



New York State Dispute Resolution Association
2020 Annual Report

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Conine
President

Donna Ramlow
Vice President

Amber Kane
Treasurer

Michele Kirschbaum
Secretary

Mark Collins

Donna Durbin

L.J. Freitag

Leslie Funk

Amber Kane

Simon Kyriakides

Sarah Rudgers-Tysz



STAFF

Regina Ritcey

Executive Director

Elizabeth Vanasdale

Director of Operations

Joe Gorman

Lemon Law Arbitration Program Manager

Nicole Jenkins

Disability Mediation Programs Coordinator

Claudia Kenny

NYS Agricultural Mediation Statewide Director

Jordyan Mueller

Community Mediation Service Corps Director

Samantha Slattery

Membership Coordinator, EA

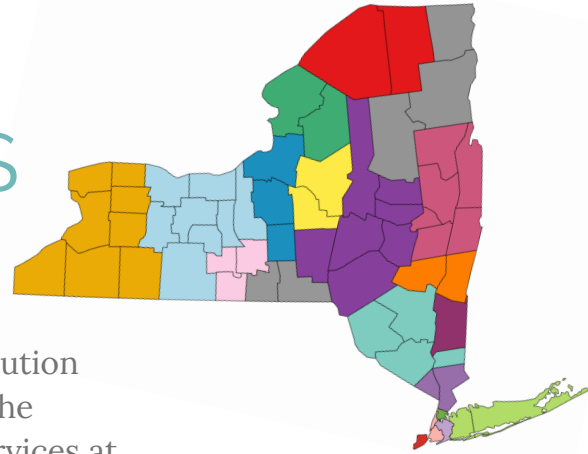
Chris Tausel

NYS Agricultural Mediation Program Director

COMMUNITY DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTERS

About the Centers

New York State is home to the 20 Community Dispute Resolution Centers, serving every county and community in the state. The centers provide dispute resolution and restorative justice services at no or low cost to participants. The Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program providing funding to the centers through the Office of Court Administration was founded in 1985. Centers and their trained volunteers are change agents making a real difference, helping to settle conflict, facilitate dialogue, and foster effective communication. CDRCs foster connection and communication, leading to strong, resilient communities.



71,876
individuals
served in
FY20

Community Dispute Resolution Centers

- ACCORD - A Center for Dispute Resolution, Inc.
- Catholic Charities Dispute Resolution Center
- Center for Dispute Settlement
- Child & Family Services-Center for Resolution and Justice
- Common Ground Dispute Resolution, Inc.
- Community Dispute Resolution Center, Inc.
- Community Mediation Services
- Dispute Resolution Center
- EAC Long Island Dispute Resolution Centers
- Empowered Pathways
- IMCR Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution
- Justice and Law Centers of St. Lawrence & Franklin Counties
- Mediation Center of Dutchess County, Inc.
- Mediation Matters
- New Justice Conflict Resolution Services, Inc.
- NYCID
- New York Peace Institute
- Resolution Center of Jefferson & Lewis Counties, Inc.
- Rural Law Center of New York
- Westchester & Rockland Mediation Centers of CLUSTER

MEMBERS

David Abeshouse
Howard Adelsberg
Mary Andrews
Association for Negotiation and
Conflict Resolution Students at
Columbia University
R.M. Bud Baker
Zachary Beaudoin
Matthew Becka
Robin Beckhard
Andrew Berman
Lewis Bernstein
Debra Best
Hon. Jaclyn Brilling
Jennifer Brock
Paul Buchanan
Jess Bunshaft
Dr. Denise Burton
Ed Campbell
Hon. Michael Coccoma
Mark Collins
Daniel Condon
William Conine
Gemma Corbin
Alex Cottrell
Todd Cucchiara
Dr. Brent Cutler
Dr. William Daniels
Sally Dear-Healey
Bobbie Dillon
Edmund Donovan

Donna Durbin
Denise Ellison
Kathy Evans
Don Franks
L.J. Freitag
Hon. Marilyn Genoa
Kathleen Gleeson
Dr. Frances Gottfried
Laura Granelli
Thomas Grant
Debra Hamilton
William Harrel
Steven Harris
Astrid Hoffius
Nancy Hoffman
Carol Horn
Jack Kellogg
Mariam Kirvalidze
Cynthia Kurtz
Ludan Lai
Stephen LaLonde
Anthony LaValle
Mark W. Leuthauser
Brett Linn
Elizabeth Little
Rosalie Lolonga-Gedeon
Tim Lyon
Allison McFarlane
Jillian Menna
Eoin Moynihan
Dr. Kenneth Neumann

Larisa Nowicki
Bridget O'Connell
Olivia Paulo-Lee
Ana Peake
Ruby Philips
Lisa Pomerantz
Caprice Reader
Howard Reiss
Dr. Michael Ritty
Nathan Robfogel
Natesha Rosado
Diane Rosen
Letitia Rosenthal
Fran Sabshon
Melissa Samuels
Elena Sapora
Steven Seig
Patrice L. Shea
Catherine Sherwood
Charles Silsby
Charles Smith
Debra Smith
William Sparks
Louis Sroka
Katherine Stoessel
Susan Tejuosho
Heather Tomes
Ron Vero
Rebecca Wager
Margaret Yonco-Haines

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

APRIL 1, 2019 - MARCH 31, 2020*

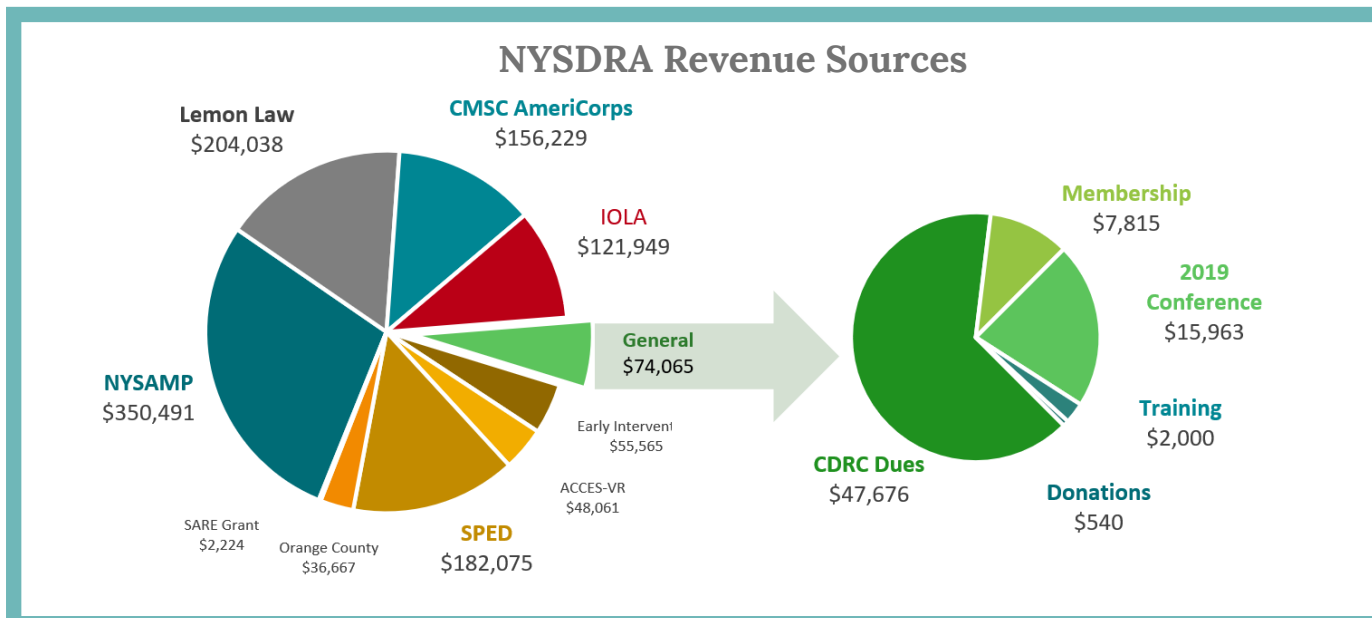
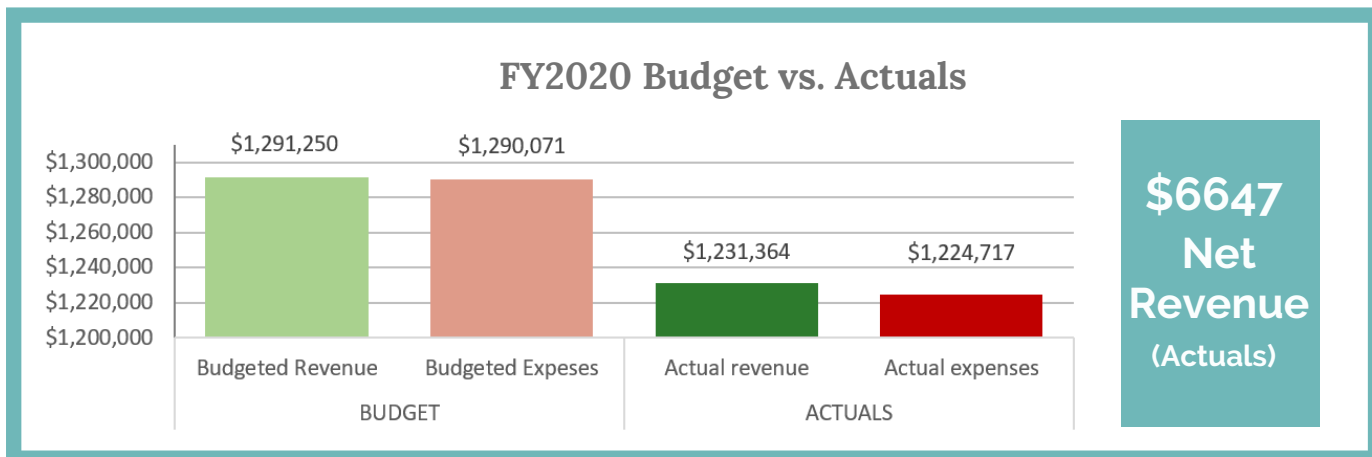
*NOTE: NYSDRA OPERATES ON A 4/1-3/31 FISCAL YEAR.

NYSDRA FINANCIAL POSITION

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, NYSDRA's expense management and revenue resulted in a \$6,647 net income, an increase of \$24,923 compared to 2019. NYSDRA's financial position improved as a result of NYSDRA successfully procuring new grant opportunities, increasing indirect grant revenue, and close fiscal management of expenditures.

ANNUAL AUDIT

On an annual basis, NYSDRA engages an independent accounting firm to conduct an annual audit of NYSDRA's fiscal operations and accounting. The most recent organizational audit (FY19-20) resulted in no findings of internal control issues or operating inefficiencies.



2020 NYSDRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Challenge of Change: Creative Conversations for Today

NYSDRA met the considerable challenges of 2020 by holding its first *fully virtual* conference! The 2020 Annual Conference was held from November 16th -18th, on Zoom, and welcomed over 270 registrants from across New York State-- and beyond!

Though the change from an in-person to virtual conference presented new challenges, it also provided several opportunities, including the ability to reach attendees who many not normally have the financial resources to travel for a professional conference and reduced overall expenses.

This year, NYSDRA:

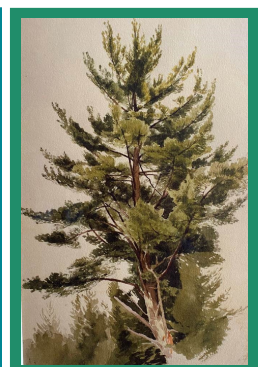
- Reached more people than ever before-- with 290 registered participants and speakers, (an increase from the 2019 conference by over 222%)!
- NYSDRA welcomed **Soffiyah Elijah**, Executive Director of Alliance of Families for Justice (AFJ), as the keynote speaker
- Honored the late **Dominick J. Brancato** with the 2020 Andrew Thomas Peacebuilder Award



290 Registrants
18 Sessions
3 CLE Opportunities



Pictured above: live from the conference; **Bottom left:** 2020 Andrew Thomas Peacebuilder Award recipient Dominick Brancato; **Bottom right:** Andrew Thomas Peacebuilder Award white pine tree;



ADVOCACY

As the association for community mediation and dispute resolution services, NYSDRA advocates to promote the awareness and funding of critical dispute resolution services in communities throughout New York State.



BUDGET TESTIMONY

On February 12, 2020, NYSDRA Executive Director, Regina Ritcey testified with Sarah Rudgers-Tysz, Executive Director of Mediation Matters and NYSDRA Board-Immediate Past President at the Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2020-2021 Executive Budget Hearing on Public Protection on behalf of the statewide network of Community Dispute Resolution Centers.



NYSDRA Past Board President, Rudgers-Tysz testified, "NYSDRA and the CDRCs align directly with Chief Judge DiFiore's Excellence Initiative which has brought Presumptive Dispute Resolution to the courts. The goals of the initiative: To improve efficiency and user experience, and improve access to justice for all New Yorkers. It is an innovation that does not mandate but rather makes available options, such as mediation, that have proven to be highly satisfactory to users and cost-effective for all."



Lobby Day 2020 Highlights
Total Number of Meetings: 58
Total Number of Participants: 42

NYSDRA PROGRAMS

**COMMUNITY MEDIATION SERVICE CORPS
CMSC AMERICORPS**

DISABILITY MEDIATION PROGRAMS

EARLY INTERVENTION MEDIATION

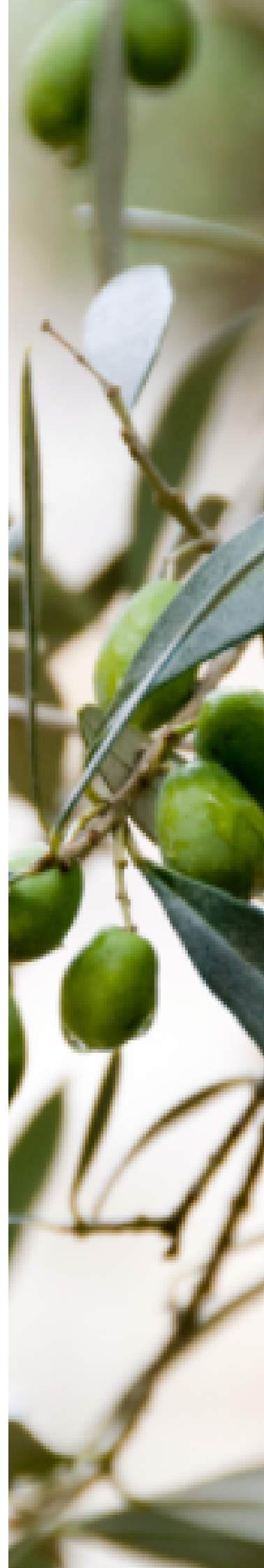
SPECIAL EDUCATION MEDIATION

ACCES-VR MEDIATION

LEMON LAW ARBITRATION PROGRAM

NYS AGRICULTURAL MEDIATION PROGRAM

IOLA ACCESS TO JUSTICE GRANT



COMMUNITY MEDIATION SERVICE CORPS (CMSC)

Supporting the next generation of practitioners



About CMSC

Since the program's inception in 2016 by the NYS Unified Court System, Office of Court Administration-Office of ADR, 62 members have served in the AmeriCorps Community Mediation Service Corps Program. In 2019, NYSDRA assumed the contract for CMSC AmeriCorps, developing a strong program partnership between NYSDRA and Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDCRs) host sites across New York. Members serve in three different tracks; school-based, family services, and youth services. Members in the CMSC program provide conflict resolution services to youth and families in local communities and schools, leading to stronger local partnerships and communities with skills to navigate conflict.

2019-2020 Members

Lu Blanchard

Empowered Pathways

Jaime Cloutier

Empowered Pathways

Arianna Diaz

New York Peace Institute

Cayla Jenne

Resolution Center of Jefferson & Lewis Counties

Stephanie Joseph

Center for Resolution and Justice

Tim Lyon

Empowered Pathways

Savanna Thomas

Community Dispute Resolution Center

Courtney Sullivan

Community Dispute Resolution Center

Mara Pratt

ACCORD



Since 2016, 62 Members have served

2020-2021 Members

Alex Cottrell

Center for Dispute Settlement

Larisa Nowicki

Empowered Pathways

Ana Peake

New York Peace Institute

Ruby Phillips

New York Peace Institute

Catherine Sherwood

Center for Dispute Settlement

Since 2016, ~5,500 cases conducted by members

64,000
service
hours
completed!



DISABILITY MEDIATION

Identify Needs & Develop Solutions

NYSDRA promotes awareness and outreach to individuals, families, service providers, and advocates across New York State. NYSDRA strives to promote mediation as an empowering process to identify needs and develop solutions for individuals with disabilities, their families, and service providers.



**85%
Agreement
Rate***

Early Intervention

NYSDRA has embarked on an outreach initiative to promote mediation as a community resource to individuals, families, and service providers throughout NYS. NYSDRA has researched a stakeholder engagement list of more than 600 disability service providers, and advocates to promote services.



**Promoting
mediation as a
community
resource**

Special Education

NYSDRA manages case reporting for NYS Special Education Mediation under contract with the NYS Education Department. These cases are reported to the U.S. Education Department comparing other states' IDEA dispute resolution processes. In partnership with the NYC Department of Education, Impartial Hearing Office, NYSDRA served as a resource and partner in the development of a new process to increase special education mediation usage in New York City while addressing the backlog of impartial hearing requests. NYSDRA seeks to advocate for this process statewide.

ACCES-VR: Adult Career and Continuing Education Services

In efforts to promote mediation as a dispute resolution process for ACCES-VR participants and ACCES-VR offices in conflict concerning vocational rehabilitation services, NYSDRA has developed and printed 2,500 ACCES-VR mediation brochures to be distributed to ACCES-VR District Offices throughout NYS and to disability services and advocacy organizations promoting education and awareness of mediation services and options.

**2,500
brochures
printed**



LEMON LAW ARBITRATION PROGRAM

New Programming

In 2020, NYSDRA was approved for renewal of the biennial Lemon Law contract with the NYS Attorney General's office. The new contract includes a negotiated increase in case reimbursements and the addition of a new contract provision to include the Lemon Law Farm Equipment Program. This Farm Equipment program establishes an arbitration process for defective new farm equipment, providing recourse for New York residents who have bought or leased new farm equipment that turns out to be ... a lemon.



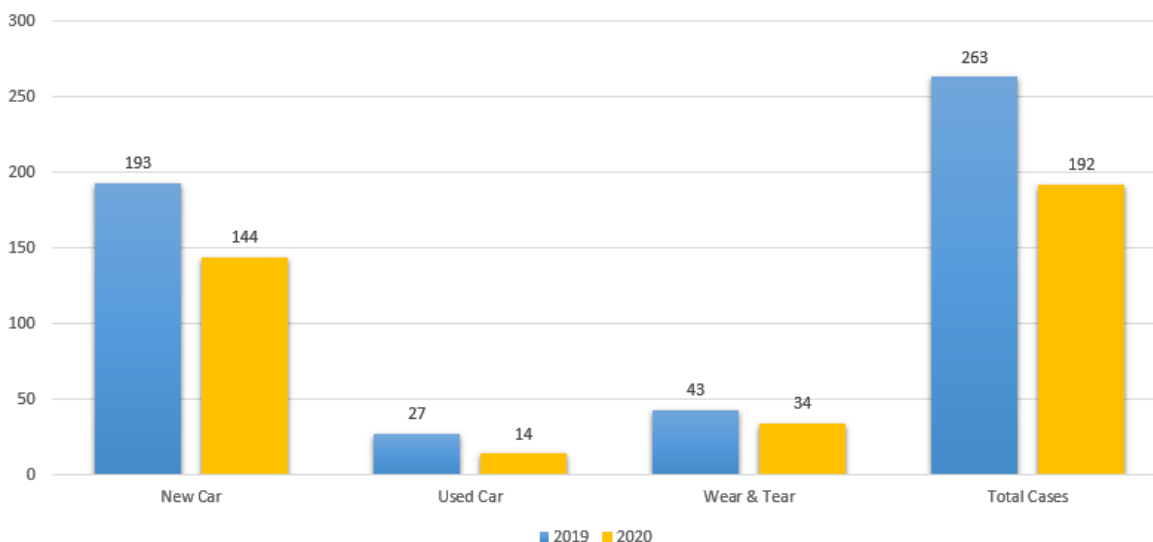
Thank you
to our 36
arbitrators!

Virtual Hearings

Early in 2020, in response to the COVID pandemic, the Attorney General's Office halted all in-person Lemon Law hearings. Together, NYSDRA and the CDRCs developed and implemented virtual arbitration hearing procedures, leading to the full resumption of services in the summer of 2020, via the new online hearing process. NYSDRA continues to provide technical support and training to support in-person and virtual hearings to consumers, manufacturers and CDRC staff.

As part of the pandemic response, NYSDRA initiated the now popular virtual Lemon Law Lunch series, for arbitrators and case managers to convene, sharing best practices, and ideas for program improvements.

Lemon Law Cases



Funds recovered
to consumers

2019
\$3.3 million

2020
\$2.1 million

NYS AGRICULTURAL MEDIATION PROGRAM



NYS Agricultural Mediation Program provides the farm community with quality services as they problem solve challenges and conflicts.

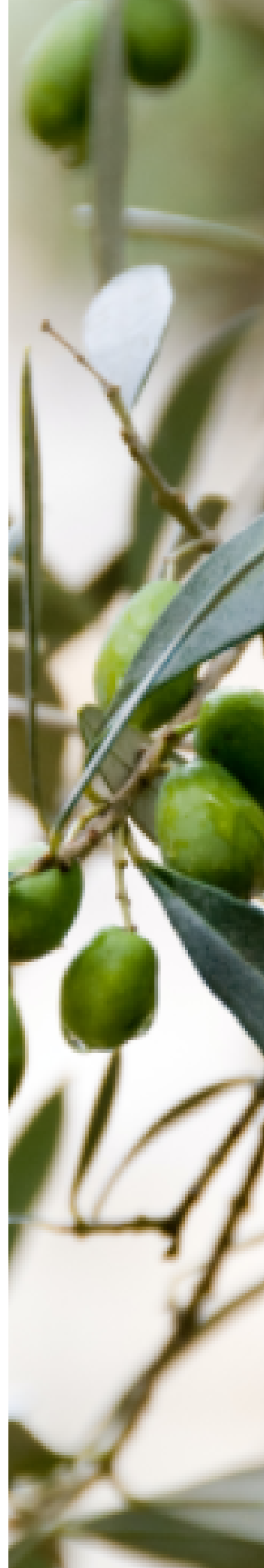
NYSAMP, the NYS Agricultural Mediation Program, mediates over 500 cases annually in NYS. While most are credit & debt cases, NYSAMP mediators also handle USDA program contract disputes with the Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, and Natural Resources Conservation Service. New case type services expanded in 2020-2021 to include services for agriculture neighbor disputes, farm transition, farm lease, and farmers experiencing interpersonal disputes.

Pandemic Response

NYSAMP expanded offerings to include virtual mediation, and partnered with circle facilitators to offer virtual community dialogue to agricultural groups.

New: Pilots, Panels & Branding

NYSAMP began piloting the use of conflict coaching as a stand alone service and a pre-mediation process. A new Agriculture Mediation Panel was formed to handle complex case types, such as USDA mediations, farm transitions and farm lease cases. And, NYSAMP rolled out a new logo and branding to better promote mediation to the agricultural community.



IOLA ACCES TO JUSTICE

Expanding Access to Alternative Dispute Resolution Services in New York State

About IOLA

Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) is an innovative way to increase access to justice for individuals and families living in poverty and improve our justice system. Without taxing the public, and at no cost to lawyers or their clients, interest from lawyer trust accounts is pooled to provide civil legal aid to those who are under-resourced, and historically excluded individual, supporting improvements to the justice system.

Community Mobilization Initiative

In 2020, NYSDRA advanced the initiative to train NYSDRA and the CDRC staff and volunteers in Community Mobilization principles, to develop skills to address and dismantle barriers to access to justice and effectively serve communities across New York State. Presented by Growing A New Heart, Community Mobilization includes a set of strategies, principles and skills designed to work with the strengths of disparate communities towards increased equity and social justice.

NYSDRA listened to the needs of the CDRCs and the communities they serve taking into consideration the context of anti-racism, folding in context and skills, and mutual planning, with facilitation led by people of color and white allies. Since 2020, NYSDRA has led a series of ongoing trainings and tailored consultations on: *Holding Space*; *Undoing White Supremacy in the Workplace*, *Dialogues Across Differences*.



150
Community
Mobilization
Participants

Community Mobilization Trainings

Holding Space

"Helping white people understanding the oppression of BIPOC."

Dialogues Across Differences



Learn Critical Skills to Build Equity in All Communities

Undoing white supremacy in the workplace

"Foster joyful equitable workplaces through an examination and restructuring of racial power dynamics."

Community Mobilization

Effective approaches for motivating and organizing toward common goals

Thank You!

Donors

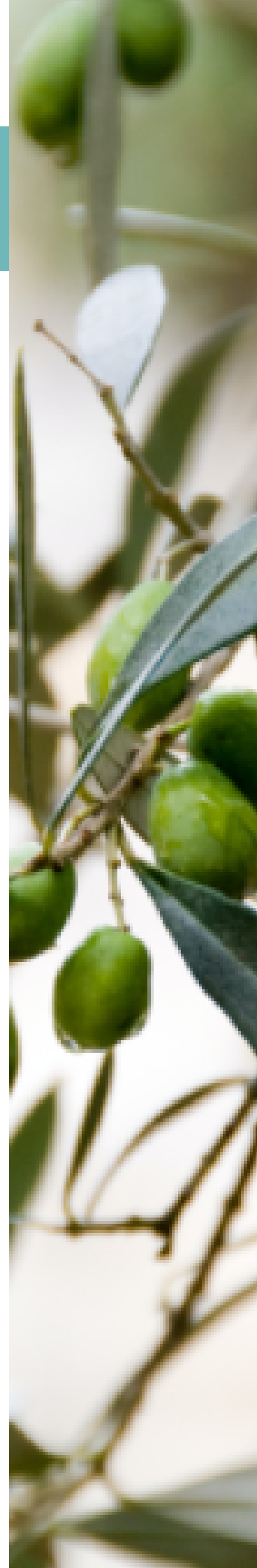
Daniel Condon
Melissa Fairweather
Laura Granelli
Jeremy LeFevre*
Mark Leuthauser
Price Chopper's Golub Foundation
Regina Ritcey
Susan Tejuosho
Elizabeth Vanasdale*

**Denotes recurring donations*

SUPPORTERS

2020 NYSDRA Annual Conference Sponsors

Albany IT
ANCoRS
Burns Mediation
Deb Best Practices
New Justice Conflict Resolution Services
NYCID
NYSDRA Board of Directors
Tauzel Farms





New York State Dispute Resolution Association

300 Great Oaks Blvd, Suite 300-027

Albany, NY 12203



www.nysdra.org