

# DisputeResolution

## CENTER of KING COUNTY

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### Dear Small Claim Court Parties:

A small claim action involving you has been filed in the King County District Court (KCDC).

The Court strongly encourages parties to work to resolve their small claim case through mediation before the scheduled pretrial hearing or trial. **KCDC has arranged for the Dispute Resolution Center of King County (DRC) to provide mediation assistance to the parties at no additional cost to you.**

Since 1987, the DRC, a non-profit organization, has provided free or low-cost conflict resolution and mediation services to the community. **The DRC is not part of the District Court.**

### What is Mediation?

- **Mediation is a voluntary and confidential meeting** between you and the other party, with a professionally trained, neutral mediator.
- The mediator helps the parties work together to create mutually agreeable solutions without offering legal advice or an evaluation of the case.
- If agreements are made, the mediator will write up the agreement using the parties' own words and both parties will leave the mediation with the signed written agreement. The Court will be notified the parties have reached an agreement, and the parties will not have to attend the scheduled prehearing conference or trial.
- Choosing to mediate does not affect your right to a trial. If you are unable to reach an agreement with the other party you still have the right to proceed to trial.
- If one of the parties does not follow the terms of the agreement, the agreement can be presented to the Court with a request that it be converted into an enforceable judgment.

### Why Should I Choose Mediation?

- Mediation enables the **parties to determine the outcome** of their conflict, rather than being forced to accept a judgment from the Court that may leave neither party satisfied.
- Unlike a public trial, **mediation is confidential** and does not become part of the court record.
- At trial, the judge is limited to granting or denying a money judgment. **Mediation is more flexible.**
- With a mediated agreement, a party may agree to complete a job, return an item of property, or pay money using a payment plan.

### How Do I Set Up a Mediation?

In order to resolve your dispute before your scheduled pretrial hearing or trial, **IMMEDIATELY** contact: **DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER OF KING COUNTY** at [www.kcdrc.org](http://www.kcdrc.org) or call 206-443-9603. The sooner you contact DRC, the more time DRC will have to work with the parties prior to your scheduled court date. While DRC usually has trained mediators available at the pretrial hearing to conduct mediations, the time available to conduct mediations is shorter.

We look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your interest in our services!