester, 83% reported supporting causes they care about. Instead, the problem lies in the design of public meetings themselves.

Official meetings often prioritize procedure and testimony over dialogue, relationship-building, and visible accountability, weakening trust and narrowing participation over time.

Location

Anchorage, Alaska; Rochester, Minnesota; and one additional U.S. pilot community

Dates

March 5, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Grant Amount

\$244,800

Participating Communities

The National Civic League is piloting new approaches to civic engagement in Anchorage, Alaska, and Rochester, Minnesota, in partnership with the SHIFT Family Foundation, the National League of Cities, and the International City/County Management Association.



In Anchorage, the project engages community council leaders, municipal Assembly members, nonprofit organizations, youth, longtime residents, newcomers, and residents who do not regularly attend meetings. The initiative also works closely with the Federation of Community Councils and YWCA Alaska to expand participation beyond typical council attendees.

In Rochester, the project engages city council members, municipal staff, civic engagement leaders, and residents through surveys, interviews, and facilitated public forums designed to explore how civic engagement processes can be strengthened.

Across both communities, the work intentionally seeks participation from youth, renters, immigrant communities, working families, and residents who face barriers to attending traditional public meetings.

CASE STUDY

Advancing the Field of ADR

Rather than bypassing official public meetings, the National Civic League focuses on redesigning them from within. Because these meetings are legally required spaces of governance, improving how they function offers a powerful opportunity to strengthen civic trust and participation.

In Anchorage, the project partnered with YWCA Alaska and the Federation of Community Councils to host a public forum exploring how to strengthen the city's charter-embedded community councils. The event incorporated civic arts and facilitated dialogue, including an exercise in which residents read real meeting transcripts aloud to one another. The activity helped participants experience procedural language in a more human and relational way, demonstrating how meeting design can influence accessibility and participation.

In Rochester, the project facilitated a public forum with residents and five city council members that focused on strengthening civic engagement and improving how community voices influence decision-making. Structured roundtable discussions emphasized dialogue rather than one-way testimony.

During the Rochester forum, the project also piloted AI-powered translation using smart glasses, allowing a Spanish-speaking participant to follow discussions in real time. The pilot highlighted both the promise and limitations of emerging technologies, reinforcing that accessibility depends not only on translation tools but also on thoughtful meeting pacing and facilitation.

Across both cities, the initiative conducts civic infrastructure scans, pilots dialogue-based formats within existing legal structures, strengthens facilitation skills among civic leaders, and tests feedback mechanisms such as "you said, we did" summaries that clearly show how public input informs decisions.

Impact and Outcomes

Early findings suggest that residents and local officials are eager to experiment with new approaches to civic engagement when given the opportunity.

Participants in Anchorage responded positively to civic arts and dialogue-based formats that encouraged empathy and shared understanding. In Rochester, residents and elected officials engaged deeply in facilitated discussions about how civic engagement processes could better support meaningful participation.

Across both communities, participants consistently requested earlier opportunities for engagement in decision-making processes, clearer communication about how public input is used, and more accessible meeting formats that support dialogue and learning rather than procedural testimony alone.

Research findings suggest that many challenges in civic engagement stem not from a lack of public commitment, but from the design of civic processes themselves. When meetings are structured to emphasize dialogue, clarity, and reciprocity, residents respond constructively and remain motivated to participate.

CASE STUDY

Advancing the Field of ADR

This initiative extends principles of ADR into everyday democratic governance. Public meetings often function as adversarial spaces structured around testimony and rebuttal.

By integrating facilitated dialogue small-group discussion, and civic arts approaches, the project demonstrates how ADR-informed design can transform civic engagement.

The initiative contributes to the field of ADR by applying facilitation to reduce escalation in public forums, designing processes that surface interests rather than positions, and embedding norms of respect, accountability, and psychological safety within civic decision-making spaces.



The Role of the AAA-ICDR Foundation Grant

Support from the AAA-ICDR Foundation enables the National Civic League to pilot innovative approaches to strengthening civil discourse in local governance.

The grant funds research, community engagement activities, and pilot programs in multiple cities, allowing the organization to test new models for dialogue-based public meetings and inclusive civic participation.

By supporting experimentation, evaluation, and collaboration with national partners, the Foundation's investment helps advance practical strategies for rebuilding trust between residents and local governments.

Rapid Response Grants



CASE STUDY

Organization

National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM)

Project

Los Angeles Area Community Mediation Centers
Unite to Support Fire-Affected Communities

The Challenge

Wildfires create immediate physical destruction and long-term conflict. In the aftermath of the Los Angeles area fires, residents faced displacement, housing instability, insurance and contractor disputes, family stress, workplace disruption, and increased polarization and mistrust.

These pressures often persist long after the flames are extinguished, particularly for marginalized and underserved communities that face barriers to accessing legal and support services.

Participating Centers

With funding from the AAA-ICDR Foundation, NAFCM selected and supported a coordinated response among community mediation centers prepared to meet post-fire needs, including:

- Conflict Resolution Institute (Ventura County)
- Groundswell (Orange County)
- Loyola Law School Center for Conflict Resolution (Los Angeles County)
- Peace In Education (Los Angeles County)

Location

Greater Los Angeles Area, California
(Los Angeles, Ventura, and Orange Counties)

Dates

February 26, 2025 – February 26, 2026

Grant Amount

\$55,000

Approach and Implementation

The grant supported the rapid deployment of mediation and conflict resolution services, combined with outreach, to ensure affected residents knew help was available. Funding enabled centers to:

- Provide immediate mediation support in fire-affected communities
- Expand outreach through courts, nonprofit partners, and local service organizations
- Strengthen mediator readiness through trauma-informed and high-conflict de-escalation training
- Convene monthly collaboration sessions among centers led by NAFCM
- Develop shared disaster-response tools and processes



CASE STUDY

Impact and Outcomes

As a result, community members gained immediate access to trusted conflict resolution support during a period of heightened stress and uncertainty, while courts and community partners increased their use of community mediation.

A major long-term outcome of the project is the creation of the Southern California Community Peacebuilding Coalition, a coordinated response network spanning roughly 240 square miles.

The coalition connects mediation centers across county boundaries, enabling faster coordination, shared resources, and a more effective response to future disasters.

Advancing the Field of ADR

This project strengthens ADR by positioning community mediation as a frontline recovery resource rather than simply an alternative to litigation after disputes escalate.

It also models a collaboration-forward funding approach that supports local centers working together rather than competing, expanding visibility and trust in community mediation across the region.

The Role of the AAA-ICDR Foundation Grant

Recognition under the AAA-ICDR and NAFCM logos helped distinguish legitimate mediation support from opportunistic or unverified programs seeking to take advantage of the disaster.

The Foundation's funding enabled center-to-center collaboration, delivered services and outreach during a period of heightened need, and established durable infrastructure that will strengthen Southern California's disaster response capacity moving forward.



CASE STUDY

Organization

Western Justice Center

Location

Pasadena, California (Pasadena Unified School District)

Project

Conflict Resolution Education and Restorative Practices in Pasadena Unified School District

Dates

February 24, 2025 – February 24, 2026

Grant Amount

\$25,000

The Challenge

Conflict in schools often reflects deeper challenges: unprocessed grief, trauma, stress at home, and strained relationships within the school community.

In communities affected by natural disasters, these pressures intensify. When the Eaton Fire impacted the Pasadena and Altadena areas, entire school communities experienced displacement, loss of homes, and disruptions to daily life.

Schools facing these circumstances must navigate rising tensions while maintaining safe learning environments.

Traditional disciplinary responses often fail to address the underlying causes of conflict and can further strain relationships among students, staff, and families.

Participating Communities

Through this project, WJC works in partnership with the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD), where the organization maintains a districtwide restorative schools partnership.

The initiative engages students, educators, administrators, and community partners across the district. Following the Eaton Fire, this work expanded to support schools experiencing displacement, co-location, and other disruptions affecting students and staff.

WJC collaborates closely with district leadership and school-based teams to integrate restorative practices and conflict resolution education into everyday school environments.

The Western Justice Center (WJC) works to strengthen school communities by equipping students and educators with conflict resolution skills through Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) and restorative practices.

WJC leads the largest evidence-based Restorative Schools initiative in Los Angeles County, supporting more than 30,000 TK–12 students across 38 schools in eight districts. Evidence from WJC's long-term partnerships demonstrates the impact of this approach.

In the Azusa Unified School District, where WJC works across all 10 schools, chronic absenteeism has dropped by 30% and suspensions have been reduced by 50%.

Approach and Implementation

Through support from the AAA-ICDR Foundation Rapid Response Fund, WJC expanded its services to address emerging needs across the PUSD community following the fires. Key activities included:

- Peer Mediation Boot Camp training for 116 students and 19 adults
- Community circle facilitation training for 24 students and 13 adults, leading to participation by more than 400 students and adults in restorative circles
- Development of a PUSD-focused Peer Mediation Invitational event engaging students, staff, and volunteer mentors

Through these activities, WJC strengthened school communities' capacity to respond constructively to conflict during a period of significant disruption.

CASE STUDY

Impact and Outcomes

WJC's partnership with Pasadena Unified enabled schools to respond to the crisis by leveraging restorative practices already embedded in their cultures.

When Eliot Arts Magnet School relocated more than 400 students and teachers to McKinley School of the Arts following the Eaton Fire, educators and students relied on restorative circles and dialogue to help build trust and community across the newly combined campus.

Rather than allowing tensions to escalate, students and educators used restorative practices to process loss, rebuild relationships, and support one another during recovery.

The Rapid Response Fund also enabled WJC to expand its districtwide restorative schools initiative from 12 to 17 schools, while continuing to provide recovery-related resources and support across the broader district.

Advancing the Field of ADR

WJC advances the field of ADR by embedding mediation and restorative practices directly into school environments.

Through peer mediation programs, community-building circles, and restorative conferencing, students and educators develop practical conflict resolution skills that reduce violence, strengthen empathy, and build healthier school communities.

WJC also convenes students, educators, and community mediators through its annual Peer Mediation Invitational, creating a regional network of young leaders equipped to address conflict constructively in schools and communities.

The Role of the AAA-ICDR Foundation Grant

The AAA-ICDR Foundation Rapid Response grant enabled WJC to respond quickly to the Pasadena Unified School District's needs following the Eaton Fire.



Funding supported expanded training, restorative programming, and districtwide professional development during a time of extraordinary disruption.

The grant also helped stabilize school communities and expand WJC's restorative schools initiative to additional campuses.

Through this support, the Foundation helped ensure that students, educators, and families had access to the tools needed to rebuild trust, strengthen relationships, and maintain safe and supportive learning environments.

Special Initiative Grant



CASE STUDY

Organization

Dignity Best Practices

Project

Field Mediation Technical Assistance Initiative

Location

Chicago, Illinois
Iowa City / Johnson County, Iowa

Dates

March 21, 2025 – June 20, 2027

Grant Amount

\$550,000

The Challenge

Across the United States, an estimated 10% of the roughly 200 million 911 calls placed annually — about 20 million calls — involve nonviolent interpersonal disputes between neighbors, roommates, family members, or members of the public. Yet law enforcement remains the default responder.

Police officers responding to these situations must operate within a law enforcement framework. When no law has been broken, officers may leave the situation unresolved. In other cases, citations or threats of arrest may be used to address low-level conflicts. Either response can leave the underlying dispute unresolved, often resulting in repeated calls for service and ongoing tensions within communities.

Field mediation offers an alternative approach. By deploying trained mediators or cross-trained crisis response teams, communities can respond to conflict with dialogue and problem-solving rather than enforcement.

Participating Communities

Through a competitive application process, Chicago, Illinois and Iowa City/Johnson County, Iowa were selected to receive technical assistance to establish field mediation capacity.

Both communities demonstrated strong commitment to cross-agency collaboration and community-centered public safety approaches. Their differing sizes and structures offer an opportunity to explore how field mediation can operate effectively across diverse community settings.

Approach and Implementation

Chicago and Iowa City/Johnson County share a goal of ensuring residents receive the most appropriate response to conflict. Both jurisdictions have invested in community-based interventions and view field mediation as a natural next step in expanding their public safety approaches.

By integrating mediation into crisis response systems, residents can receive support that emphasizes dialogue, de-escalation, and long-term conflict resolution while reducing unnecessary police involvement in nonviolent disputes.

In the short term, the initiative will train two mobile crisis response teams in field mediation, equipping them to respond more effectively to interpersonal disputes and help residents develop practical tools to manage conflict.

Impact and Outcomes

Over time, the project aims to demonstrate how field mediation can become a standard capability within crisis response systems, helping communities reduce conflict escalation, strengthen relationships among neighbors, and improve overall community safety.

The initiative also creates a model that other jurisdictions can replicate as they explore alternatives to enforcement-based responses to interpersonal conflict.

CASE STUDY



Advancing the Field of ADR

This initiative expands the reach of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) by applying mediation principles in real-time community settings.

Unlike traditional mediation, which typically occurs during scheduled sessions, field mediation takes place directly in neighborhoods, parks, and other public spaces, allowing mediators to intervene quickly when disputes arise.

The Role of the AAA-ICDR Foundation Grant

The AAA-ICDR Foundation grant supports a 15-month implementation period, enabling Dignity Best Practices to provide technical assistance to participating communities.

Funding supports a dedicated project manager, development of mediation training curriculum in partnership with an established mediation center, cross-agency working groups, and site visits to participating communities.

These efforts will help build sustainable mediation capacity and demonstrate how ADR can strengthen community-based crisis response systems.

Panel Partners Program



CASE STUDY

Organization

Bar Association of San Francisco

Project

Restorative Practices in Supportive
and Affordable Housing

The Challenge

Evictions rarely stem solely from legal violations. They are often the result of unresolved conflict: Miscommunication, stress and trauma responses, power imbalances, and cultural disconnects within housing communities.

In supportive and affordable housing settings, where many residents and staff have experienced trauma, traditional enforcement responses such as lease violation notices or calls to emergency services can escalate conflict rather than resolve it.

These approaches can increase the risk of homelessness, contribute to staff burnout, and undermine efforts to build stable, trusting communities.

Data collected by the Conflict Intervention Service (CIS), a program of the Bar Association of San Francisco, through 260 surveys of residents and staff, underscores the demand for alternative approaches: 85–91% expressed interest in mediation and restorative justice as tools for addressing conflict within their housing communities.

Location

San Francisco, California

Dates

October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026

Grant Amount

\$10,000

Participating Communities

Through this project, CIS works with supportive and affordable housing providers across San Francisco, engaging property managers, service providers, case managers, and housing leaders in collaborative learning and training around restorative practices.

These partners play a critical role in shaping housing environments where conflicts can be addressed constructively, and residents are supported in maintaining stable housing.

Approach and Implementation

With support from the AAA-ICDR Foundation's Panel Partners Program, CIS is expanding its capacity to integrate restorative justice practices into housing communities.

Over eight months, CIS is convening a Community of Practice Series for housing providers and frontline staff. These sessions provide practical tools and training to help participants incorporate restorative approaches into their daily conflict resolution practices.

The initiative also supports CIS's expanded panel of neutrals and strengthens partnerships with housing organizations, allowing mediation and restorative justice services to be delivered more consistently across participating communities.

CASE STUDY

Impact and Outcomes

The Community of Practice Series is helping housing providers develop practical, equity-centered tools for responding to conflict. By building staff capacity in restorative practices, the initiative encourages approaches that focus on dialogue, accountability, and repairing harm rather than punitive enforcement.

In the short term, the project strengthens knowledge and collaboration among housing providers committed to restorative approaches. Over time, CIS aims to expand its programmatic capacity to provide mediation, restorative justice services, and training that help residents and staff address conflict constructively and prevent unnecessary housing loss.

The Role of the AAA-ICDR Foundation Grant

The AAA-ICDR Foundation Panel Partners grant enables CIS to continue building momentum for restorative practices within San Francisco housing communities.

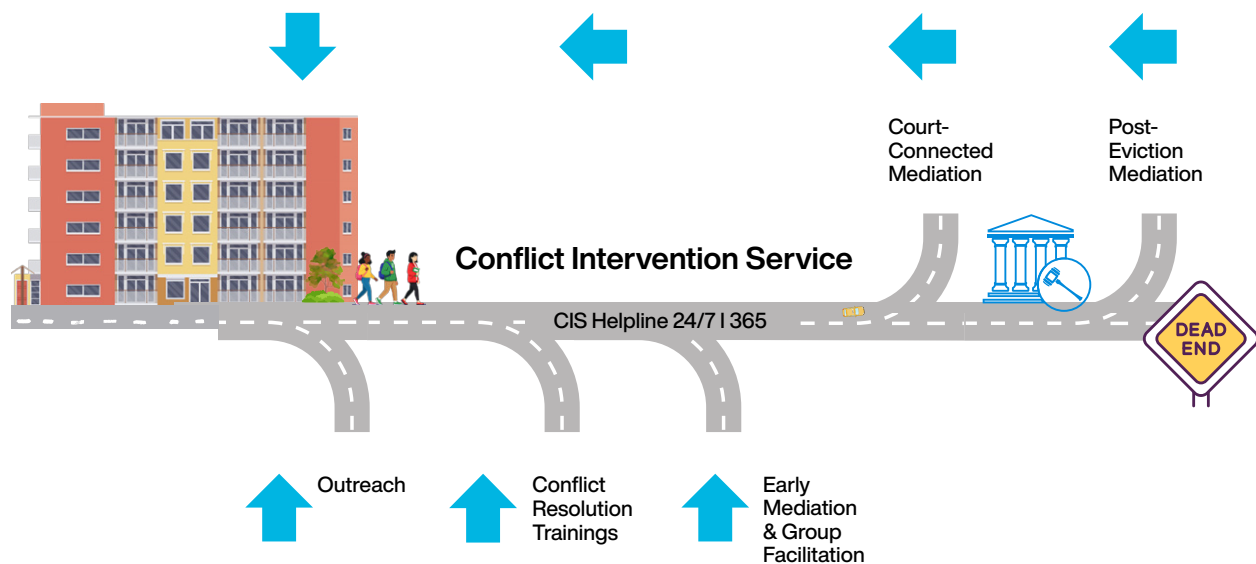
Funding supports the Community of Practice Series, expands CIS's panel of neutrals, and strengthens partnerships with housing providers committed to restorative approaches.

The grant serves as an important bridge, allowing CIS to deepen this work and continue embedding mediation and restorative justice practices within housing environments.

Advancing the Field of ADR

This project contributes to the field of ADR by expanding the use of mediation and restorative justice in housing communities.

By equipping frontline housing staff with restorative tools, the initiative helps shift conflict resolution practices away from punitive responses toward approaches that emphasize dialogue, accountability, and community stability.



ADR Scholarships



Howard University Scholarship Recipients



My goals within the field of ADR are to represent States, investors, and other parties in matters of international trade and investment, and to promote ADR mechanisms as a solution to human and civil rights issues. ADR holds a unique capacity to fashion creative, yet pragmatic solutions to complex global challenges. I intend to be a catalyst in expanding the reach of ADR, ensuring it remains an inclusive and innovative tool for global problem solving. ”



William Jones

Washington, D.C.

Howard University Law School

Grant Amount: \$25,000



I plan to continue developing analytical, critical and negotiation skills within the field of ADR while advocating for the inclusion of diverse neutrals in ADR rostering agencies. I attribute my appreciation of the ADR field to the teachings of Professor Homer C. La Rue and Professor John Woods at the Howard University School of Law. I look forward to using such problem-solving skills in my legal career and beyond. ”



Ama Fosu

Washington, D.C.

Howard University Law School

Grant Amount: \$25,000

North Carolina Central University Scholarship Recipients



My goal within Alternative Dispute Resolution is to strengthen my ability to mediate and arbitrate complex workplace disputes, particularly those involving discrimination, bias, and organizational culture. I aim to integrate ADR principles into employment law practice to promote fairness, preserve professional relationships, and resolve conflicts before they escalate to litigation. ”



Kamilah Kennedy

North Carolina
North Carolina Central University Law School
Grant Amount: \$7,000



As a law student and through personal experiences, I've been introduced to the world of mediation and ADR, which has sparked a strong interest in helping parties resolve disputes outside of court. I've seen how effective these methods can be in moving cases forward and reducing the burden of litigation. My goal is to build a career where I can facilitate meaningful, cost-effective resolutions and be part of a more collaborative approach to justice. ”



Ruth Montilla

North Carolina
North Carolina Central University Law School
Grant Amount: \$7,500



After law school, I aspire to incorporate ADR and its relevant practices into my daily work as a contract attorney in the sports law industry. I recognize that ADR methods are often extremely valuable to resolving contract disputes amongst parties. Additionally, while working as a paralegal for over eight (8) years, I have first-hand seen the benefits that negotiation, mediation, and arbitration offer to clients while serving as an alternative to litigation. In the future, I aspire to have a strong and experienced skill-set in ADR practices so that I can utilize these to advocate for my clients and help each client find a beneficial resolution to their unique claims and circumstances. ”



Aimee Roix

North Carolina
North Carolina Central University Law School
Grant Amount: \$7,500

North Carolina Central University Scholarship Recipients



I am interested in the area of ADR because it plays a crucial role in providing alternative means of resolving conflicts outside of the traditional courtroom process. In today's society, litigation can be extremely time consuming and expensive, and the traditional process is not always accessible or practical. ADR offers individuals and businesses a practical alternative, balancing the pursuit of justice with financial accessibility. ”



Raygan Hansley

North Carolina

North Carolina Central University Law School

Grant Amount: \$7,000



My goal in the field of ADR is to apply my 30 years of experience in project management, business operations, and conflict resolution to help parties navigate disputes with clarity and fairness. With a forthcoming J.D. and a strong background in managing complex contracts and diverse stakeholders, I aim to foster collaboration and craft practical, mutually beneficial outcomes. ”



Aimee Bickers

North Carolina

North Carolina Central University Law School

Grant Amount: \$7,000



I'm interested in using the core ideas of open communication and collaboration, as seen in Alternative Dispute Resolution, to make in-house counsel work more efficient and proactive. I want to help resolve issues early, cut down on unnecessary litigation, and build stronger working relationships within my work environment. ”



Brandon Sanders

North Carolina

North Carolina Central University Law School

Grant Amount: \$7,000

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2025 AAA-ICDR Foundation Leadership



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Acknowledgment of Donors

The Foundation's work is only possible due to the generosity of the AAA-ICDR and its roster of arbitrators and mediators, which together have provided over \$18 million in monetary and in-kind contributions. We cannot thank you enough. In particular, we recognize those who donated at the Chair's Circle Donor (\$2,000+) and Leadership Donor (\$1,000+) tiers:

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