

MAY 2023

SPECIAL REPORT  
FOR  
HOUSING STABILITY  
STAKE HOLDERS

Wenatchee Valley  
Dispute Resolution  
Center

Eviction Resolution  
Pilot Program  
(ERPP)

Serving Chelan & Douglas counties

Report by:  
Jennifer Talbot,  
Executive Director





## EARLY DISPUTE RESOLUTION IMPACT

Over the past few years, DRCs across the state have gained valuable insight into the current challenges facing housing providers and tenants. For decades, DRCs have provided an efficient and cost-effective pre-filing mediation option for settling tenant-landlord financial and behavior issues. Consider the impact that DRCs have had on the larger issue of housing stability in communities throughout the state. Housing providers often prefer to reduce legal costs and prevent tenant eviction by discussing repayment options or working through behavior issues in advance of taking court action. Tenants appreciate the opportunity to problem solve housing solutions with their landlord through an impartial facilitated process.

**2,700**

People Served

**Over 1,400**

ERPP notices received



Although it's a group effort: the DRC is amazing and patient, the tenants are willing to participate and come to a resolution as well. Teamwork makes the dream work!

-heard from a property manager by ERPP staff – September 2022



Funding for DRCs to provide FREE pre-filing resolution for housing issues removes barriers and increases access for any tenant in need and for both small landlords and larger property managers providing housing for individuals and families.

Wenatchee Valley DRC's team of volunteers and staff offer efficient and timely conflict resolution services to Chelan and Douglas County residents. The DRC on average schedules a mediation within 2 weeks of connecting with both landlord and tenant.

**The settlement  
rate for tenant-  
landlord  
mediations is  
typically above  
80%**

**37**

mediations/conciliations

**207**

certificates issued

**17**

clients utilized  
interpreter services

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ERPP SUNSETS ON JUNE 30, 2023?

On June 30, 2023, RCW 59.18.660 and, unless updated or renewed, local Superior Court standing orders will end. Landlords will no longer be required to issue an ERPP notice to both tenant(s) and the local DRC. Landlords will no longer be required to participate in early resolution programs including tenant referral, mediation, or conciliation even if the tenant is requesting these services. A certificate of participation in ERPP issued by the DRC within 14-21 days will no longer be required for a landlord to file an unlawful detainer (eviction) action for non-payment of rent with the local Court.

Resolution Washington (statewide association of DRCs) and Wenatchee Valley Dispute Resolution Center continue to see value in early dispute resolution services to support the prevention of evictions, reduce the unlawful detainer court dockets, and promote accessible resolution options to all community members.

We continue to support complementary affordable housing and housing stability approaches including emergency rental assistance, pre- and post-filing access to legal aid for unlawful detainer (eviction) cases, and efforts to expand affordable housing.

### TESTIMONIALS FROM ERPP CLIENTS: for 2021 -2023



Great program; helped  
save my house; the  
mediators were very  
helpful  
– A tenant after  
participating in mediation  
session with Landlord

“

I entered the ERPP process with frustration and agreed to mediate with low expectations but was pleasantly surprised by the opportunity for a quick and cost-effective resolution.

- A landlord after participating in mediation  
March 2022

”

“

Me gustó mucho la  
comunicación entre  
todos, creo que hacen  
muy bien su trabajo.

Gracias!!

Translation: I really liked  
the communication  
between everyone, I  
think they do their job  
very well. Thank you!!

-Tenant after ERPP  
mediation – August 2022

”

“

Landlord representative was very skeptical of the whole ERPP process, especially the rental assistance funds. In communication with the rental assistance agency, landlord representative was referred by rental assistance and encouraged to work with DRC. After several lengthy emails to address all of his concerns, he is moving forward with mediation. This is a great example of the teamwork that goes into these cases, and the relationships we have with our partner agencies. It's a complicated case, with more than just back rent at issue, but both parties were eager to mediate, and I really hope this is successful for both sides.

– From ERPP staff

“  
The mediators were extremely helpful. They made it where both parties were able to express our thoughts, feelings, and organize everything out on paper for us. They were very educated on how the process went. I would definitely use the mediators again for future problems.  
– Tenant after ERPP mediation – October 2022  
”

“  
Cannot think of anything to make the mediation better. I thought it was a great tool for success. I appreciate the available service.  
– Property Manager after ERPP mediation – September 2022  
”

”  
Awesome job! Clear communication. An agreement was reached.  
– Property Manager after ERPP mediation – September 2022  
”

## NEXT STEPS FOR HOUSING STABILITY

Wenatchee Valley DRC urges state/local government and agencies to support early resolution for tenant-landlord disputes. Without a legal requirement to participate, referrals to Wenatchee Valley DRC will be critical to providing timely and cost-effective dispute resolution services.

Please reach out to Jennifer Talbot, Executive Director, to discuss options for continuing to impact housing stability in Chelan and Douglas counties after June 2023.

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