

Eviction Resolution Pilot Program: Dispute Resolution Center Update May 2023

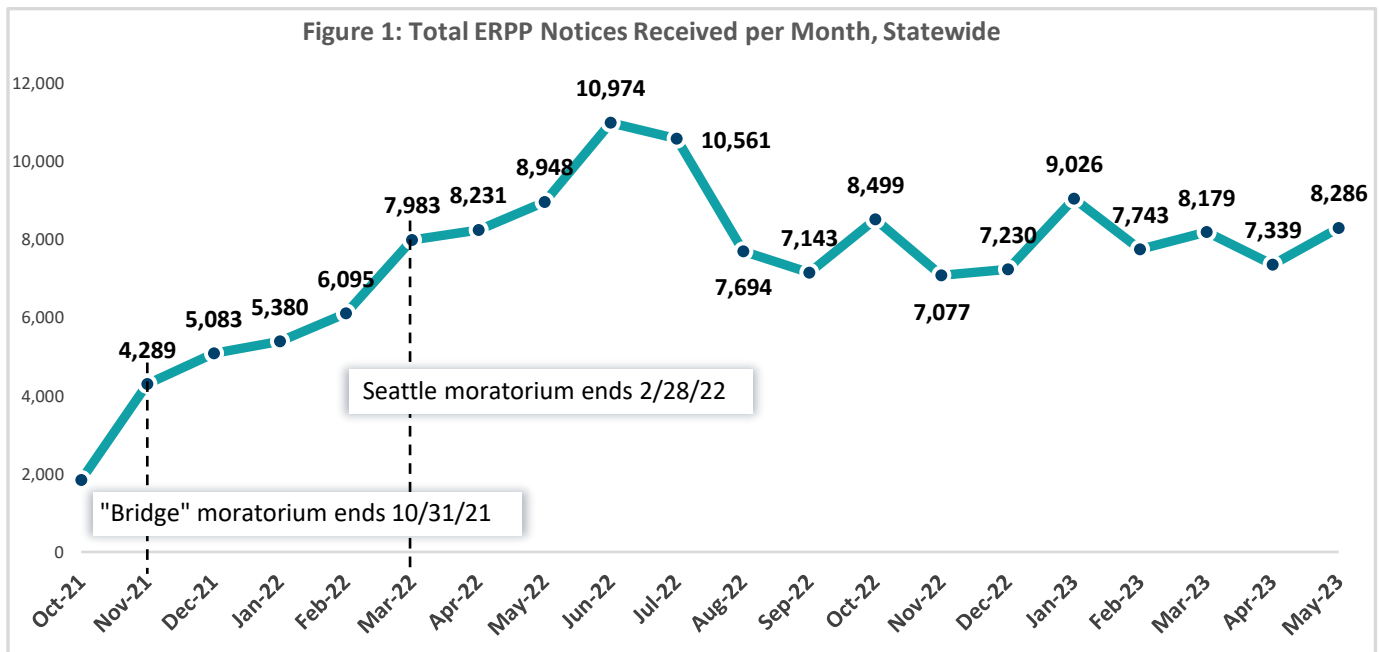
“ [The DRC] obviously genuinely cares about not just what they are doing, but they care about the client first and foremost. I can't adequately express how much knowing that they were there for me helped me through a horribly stressful time. ”

- Tenant after receiving ERPP services

May Outlook/Update

Although the ERPP is in its last stages of operations, demand remains high (fig. 1). Pay or vacate rent notices have been steady since August 2022, averaging more than 7,000 per month statewide.

The May statewide ERPP case volume increased compared to April (fig. 1).



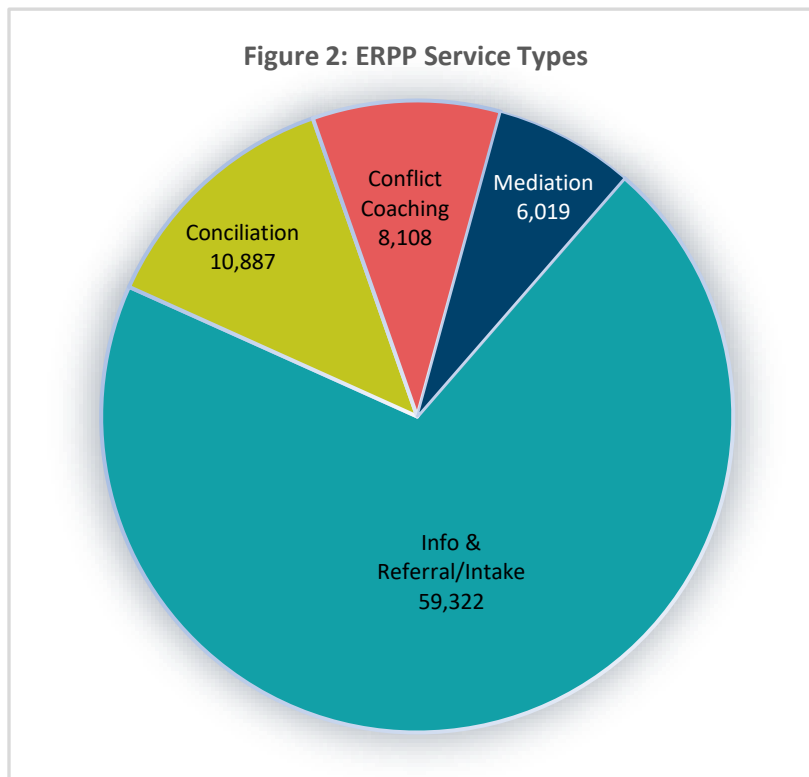
- King and Spokane Counties generated more than 50% of the total ERPP May notices received statewide.
- The average statewide tenant response rate was 56% for cases closed in May.

As rental assistance drops from \$675 million in 2020-22 to approximately \$40 million per year in 2023-24, DRCs are adjusting to help tenants and landlords navigate reductions in assistance.

- Current median case duration measured during the November 2021 to May 2023 period was 30 days and cases that required more intensive services, such as mediation and conciliation, took a median of 47 days to close as the participants worked toward resolution.

As of May 31, 2023, the DRCs reported the following on cases closed since the program’s launch in July 2021:¹

- The ERPP Notices received represented a combined total of **187,026** tenants and landlords. Many of these are quickly resolved without a certificate of participation needed, for example with current-month rent paid within a few days, assistance through information and referral, or with rental assistance. DRCs provide additional dispute resolution services for the remaining cases.
- DRCs also help parties with housing disputes in cases where the landlord does not want to issue a notice or tenants request conflict coaching without involving the landlord. More than 3,100 people have been served directly through this voluntary participation in DRC landlord-tenant services.
- **84,336** cases were closed and completed (depicted by service type in figure 2); and **36,269** certificates were issued.²



Entry into the ERPP process typically starts with Information & Referral and/or Conflict Coaching services. Once DRCs provide information and support, many of these cases may be resolved directly between tenant and landlord, or with rental assistance, without further involvement of the DRC needed. Often after receiving referrals the parties do not report an outcome to the DRC. The outcome is known for 48% of Info & Referral service cases and 65% of Conflict Coaching cases. Parties may also move through those stages and/or opt into Conciliation and Mediation services from the DRC.

¹ A few early cases may fall outside of ERPP due to cases covering rent owed from months prior to attestation (see Proclamation 21-09).

² Note the volume of cases closed at any given time is lower than the total number of ERPP notices received by DRCs. Some notices are for cases currently in progress. In some cases a landlord may issue more than one notice to a tenant and those may be combined into a single case to support client service. Additionally, some current month’s rent notices are resolved upon confirmation of rent payment before a case can be opened.

“ The ERPP helped keep a number of our tenants in their homes and avoided foreclosure. As landlords, we don't want to do a foreclosure, but we are often left without other resources.
- Property manager ”

- The overall settlement/agreement rate was **73%**.³
- Where outcomes were known, DRCs reported that in **94%** of mediations and conciliations the tenancy was preserved upon case closing.
- **695** tenants were served using an interpreter due to clients' limited English proficiency or preference.
- **3%** of tenants had legal representation during the conciliation stage and **8%** of tenants had legal representation during formal mediation. DRCs provide legal resources information to all tenants and facilitate access to legal aid where requested by the tenant.

Demographics of the ERPP clients surveyed statewide during July 2021 through May 2023 were the following:⁴

- Race/Ethnicity: 52.4% White; 24.5% Black/African American; 7.0% Other; 4.9% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; 4.0% Asian; 3.6% Multiracial; 3.0% American Indian/Alaska Native; 0.7% Indian/South Asian.
- Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino/a: 26.1%; Hispanic or Latino/a: 7.7%; No Response: 66.2%.
- Annual Household Income: 42% was at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL); 31% was at 101-200% of FPL; 16% was at 201-300% of FPL; 11% was above 300% of FPL.

Program Background

In April 2021, the Legislature established the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program (ERPP) under E2SSB 5160 (codified in [RCW 59.18.660](#)). [Resolution Washington](#) and [Washington Courts](#) contain further background and details of the program, including 1-minute ERPP videos in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

“ The mediator I had was excellent. He was knowledgeable, understanding, professional, available, responsive and on point. I'm grateful for everything he did for me. The team that handled the mediation itself were sharp, sensitive, respectful, clear and helpful. You could tell that they cared for the people they serve.
- Tenant ”

³ The rate is based on cases where the outcome was known, such as in conciliations, mediations, and where the DRC was notified that the dispute was resolved through rental assistance.

⁴ Excludes “No Response” and “Unknown” categories, except for Hispanic/Latino Origins, which includes “No Response.” Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.