

## **A Nationwide Survey of Mediation Centers<sup>1</sup>**

**Bruce C. McKinney, William D. Kimsey, Rex M. Fuller**

McKinney, Kimsey and Fuller conducted a mail-in survey to determine the status of community mediation centers throughout the country. 146 centers participated in the survey. The results suggest that centers continue to have limited budgets; however, most have high settlement rates for mediations.

In 1996, community mediation centers in the U.S. were surveyed. The results suggest that centers continue to have limited budgets; however, most have high settlement rates for mediations.

### **Center Staffing**

Centers consisted of mostly volunteers with generally small full-time staffs. 15.1 percent of the centers had no full-time personnel and 47.9 percent had one or two full-time personnel. 24.7 percent employed three or four people and 12.3 percent had five to forty full-time personnel. 46.7 percent had no part-time personnel, 40.4 percent reported having one to three part-time staff, 10.3 percent reported having four to eight part-time personnel and 2.7 percent reported having nine to forty-five part-time staff.

With a limited number of full-time and part-time staff members, most centers rely substantially on volunteers. 70 percent of the respondents had 4 to 93 volunteers. 20.5 percent had no volunteers. 13.7 percent had 1 to 9 volunteers and 29.5 percent had 10 to 40 volunteers. 27.4 percent had 41 to 93 volunteers and 8.9 percent had 94 to 225 volunteers. Centers with the most volunteers were located in large urban areas such as Durham, North Carolina; Houston, Texas; New Haven, Connecticut; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; San Diego, California; and Washington, D.C.

### **Center Funding**

Most centers surveyed were nonprofits. 96.7 percent of the centers were nonprofit agencies and 3.4 percent were profit based. 50 percent charged for services and 49.3 percent did not charge for services. Surprisingly, 57 percent reported receiving public money from taxes as their funding. Grants accounted for 16 percent of the centers. 11 percent of centers received funding from fees. 7 percent of the centers reported having no funding source.

### **Center Caseload**

Forty-six percent of the centers reported having between 200 and 1,887 cases a year. 28.1 percent reported between 8 and 180, 12.3 percent reported having 2,000 and 6,000, and 8.2 percent reported having no cases. 4.8 percent had between 6,000 and

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<sup>1</sup> McKinney, Bruce, William D. Kimsey, Rex M. Fuller. "A Nationwide Survey of Mediation Centers." Mediation Quarterly 14.2 (1996): 155-166.

22,500 cases a year. The top 4.8 percent of centers were located in large urban areas and were connected to district attorney's offices, which explains their high caseloads. For instance, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office reported receiving between 12,000 and 15,000 cases a year.

Most centers also had high settlement rates for mediated cases. Approximately 60 percent of the centers reported that more than half of their disputes settled. Just over 50 percent reported agreement rates of over 76 percent. 25.3 percent reported 76-85 percent of cases settled, 17.1 percent reported between 66 and 75 percent, 6.2 percent reported from 56 to 65 percent, 5.5 percent reported 26 to 55 percent and 4.1 percent reported between 96 and 100.

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### **Conclusion**

Most mediation centers have limited budgets and benefit from the work of volunteers. Centers in large urban areas generally have higher caseloads and more volunteers than centers in other environments. Funding for mediation centers varies; however, more centers are obtaining public funding from taxes.

### **Human Resources Management [MH]**

- Staffing numbers

### **Information Analysis [MI]**

- Program Effectiveness [MI-3]
- Caseload

### **Resource Development & Fundraising [MR]**

- Diversified Funding [MR-1]

### **States**

- California
- Connecticut
- North Carolina
- Texas
- Pennsylvania
- Washington, DC