

To: Members of the Budget Committee
From: Sharron Monohon, Budget & Finance Director
Meeting Date: April 25, 2024
Subject: Public Comment

In addition to the oral public comment that will be given during the Budget Committee Meeting on April 25, 2024, the attached comments were submitted in writing.

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

Resolutions Northwest based in Portland OR created a Landlord-Tenant Mediation Program about 3 years ago to prevent eviction and/or improve the relationship between landlords/property managers and tenants. Occasionally our caseload is so heavy, that we reach out to East County Resolutions for assistance with cases from neighboring cities such as Gresham. We often collaborate, and some of the trainings have led to great mediators that have been valuable to both programs. Our programs are both premier services for Multnomah County and it would be detrimental to the communities, DHS, and other services that ECR helps with in Gresham and surround areas.

Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact program for the some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members. Closing East County Resolutions will have a negative impact on our community.

Contact us if you have any questions!

Sincerely,

Erion Moore

erion@resolutionsnorthwest.org

Resolutions Northwest

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact program for the some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members. Closing East County Resolutions will have a negative impact on our community.

As a public defender in Multnomah County, I have a deep appreciation for programs that seek to resolve issues outside of the legal system. It has become apparent in recent years that our legal systems are overburdened and often fail to resolve matters in a timely fashion as a result. Mediation centers, like East County Resolutions, can give people access to justice in a faster and often more satisfying way. In addition, community mediation saves taxpayers money as legal system interventions are far more costly to individual parties as well as the government. In my work, I have seen community mediation centers provide creative and impactful solutions to difficult problems. I urge you to continue investing in East County Resolutions.

Sincerely,

Tristen Edwards

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact programs for some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members.

Again, I write as the President of the national organization, the National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM). We support over 300 centers, like the one you support through the City of Gresham. At a time when civic connection, civil conversation and community engagement is being challenged, more communities need community mediation centers, such as East County Resolutions, not less of them.

Your center has been a leader not only locally, but also nationally, supporting our national movement of increasing trust, through the TRUST Network and building bridges by connecting with national partners and as well as other centers doing similar work cross the U.S. and Canada through your Tera Cleland's participation in our quarterly State Associations Director meetings. Through your director we have learned about and learned from the tremendous work your team has accomplished to be a community hub of creative problem solving, facilitation, mediation, conflict coaching and conflict management training. Here are some impacts that you may already know about your center, but needs repeating:

- Facilitates the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance Program helping local homeowners avoid foreclosure.
- Helps homeless high school students maintain housing with volunteer home providers in our community, through Second Home Program mediations
- Helps keep families together and reunite families that have been separated, in partnership with Child Welfare
- Empowers tenants and landlords to find solutions together and avoid expensive court proceedings, mediating manufactured and marina communities dispute through SB586
- Provide conflict coaching to help parties think through their issues, de-escalate the situation, and help them find a solution to move forward.

In the last 10-years, East County Resolutions has served 32,660 community members, trained 83 community members to become community mediators, educated 2,898 community members in 225 conflict resolution skill building programs, offered 254 conflict coaching sessions and maintained an 89% Mediation Resolution Rate and provides opportunities for citizens to feel connected to their city by being able to volunteer their talents through your center.

Warm Regards,

D.G. Mawn

D.G. Mawn, M.A., J.D., President

2023 Melanie Greenburg U.S. Peacebuilder of the Year recipient

National Association For Community Mediation

(602) 633-4213 (Main Office)

(502) 777-0603 (Program Office)

Pronouns: He/Him/él

The Claim

“The mediation services provided by East County Resolutions have been eliminated. This was an incredibly difficult decision, but ultimately, analyzing **the impact to our General Fund, as well as the relatively low use of this program by the community**, it is simply a service we can no longer afford to provide.”

-Gresham City Manager

The Facts

Actual Impact to the General Fund

- Over 10 years, the program has cost the City an average of \$29,000 annually. The program is slated to be completely self-supporting by July of this year.
- The program has already secured \$132,748 in grant funding for FY 24/25. \$71,000 will need to be returned.

| East County Resolutions Historical Operating Costs | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| | FY 14/15 | FY 15/16 | FY 16/17 | FY 17/18 | FY 18/19 | FY 19/20 | FY 20/21 | *FY 21/22 | FY22/23 | **FY23/24 |
| Revenue | 56,490 | 96,560 | 98,730 | 153,205 | 248,011 | 277,730 | 333,974 | 202,262 | 224,670 | 169,679 |
| Expenses | 110,023 | 118,920 | 134,994 | 185,788 | 243,847 | 280,827 | 350,636 | 290,881 | 257,701 | 177,147 |
| Net | -53,533 | -22,360 | -36,264 | -32,583 | 4,164 | -3,097 | -16,662 | -88,619 | -33,031 | -7,468 |
| Percentage of operating costs covered | 51.3% | 81.2% | 73.1% | 82.5% | 101.7% | 98.9% | 95.2% | 69.5% | 87.2% | 95.8% |
| | *Policy changes with one of our largest contractors caused an unintentional steep decline in referrals which we were able to re-organize and stabilize the next year. | | | | | | | | | |
| | **Current Revenue Expenses through Q3 (July 1, 2023-March 31, 2024) | | | | | | | | | |
| | Additional Note- City of Gresham each year has pledged ~\$45,000-\$47,500 to support ECR services each year in alliance with Wood Village, Fairview and Troutdale | | | | | | | | | |

Actual Program Use

Over 10 years:

- ECR accepted 6,529 cases from the community
- Parties have resolved their differences in 89% of community mediations
- 2,898 community members have enrolled in 225 ECR conflict management workshops
- ECR has engaged in 254 conflict coaching sessions
- ECR has facilitated more than 600 Foreclosure Avoidance conferences
- ECR has facilitated dozens of Second Home mediations, helping homeless high school youth maintain housing until graduation
- ECR has facilitated more than a thousand meetings between families in crisis and social workers
- ECR has facilitated landlord/tenant disputes mandated by SB586

In the first 2 quarters of FY 23/24, ECR served more than 1,300 members of the community

Conclusion

The facts seem to contradict the City Manager's understanding of the cost and benefits related to East County Resolutions programming. In fact, ECR's impact on the City's General Fund is incidental to nonexistent and, contrary to his assertion, ECR provides access to conflict management services to thousands of community members annually. The value of keeping families together, helping homeowners avoid foreclosure, and helping homeless high school students graduate should not be underestimated. Please reconsider eliminating this program.

Rob Bearden c.rob.bearden@gmail.com

April, 23, 2024

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees: Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact program for the some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members. Closing East County Resolutions will have a negative impact on our community.

OHCS has consistently provided funding for East County Resolutions mediation services to assist manufactured home tenants in Gresham and surrounding areas. East County Resolutions has proven to be a valuable asset to the Manufactured homeowners in preserved parks.

Prior to the end of the 21-23 biennium OHCS provided East County Resolutions, mediation center with \$142,500 to assist with its operational costs for the 23-25 biennium.

OHCS is asking that you reconsider closing East County Resolutions' and that they continue providing mediation services to our manufactured home owners and tenants.

In the last 10-years, East County Resolutions:

- Served 32,660 community members within 6,529 cases
- Trained 83 community members to become community mediators
- Educated 2,898 community members in 225 conflict resolution skill building programs
- Offered 254 conflict coaching sessions
- Maintains an 89% Mediation Resolution Rate (considered excellent)
- Supports 12-15 volunteer mediators every year

Sincerely,
Rick Abrego
Asst Director Manufactured Housing
Oregon Housing and Community Services

The Claim

*“The mediation services provided by East County Resolutions have been eliminated. This was an incredibly difficult decision, but ultimately, analyzing **the impact to our General Fund, as well as the relatively low use of this program by the community**, it is simply a service we can no longer afford to provide.”*

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-Jack Hollis

4/23/2024

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:
I am reaching out as the Executive Director of Resolution Washington, the association of 21 Dispute Resolution Centers in Washington State. I'm connecting on behalf of the East County Resolutions program for Gresham community members.

I understand as community and budget leaders you have difficult decisions around funding. I hope to convey the value of having these essential services available to your community. I understand this program has been available to your community since 1992, and I know if one of our centers in WA were to lose its funding it would start the program over—the staff, volunteer community members, and board members fall away and regathering all those talented individuals who have the essential skills will likely never happen.

When I see the data for East County Resolutions it reminds me of some of our similar-sized Dispute Resolution Centers in Washington. They are currently thriving and providing essential de-escalation services to landlords and tenants as well as helping with civil dialog between community members and their elected officials. Empowering landlords and tenants to solve problems through less formal processes saves many other systems, including courts and homeless services by preventing the eviction where agreeable to both parties.

Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. The services they provide are needed now more than ever across America.

Respectfully,

LaDessa Croucher
Executive Director
Resolution Washington
Resolutionwa.org

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I received mediation training from East Country Resolutions in 2022, and in the training encountered multiple city and county employees who were gaining valuable communication skills to take into their work. While ECR's mediation record speaks for itself, there is a less obvious benefit it brings to the community -- equipping its public servants with effective tools for listening, establishing common values and mediating conflict.

Gresham made a bold and forward-thinking action investing in mediation via East County Resolutions, and the city has reaped a multitude of benefits through its programming. The residents of Gresham deserve leaders and decision makers who prioritize the longterm health of the city infrastructure.

Thank you,
Catherine Feeny

Hi,

I have been involved in mediation for over 30 years, and the cost effectiveness along with the priceless contribution to the community is supported by the data across the board.

ECR is vital in keeping our community safe, and as peaceful as seemingly possible, serving a diverse representation of our citizens, both organizationally and individually.

Any way you measure value to our community, ECR is structurally sound and important to us all.

Please do NOT cut funding to the program.

Sincerely,
M. Steiner

Please reconsider closing East County Resolutions. Their work is too valuable to discontinue. We have free Neighbor to Neighbor Mediation in Benton, Linn, Marion and Yamhill counties and the many people who use it consider it invaluable.

Wendy McKee

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

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- Supports 12-15 volunteer mediators every year

I am Executive Director of Six Rivers Dispute Resolution center, serving Hood River, Wasco, Gilliam, Sherman and Wheeler counties with community mediation. On behalf of your neighboring communities, I can provide an example of the impact of community mediation:

Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center was alerted to an eviction filing that was scheduled for court hearing in early December. Staff from Six Rivers attended the hearing and the tenant failed to appear. Nevertheless, after discussing the matter with a mediator, the housing provider was persuaded to ask the Judge to postpone the execution of the Default Judgment and Eviction until there was an opportunity for mediation efforts. Eviction was postponed until the day after Christmas. Six Rivers contacted the rent support organization that had helped the tenant previously. We learned that the tenant missed the court hearing because she had been hospitalized with a difficult childbirth. She also spoke no English and was behind in only a small amount of rent due in part to an oversight by the housing provider. Working closely with an advocate from the rent support organization, and communicating with the housing provider, Six Rivers helped the parties reach a resolution that kept the tenant and her new baby housed. Due to an oversight by the court, canceling the eviction required special efforts from the housing provider just before Christmas, and mediation helped make that happen too!

Our communities need low cost, accessible mediation. It addresses escalation and can prevent violence.

East County Resolutions has **already secured significant funding for services** that impact our most vulnerable communities in the next fiscal year. **Known grant funds are available** to ECR on the near horizon.

Please vote to **keep East County Resolutions'** programming open and available for Gresham community members.

Sincerely,

Andrea

Andrea Pacheco (she/her)

Executive Director

[Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center](#)

541-386-1283 x5

andreap@6rivers.org

Oregon's USDA Agricultural Mediation Program

Member, [Coalition of Agricultural Mediation Programs](#)

Member, [Resolution Washington](#)

Member, [Resolution Oregon](#)

Connect with us on [Facebook](#)

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992, providing low-cost and effective services for some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members. Closing East County Resolutions will have a negative impact on our community.

I am writing to you as the Executive Director of the Dispute Resolution Center of Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties. Today, I stand before you to advocate fervently for the East County Resolutions program, which has been a vital resource for Gresham community members since 1992.

As community leaders entrusted with the responsibility of managing budgets, I understand the weight of the decisions you must make. However, I implore you to recognize the immeasurable value that the East County Resolutions program brings to your constituents. This program's funding cut will harm dedicated staff, volunteers, board members, and those who rely on its services.

Similar-sized Dispute Resolution Centers in Washington thrive, providing de-escalation services and facilitating civil dialogue. By empowering landlords and tenants to resolve conflicts through less formal processes, this program eases the burden of various other systems, including courts and homeless services, ultimately preventing evictions when agreeable to both parties.

In a time when our nation is grappling with unprecedented challenges, the services provided by East County Resolutions are more critical than ever. As legislators, you have the power to ensure that this vital resource remains available to the people of Gresham. Please vote to maintain funding for East County Resolutions' programming, as it affects the community.

Thank you for your consideration and for your unwavering commitment to serving the people of Gresham.

Donnell Austin SHRM-CP, SCP, SPHR

Executive Director

Dispute Resolution Center of Snohomish, Island and Skagit County

daustin@voaww.org

Direct: 360.419.4249 | Main: 425.339.1335

117 N 1st St, Ste 30 | Mount Vernon, WA 98273

April 23, 2024

City of Gresham:

I am writing to express my deep concern and opposition to the proposed budget cuts for FY24/25, which include the complete defunding and termination of East County Resolutions (ECR), a critical community dispute resolution center that has faithfully served our community since 1992. The decision to eliminate this vital service from the budget is not only short-sighted but counterproductive to the communities shared goal of fostering a harmonious, just, and equitable society.

ECR has been an indispensable pillar in our community, impacting over 1,300 individuals in just the first half of FY23/24 alone. This organization extends far beyond the basic mediation services it offers; it is a hub of peace-building, conflict coaching, and management training that has created a network of empowered citizens equipped to handle challenges creatively and amicably. The broad scope of programs facilitated by ECR, including the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance Program and the Second Home Program, are testaments to its integral role in preventing more severe societal issues such as homelessness and family separation.

The financial rationale for discontinuing funding for ECR is significantly flawed. The assertion that the program is underutilized and too costly contradicts the reality of its operations and the financial strategies it employs. ECR has not only secured substantial grant and contract funding to minimize the impact on the city's general fund but is also exploring new grant opportunities that could potentially generate additional revenue for the city. It is vital to consider that the costs saved from cutting ECR are likely to be offset by increased expenses in other areas which could otherwise be mitigated by the services provided by ECR.

As a community member, I urge the committee to reconsider the proposed elimination of East County Resolutions from the city budget. Maintaining funding for ECR is not just an investment in a service but an investment in our community's future, well-being, and harmony. I strongly advocate for the continuation of support for ECR and request that this matter be given the urgent attention it deserves.

Jenise Gutierrez-Ingleston, MBA

Recruitment and Marketing Manager, Graduate Studies

The School of Business at Portland State University

jenise@pdx.edu

Phone/Text: 503-725-8008

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:
Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact program for the some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members. Closing East County Resolutions will have a negative impact on our community.

As a sitting member on the Board of Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center, I have personally seen the amazing impact that this kind of work has on community. Please consider keeping this program alive!

Sincerely, Jenny V.

Council Members,

I write to urge you not to pull funding from East County Resolutions and shut it down. As a trained mediator and recently retired attorney, I see the forceful, positive impact that community mediation serves, both as a means of harm reduction, a tool for quality of life and community improvement, and a cost-effective means of achieving productive results. Communities and the courts are better served when people communicate and work toward solving problems together, including the ability to save their homes in foreclosure.

Thank you for your reconsideration.
Susan Steinman

Dear members,

please, I urge you, do not close down East County Resolutions. The training I received and receive there has made a tremendous impact on my life and my relationships. I am a better and less judgmental listener now with my friends, family and neighbors. The people around me have benefitted from what I learned at ECR.

This low-cost community support is like no other, assisting in areas of conflict in a balanced, personable, fair and empowering way. The ECR programs that assist the most vulnerable in our community should not be shut down. I just don't understand why something so good, so appreciated, and so inexpensive has become a target for closure. Please, don't do this. Keep this unique, helpful and historical program intact.

-Yvonne Croteau

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees: I extend my sincere gratitude to each of you for your dedicated service to our community. My name is Eldridge Fantroy, a proud resident of East County with deep roots in our local education system. Having attended Reynolds Middle School and Gresham High School, I've witnessed firsthand the importance of community support and enrichment programs in shaping the lives of our youth. Currently serving as the Student Support Coordinator at the Center for Advanced Learning, I am intimately familiar with the invaluable contributions of East County Resolutions to our educational community. Over the past two years, their involvement has been transformative, facilitating student-to-student and teacher-to-student mediations, as well as delivering impactful classroom presentations. These interventions have equipped our students and staff with essential conflict resolution skills, nurturing a culture of connection and safety within our school walls. I've had the privilege of witnessing the profound impact of these initiatives, witnessing students leave mediation sessions empowered and better prepared for future challenges. Their dedication to fostering peacemakers within our community cannot be overstated.

While I recognize the weight of the decisions you face regarding budget allocations, I implore you to consider the long-term consequences of terminating East County Resolutions. As Abraham Lincoln famously said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." In a community rife with inevitable conflicts, we rely on programs like East County Resolutions to mend ruptures and fortify the bonds that hold us together. Therefore, please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact programs for some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members. Closing East County Resolutions will have a negative impact on our community.

The generational impact of this program is undeniable, and its absence would leave a void in our community's ability to nurture future peacemakers and sustain harmonious relationships.

Sincerely,

--

Eldridge Fantroy (*he/him*)

Student Support Coordinator

Office: 503-667-4978 x3367

Cell: [\(503\) 451-0330](tel:5034510330)

The Center for Advanced Learning

1484 NW Civic Dr,

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact programs for some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members.

Through my work as a 911 dispatcher I learned about how East County Resolutions could help neighbors resolve civil issues that don't necessarily need to involve sending a police officer. Empowering community members to work together to resolve differences is not only important for creating a stronger community, but it also prevents unnecessary strain on the police force so they can focus on life-safety matters.

Hoping to add some de-escalation tools to my communication toolbox I took their Basic Mediation course after working in the 911 industry for almost 2 years. After employing some of the course principles in my calltaking I was surprised to see my already excellent calltaking times become more efficient -- a critical metric in an industry where seconds save lives. Of course, after this training my callers were also feeling more heard and validated and de-escalation felt more natural.

Inspired by how my professional work drastically improved from their course, I've volunteered with East County Resolutions over the past few years. This has given me a firsthand glimpse into how they've been a continuous uplifting presence in East County and truly helped build community. Closing East County Resolutions will have a negative impact on our community. Please vote to save East County Resolutions.

Sincerely,
Rachel Stout

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

My name is Tera Cleland and I am the City of Gresham's Mediation Specialist for the last 10 years. I am urging the Budget Committee to intervene and prevent the termination of East County Resolutions (ECR). The information you have been given does not align with my deep understanding of the programs' finances and services.

Having no knowledge that this proposal was being made until hours before the budget was unveiled, the lack of transparency and timing raises many concerns, especially as a City of Gresham resident myself.

The proposal to the Budget Committee on April 18, 2024 outlined eliminating ECR based on "...the impact to the General Fund as well as the relatively low use of this program by the community,..." **The data below reflects a program that is both fiscally responsible and provides valuable services to thousands of community members.**

FINANCES

The financial information below shows that most years we bring in considerable revenue and have even contributed back to the general fund. What is not included below is the \$47,500 that the City of Gresham commits to ECR in an IGA with Wood Village, Fairview and Troutdale. As you can see, ECR has been able to spend less General Funds than the City contracted in 8 out of the last 10 years. In fact, ECR put over \$4,000 back into the General Fund in FY18/19. That is almost unheard of for a social services program.

ECR has already secured \$132,748 in grants for FY24/25. \$71,250 has already been accepted and will have to be **returned** to the grantor.

At the end of Q3 our reliance on the City of Gresham general fund is \$7,468. In Q4, ECR will no longer incur Admin I LTE .4 expenses and ECR is projecting close to \$0 or potentially a net profit for FY23/24.

As you look at the financial information and service data, I hope you will be as concerned and confused as I am about how ECR "...is simply a service we can no longer afford to provide."

CONCLUSION

East County Resolutions does not have a significant impact on the General Fund, in fact, has even been a net asset. It is highly utilized by the community and has increased services and programs year after year.

Eliminating ECR will be telling the community that the City of Gresham does not value services that help homeowners avoid foreclosure, help homeless highschool students maintain stable housing, help neighbors find peaceful solutions to their issues or help reunite families involved with Child Welfare, or the many other services it has provided for over 30 years.

Tera Cleland - City of Gresham's Mediation Specialist

The Gresham City Manager claims the City leaders' decision to eliminate ECR's community mediation services is due to "the impact to our General Fund, as well as the relatively low use of this program by the community."

Please help me understand the interests behind your position. The facts regarding ECR's funding and utilization actually point to different conclusions.

ECR's impact on the City's General Fund is incidental to non-existent and, contrary to the proposal. In fact, ECR is slated to be self-supporting by July of this year.

ECR provides access to conflict management services to thousands of community members annually. The claim of "low use" is clearly wrong. If anything, it is the City that has not used ECR enough for conflict resolution, community policing in general, and specifically for no cost programs to deal with first-time offenders who commit low-level crimes.

The good news for Gresham is that because of ECR we already have the volunteer mediation practitioners to do this important work of community building. We have access to practical experience, the training, the skills, the energy, and the proven outcomes; all we need is Gresham's leaders to give ECR an invitation to help make enhanced community policing an imbedded part of Safe Gresham's response to crime.

My dream for an increasingly abundant Gresham is enhanced PUBLIC SAFETY through community/police based innovative programs. Imagine a future Gresham where there are no more victims of crime and where no one is expendable. Yes, this is a huge dream; impossible indeed but we have to work to that end.

Please do not eliminate ECR.

Sincerely,

Tony Redfern

PS. As always, I am willing to work pro bono by offering my community building services as a volunteer.

April 24, 2024

Testimony of Sherrelle Jackson, DHS District Manager, Multnomah County
Child Welfare | Self-Sufficiency Programs Before the Gresham City Council,
Council Business Meeting Regarding: East County Resolutions
April 25, 2024

The Oregon Department of Humans Services, District 2 Child Welfare (ODHS) located in Multnomah County has had a meeting facilitation contract with East County Resolutions (ECR) since 2015. At the time of our initial interactions, ECR was known as East Metro Mediation. With almost a decade of contractual collaboration, it would be a significant loss to the families ODHS serves if the mediation services provided by East County Resolutions were eliminated.

We know that effective Child Welfare practice depends on conversations with families. Productive meetings move the family to stability and Child Welfare to final decisions regarding the safety of children. We know that impartial facilitators are important to creating spaces where families feel supported and meetings can be productive. Child Welfare caseworkers in Multnomah County frequently rely on ECR to be that impartial facilitator to bring outside impartiality.

Over the years, ECR has been a great partner to work with. We highly value the work that is done and have worked hard to collaborate in meaningful ways to positively impact families residing in Multnomah County. As Child Welfare continues to shift practice towards prioritizing the family unit and keeping the family intact, meeting facilitation has become even more important in the life of a case and the sustainability of the family unit.

Over the last 5 years our Child Welfare Practice has significantly evolved. We've moved much more toward enhanced engagement with parents to help improve safety for child and preserve children and family relationships. This has resulted in a shift from nearly 2000 children in care to now only 688 in Foster Care. We could not have moved the dial this way without the services of East County Resolution

Over the last 6 months ECR has facilitated 184 meetings for 38 caseworkers, with a direct impact of nearly 20% of the total district staff facilitated meetings. We often get reviews from ODHS caseworkers on this service, here are just three comments that speak to the positive impact:

- Facilitator did a good job. Parents were highly emotional and she continued to try and center the conversation, even when emotions started being direct towards the facilitator.
- East County Resolution staff are always wonderful to work with! I love that they are so client centered and make our families feel like these meeting really are all about them.

- Mediator did a good job at managing the meeting. The mother had gotten upset, and the mediator was able to calm and redirect the situation, which allowed the meeting to continue.

We are grateful for the commitment from ECR towards making a positive impact for Multnomah County Child Welfare families in very difficult situations and would ask that the proposal to eliminate ECR from the City of Gresham budget be reconsidered.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,
[Sherrelle Jackson](#), LCSW
DHS District Manager, Multnomah County Child
Welfare | Self-Sufficiency Programs
Desk: [503.872.5576](#)
Cell: [503.459.6655](#)

Budget and Finance Committee Vote
Testimony: East County Resolutions
City of Gresham
4/24/24

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

I am writing to you to express my support for the East County Resolutions (ECR) program in both my role as mediation professional and a previous volunteer/contractor with ECR.

I serve in a leadership role in a government program that provides sister services to East County Resolutions. Our program has a strong working relationship and respect for this Gresham program. We work collaboratively on best practices, quality control and cross train so that we can ensure all residents in our respective areas receive the highest quality services we can provide. The work of conflict resolution is highly skilled, nuanced and the future of long-term sustainable solutions. We find that more people are turning to conflict resolution/facilitation practices as a viable option for difficult situations, and I assure you that East County Resolutions is a leader in the state with this work.

I personally trained at East County Resolutions under the mentorship of the current coordinator Tera Cleland. She was instrumental in helping me and large numbers of conflict resolvers' step into the work. I've participated in training where she is teaching these vital skills to wide ranges of peoples such as; previous gang members, clergy, professional and political leaders. Every single person, including myself, speaks to how the work and Tera's mentorship has changed their life. Many people who learn these skills offer to volunteer their time utilizing these skills to members of their community within Gresham. The ripple effect of community members uplifting each other in their difficult conflicts is vital to the health of a community.

I urge the committee to consider the ripples of impact of an organization doing this level of work since 1992 on the community and the ripples of impact of removing it. I urge the committee to work with the current coordinator on the known funding (outside of Gresham's general funds) that are available and could potentially offset the immediate budget need.

Thank you for your time,

Abbey Bowman
503-960-9626
abbeybrd@gmail.com

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

This letter is in support of keeping East County Resolutions in the budget that is currently slated to be cut. The services provided by the program are a critical component of the peace and safety options for the community. Cutting this program will mean eliminating the only community mediation program available to your Gresham community members.

East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact program for the some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members. Closing East County Resolutions will have significant negative impact on our community.

In my role as a Program Manager for a sister mediation program in our region, I have had the opportunity to work with the team at Gresham for 11 years. I have been consistently impressed by the innovation, and thoughtful programming that has come from the center. East County Resolutions has been a leader in the Community Mediation statewide network, with nothing but high qualities services and community-centered approach. Other programs in our network look to ECR not only as a consistent collaborating partner but as a leader in the field of community conflict resolution.

Some specifics I want to point out around the current programming that will be lost if the program is cut:

Currently, East County Resolutions:

- Provides mediation, facilitation, and conflict-coaching to community members resolving conflicts. **These models of dispute resolution are known and proven cost savings to the community** – resulting in downstream savings by preventing expensive litigation, police involvement and court costs.
- Facilitates the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance Program helping local homeowners avoid foreclosure.
- Supports homeless high school students maintain housing with volunteer home providers in our community, through Second Home Program mediations
- Helps keep families together and reunite families that have been separated, in partnership with Child Welfare,
- Works with tenants and landlords to find solutions together and avoid expensive court proceedings, mediating manufactured and marina communities dispute through SB586
- Trains and mentors community mediators and facilitators through an active volunteer program.

In addition, not only is community mediation a known cost-saving approach, ECR has brought in significant funding through grants and contract services fees. The cost to the city of Gresham directly is extremely minimal, possibly a net positive. As a government employee myself, I urge you to look deeper at the picture being presented before you and consider the financial, and community impacts of eliminating the program.

Sincerely,

Carley Adams

Dear Mayor Stovill, Chair Dyk and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

My name is Nancy Inglehart. I live in a Manufactured Home Community in Gresham.

My whole perspective on life changed when I completed a medication class through then, East Metro Mediation. I found value in communicating non-judgementally and actively listening to the other person's perspective.

I was a member of the Landlord Tenant Coalition in Salem and was instrumental in getting legislature passed for the mandatory mediation program for Manufactured Housing, which is a free program to participants.. This program has a 90% success rate statewide. To me any mediation is successful because the participants at least create a dialog and see things from the other's perspective, at most they come to a positive resolution.

I also work within East County Resolutions as a participant in Family Decision Meetings with DHS. I find that the solutions to ongoing problems within our community is to be proactive in solving problems before the issue causes more expense over time. For example, if the parents get treatment for their issues which led to the removal of their children, obtain permant ans stable housing, and their children are returned successfully to them, this reduces homelessness, drug and alcol abuse, and the cost of foster care.

I can speak drectly to the programs I am involved with in ECR but that is only a small scope of the vital services it provides to East County.

I urge you to contunie funding for this longstanding program with a proven track record of success.

Respectively submitted,
Nancy Inglehart

April 24, 2024

Re: Proposed East County Resolutions program elimination

Dear Mayor Stovall and Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

East County Resolutions' services reduces violence; stabilizes housing for youth and adults; helps to keep families together and to reunite families through interagency facilitations; and supports unaccompanied minors in achieving school success. Decades of historical data shows a program that is used by many community members at a very low cost to the City, and has made a positive impact in the work of local leaders.

Grant awards from my office, as well as other statewide grant funds that ECR has already secured for the next fiscal year, appear to cover a significant portion of the program's expenses. Shutting down East County Resolutions will have a measurable impact for your community.

In the last 10-years, East County Resolutions:

- Served 32,660 community members within 6,529 cases
- Trained 83 community members to become community mediators
- Educated 2,898 community members in 225 conflict resolution skill building programs
- Offered 254 conflict coaching sessions
- Maintains an 89% Mediation Resolution Rate (considered excellent)
- Supports 12-15 volunteer mediators every year

Before a sudden elimination of this high impact, high usage program, please reconsider using the already secured resources to allow for a more thoughtful transition. Below are a few quotes from letters of support submitted to my office that highlight East County Resolution's value to partners.

*"On behalf of the City of Gresham Police Department, I am writing to express my support for East County Resolutions. This program has proven to be a **valuable resource to our officers.**"*

Deputy Chief William Smith
City of Gresham

"The experience has been widely positive, and we appreciate the high-quality service provided. Even through the Pandemic, the City continued funding ECR because of the crucial benefits it provides to our citizens."

Philip Morley
Fairview City Manager

Sincerely,
Patrick Sponsler, MPA OOCDR
Administrator
Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution
University of Oregon School of Law
541-346-1623
1221 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403
<https://law.uoregon.edu/academics/centers/adr/oocdr>

I recently learned that City Of Gresham is thinking of discontinuing East County Resolutions mediation services. This is disappointing news because Mediation service and training have been an important tools used in my interactions among community groups and in my business relationships among landlords and tenants.

It's been my understanding that the majority of funding for this service comes from outside the city budget in the form of grants. I also have not heard of any kind of replacement service being made available. Does this mean we should refer disputes to nonemergency services or the 911 system? They already seem pretty overloaded.

I hope this situation can be thought over a little more carefully in terms of how much bang the community gets for its buck.

Sincerely,
John Bildsoe

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members. East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact program for the some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members. Closing East County Resolutions will have a negative impact on our community.

For 15 years under auspices of Oregon Housing and Community Services, I have been the MMCRC program coordinator. MMCRC partners with East County Resolutions to provide residents and landlords of manufactured dwelling parks and marina communities, with mediation services and promote cooperative community relationships, between landlords and tenants, positive alternatives to the court system.

East County Resolutions supports 30 manufactured home parks in Gresham, Troutdale, Wood Village and Fairview, more than 1,949 families. When you consider the recent, floods, fires, COVID and ice storms and the consequential loss of income to those impacted families and the ensuing potential for eviction, it is unrealistic to discontinue a program that helps keep people in their homes. More recently, you may recall the state infused emergency resources and funding to keep families in their homes, relieving overwhelmed court systems and homeless shelters.

Mediation was a significant part of that statewide effort. Make no mistake, every eviction is an incremental burden to courts and a range of social services, every eviction results in overcrowded shelters, homelessness and diminished health and quality of life.

Please reconsider funding for East County Resolutions programming. It will be far more cost effective to maintain its contributions than to recreate two years from now.

Mediation is an integral part of the social services safety net that builds better, stronger communities and is also a tangible reference that government hears us, is engaged, and works for us all.

Respectfully,

Ken Pryor

Program Coordinator

Homeownership Division

Oregon Housing & Community Services

Manufactured & Marina Communities Resource Center

P: 971-239-9969 | Toll Free: 800-453-5511 | F: 503-986-6745

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

We urge you to continue offering Gresham community members the cost-effective and high-impact services provided by East County Resolutions.

East County Resolutions' programming reduces violence; stabilizes housing for youth and adults; helps to keep families together and to reunite families through interagency facilitations; and supports unaccompanied minors in achieving school success.

High usage of services

- Over 1,300 community members were served in the first six months of the current fiscal year
- 32,660 community members served in the past 10 years (~1/3 of the City population)

High usage of educational programming

- 42 community members were trained in 7 educational programs during the first six months of the current fiscal year
- 2,898 community members received training in more than 200 conflict resolution skill building programs in the past 10 years

High quality services

- Agreements are signed in 89% of mediation cases (nationally considered excellent)

East County Resolutions is a valuable part of Resolution Oregon, a statewide association of community dispute resolution centers, where each program responds to the local emerging needs of their community to provide meaningful services to all Oregon community members.

The below organizations are all Resolution Oregon Association members.

Resolution Oregon Executive Committee

Thank you,
Miles Mabray
MNM, MS CRES
Executive Director
Center for Dialogue and Resolution



Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

I strongly urge you to keep East County Resolutions' programming open. This program affects many citizens and especially DHS families. I have been a facilitator in the program Tera and Shari from DHS created since I became a trained mediator in 2016. And the program has already secured funding for services that impact our most vulnerable communities in the next fiscal year.

I took the training after I retired from teaching. This program should be a prerequisite to getting a teaching certificate! It changed the way I interact with others on a daily basis. I have mediated countless cases and have been successful with more cases than not. Every person I have dealt with shared they enjoyed the process and would suggest the service to others.

Please keep this program I so highly recommend to others!

Diane Kelley
Mediator, Facilitator and ECR Advisory Board Member
21908 NE Lachenview Ln.
Fairview, OR 97024

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

East County Resolutions has been a valuable community service since 1992 providing low-cost and high-impact program for the some of the most vulnerable Gresham community members.

As a neighboring community mediation center, East County Resolutions has been an invaluable partner in providing conflict resolution services in the greater Portland Metro area. Your Tera Cleland has offered invaluable insight and has furthered made all our communities a more peaceful place to live, work and play. Having mediation services available is a cost effective approach to conflict resolution and invaluable to those in our communities.

- East County Resolutions:
 - Provides many conflict management trainings creating a network of peacebuilders who amplify the work throughout the community, creating ripples of positive energy in a time when we need it the most.
 - Facilitates the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance Program helping local homeowners avoid foreclosure.
 - Helps homeless high school students maintain housing with volunteer home providers in our community, through Second Home Program mediations
 - Helps keep families together and reunite families that have been separated, in partnership with Child Welfare,
 - Empowers tenants and landlords to find solutions together and avoid expensive court proceedings, mediating manufactured and marina communities dispute through SB586
 - Provide conflict coaching to help partis think through their issues, de-escalate the situation and help them find a solution to move forward

- In the last 10-years, East County Resolutions:
 - Served 32,660 community members within 6,529 cases
 - Trained 83 community members to become community mediators
 - Educated 2,898 community members in 225 conflict resolution skill building programs
 - Offered 254 conflict coaching sessions
 - Maintains an 89% Mediation Resolution Rate (considered excellent)
 - Supports 12-15 volunteer mediators every year

Sincerely,

Anne Vandecoevering | she/her | *Mediation Program Coordinator*
City of Hillsboro | Police Department: Hillsboro Mediation Program
503-615-6651 (office) | 971-724-0011 (cell)
Hillsboro-Oregon.gov | [Engage with Us](#)

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Sandra Jackson and I am one of the volunteer Mediators with East County Resolutions.

I took my basic mediation training 14 years ago from what was then East Metro Mediation and is now East County Resolutions. The name was eventually changed to East County Resolutions because over the last 10 years this program has grown to encompass so much more than just mediation.

Cities all across this state AND, for that matter, all across the country are working to find ways to help folks stay in housing and help those without housing to secure it. The City of Gresham has a program right under it's own roof that does just that for a minimal cost; it's East County Resolutions.

- East County Resolutions helps folks stay in their home by facilitating Foreclosure Avoidance Conferences.
- East County Resolutions helps youth and volunteer home providers to navigate the challenges of coming together and living under one roof when their lived experiences and expectations may be very different.
- East County Resolutions helps landlords and tenants navigate conflict so they can continue to move forward.

Cities across this state AND, again, all across the country are looking for ways to help youth who are in need. The City of Gresham has a program right under it's own roof that does just that at a minimal cost; it's East County Resolutions.

- East County Resolutions helps youth through:
 - Second Home Program – housing
 - DHS meetings – helping families to be reunited
 - Conflict resolution training in schools
 - Mediation in schools

Other important ways that East County Resolutions serves the community:

- Police frequently refer folks to mediation.
- Trainings – Basic mediation training, conflict management training, community workshops, and trainings in schools
- Mediation services

I urge you to look closely at the ACTUAL cost to the city for East County Resolutions program.

I urge you to look closely at the ACTUAL number of folks served by this program.

I urge you to vote to keep East County Resolutions program open.

Thank you for listening.

Sandra Jackson

Dear City of Gresham Budget Committee:

I am writing because it has come to my attention that the City of Gresham is intending to eliminate East County Resolutions from their programs. **East County Resolutions is a valuable part of Resolutions Oregon**, an association of community dispute resolution centers (CDRC) that offer valuable services to Oregon residents.

East County Resolutions has in the last ten years served at least 32,660 community members within 6,529 cases. They have trained 83 community members to become community mediators. 2,898 community members have received training in more than two-hundred conflict resolution skill building programs. That means that residents in your area are more equipped to handle conflict which directly **reduces violence**.

Not all of our centers can boast of the 89% resolution rate that East County Resolutions has in community mediation. Also impressive is that East County Resolutions has piloted several programs that have been used as models for other centers around the state. Your program, East County Resolutions, through its collaboration and association with Resolutions Oregon impacts the entire state.

Another Vital impact that East County Resolutions makes is in their administration and facilitation of the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance Program (OFAP). OFAP helps homeowners work with lenders to **stabilize housing** in your community.

Financially, East County Resolutions has not had a negative financial impact on Gresham, but rather a positive. Outside funding sources have been obtained and revenue has been consistent to support the program. As a CDRC and part of Resolutions Oregon, that funding is expected to continue and increase.

With urgency and sincerity, I urge you to **reconsider your decision** to remove East County Resolutions Center.

Heather Wright
Executive Director
Neighbor to Neighbor
Serving Marion, Linn, Benton, and Yamhill County
503-585-0651 x101

Dear Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

Please vote to keep East County Resolutions' programming open and available for Gresham community members.

As a trainee and volunteer with the program since 2023, I have personally been involved with or observed numerous situations in which the disputing parties have come away with a greater spirit of understanding and cooperation; in one case they actually went from uncomfortable postures to leaning across the table [literally] and brainstorming ideas on how to move forward.

Even in just working the "intake process" on the phone, I have employed my new skills and practices to help enable the caller to reimagine possibilities in addressing a seemingly impossible situation.

My training and volunteer experience has also impacted me and my interpersonal relationships. It constantly reminds me that:

*Everyone has a story and their own perspective of an issue.
ECR is there to help them be heard and open their minds to hear someone else's story.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Kolar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Curt Kolar, Mediator in Training

Dear Council Member,

East County Resolutions is a valuable part of the Community. East County Resolutions offers invaluable services to our residents in resolving disputes. These services are not available elsewhere in the community. The benefits and tools it provides to all residents, with both long and short term effects, often save tax dollars in many demonstrable ways.

Some of those ways include mitigation and prevention of homelessness and emergency housing costs through the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance Program (OFAP). Other programs save police time, court time, building code enforcement calls, and animal control.

East County Resolutions has in the last ten years served at least 32,660 community members within 6,529 cases. They have trained eighty-three community members to become community mediators. 2,898 community members have received training in more than two-hundred conflict resolution skill building programs. That means that residents in your area are more equipped to manage conflict which directly **reduces violence**.

Not of all our centers can boast of the 89% resolution rate that East County Resolutions has in community mediation. Also impressive is that East County Resolutions has piloted several programs that have been used as models for other centers around the state. Your program, East County Resolutions, through its collaboration and association with Resolutions Oregon impacts the entire state.

Another important impact that East County Resolutions makes is in their administration and facilitation of the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance Program (OFAP). OFAP helps homeowners work with lenders to **stabilize housing** in your community.

Financially, East County Resolutions has **had no negative financial impact on Gresham**, but rather a positive. Outside funding sources have been obtained and revenue has been consistent to support the program. As a CDRC and part of Resolutions Oregon, that funding is expected to continue and increase.

With urgency and sincerity, we urge you to **reconsider your decision** to remove East County Resolutions Center

Pamela A. Bates

PamelaBates2012@aol.com

Tom H. Hastings, Associate Professor
Coordinator, BA/BS majors & minors, certificates
Conflict Resolution program
SMSU M310
hastings@pdx.edu
pcwtom@gmail.com
503 744 9787 (cell)

Spring 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

The East County Resolutions is a very valuable community service and should get more funding, not less. I have taught mediation and related conflict transformation topics at several colleges and universities for more than 30 years, including the previous 23 years at PSU. There has never been a time when more community-based conflict coaching, mediation, and general conflict transformative services have been more needed.

- East County Resolutions has been a staple in the community since 1992
- This is a mistake that is going to not save the city money, it will cost the community, the city, it will negatively impact the police who regularly refer cases and other city services that will no longer have this service available.
- ECR has provided services to over 1300 people in the first half of FY23/24
- Minimal impact to the City general fund- in fact the city will have to give back grant funding already secured for services that impact our most vulnerable communities.
- ECR has built substantial grant and contract funding streams over the years to minimize impact on the City's general fund while providing more service to more community members. Grant options are available to ECR to apply to at this very moment that could make operating costs a net positive, generating revenue for the City.
- The program is so much more than mediation. It is a community hub of creative problem solving, facilitation, mediation, conflict coaching and conflict management training.
- ECR provides many conflict management trainings creating a network of peacebuilders who amplify the work throughout the community, creating ripples of positive energy in a time when we need it the most.
- ECR facilitates the Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance Program helping local homeowners avoid foreclosure.
- ECR mediates the Second Home Program, helping homeless high school students maintain housing with volunteer home providers in our community.

- ECR facilitates with Child Welfare, helping keep families together and reunite families that have been separated.
- ECR mediates manufactured and marina communities through SB586 and mandatory mediation empowering tenants and landlords to find solutions together and avoid expensive court proceedings
- ECR mediates landlord/tenant situations helping both landlord and tenant find creative solutions to both avoid the expenses and time of court and maintain housing
- Even when folks are not interested in mediation, which in most cases is voluntary, we provide conflict coaching and can often help them think through their issues, de-escalate the situation and help them find a solution to move forward

Thank you for considering my recommendation.

Truly,

Tom Hastings

April 23, 2024

To Mayor Stovall, Chair Dyk, and members of the Budget and Finance Committees:

I recently learned that the City of Gresham will vote whether to end support of East County Resolutions. I understand that budget decisions involve many competing and difficult decisions. I simply want to speak on behalf of mediation services and the benefits they provide to communities.

East County Resolutions provides effective and inexpensive services to community members to help them resolve conflicts ranging from neighborhood disputes to landlord tenant issues to foreclosure avoidance. They also provide assistance to homeless teenagers needing housing until high school graduation and to many families in crisis requiring intervention with social workers. They have provided conflict resolution workshops to many and trained volunteer mediators who take these skills into the community in many different arenas, making them more effective community members.

It appears that East County Resolutions has raised significant funds over the years to support its work and is scheduled to be self-supporting by July 2024 so that any financial impacts on the City will likely be minimal. However, having this service remain part of the City has many benefits for the program and the City, signaling the program's value to the community and continuing to offer collaborative means of resolving conflict in a time when there is so much polarization.

I coordinate the Multnomah County Small Claims Mediation program and have appreciated having volunteers who were trained by East County Resolutions join our program to help resolve cases brought before the court. I believe that the services provided have also helped many community members avoid going to court entirely because they were able to use free mediation services to help resolve their challenges.

As someone who has been actively involved with community mediation services since 1997, I simply wanted to emphasize the wide-ranging value of having these services available to your community. I wish you the best in making your budget decisions.

Sincerely,

Kathy Scott

Kathryn L. Scott, J.D.

Program Coordinator

Small Claims and Pro Se Mediation Multnomah County Courthouse

1200 SW 1st Ave.

Portland, OR 97204

971-375-5380
