

**How do I contact CIRP?**

You may walk into CIRP Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm., or you may call us at (202) 879-1549.

CIRP has been in existence since 1985. It is the first Multi-Door Program created at the Court. The program has helped thousands of people resolve their disputes. If you are involved in a dispute and would like to know your options, contact us and speak to a Dispute Resolution Specialist today!

Dispute Resolution Specialist Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Dispute Resolution Specialist's Phone Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

FAX Number (202) 879-9458

Options /Referrals/Contact Information:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS**

**TALK DIRECTLY:** Assuming that there is no threat of physical violence, talk directly to the person with whom you have the problem. Direct conversation is much more effective than sending a letter, banging on the wall, throwing a rock or complaining to everyone else.

**CHOOSE A GOOD TIME:** Plan to talk to the other person at the right time and allow yourselves time for a thorough discussion. Do not start talking about the conflict just as the other person is leaving for work, after you have had a terrible day, or right before you have to make dinner. Try to talk in a quiet place where you can both be comfortable and undisturbed for as long as the discussion takes.

**PLAN AHEAD:** Think out what you want to say ahead of time. Then clearly state the problem, and how it affects you.

**DON'T BLAME OR NAME CALL:** Making the other person angry only makes it harder for him or her to hear you. Do not blame the other person for everything or begin the conversation with your opinion of what should be done.

**GIVE INFORMATION:** Do not interpret the other person's behavior: "you are blocking my driveway on purpose just to make me mad." Instead, give information about your own feelings: "When your car blocks my driveway, I get angry because I can't get to work on time."

**LISTEN:** Give the other person a chance to tell his or her side of the conflict completely. Relax and listen; try to learn how the other person feels.

**SHOW THAT YOU ARE LISTENING:** Although you may not agree with what is being said, tell the other person that you hear him or her and are glad that you are discussing the problem together.

**TALK IT ALL THROUGH:** Once you start, get all of the issues and feelings out into the open. Do not leave out the part that seems too "difficult" to discuss or too "insignificant" to be important. Your solution will work best if all issues are discussed thoroughly.

**WORK ON A SOLUTION:** When you have reached this point in the discussion, start working on a solution. Two or more people cooperating are much more effective than one person telling another to change. Be specific: "I will turn my music off at midnight" is better than an unclear statement: "I won't play loud music anymore."

**FOLLOW THROUGH:** Agree to check with each other at specific times to make sure that the agreement is still working.....then really do it.

Courtesy of the Community Boards of San Francisco



**COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND REFERRAL PROGRAM**



**Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division**  
515 5<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Bldg. A, Room 114  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 879-1549

## What is the Community Information and Referral Program?

The Community Information and Referral Program (CIRP) is a free program for people seeking help with all types of disputes. CIRP tries to help people resolve their disputes before they get worse, or becomes a court case. CIRP provides a confidential, caring, and professional atmosphere for people who are frustrated and want to resolve their disputes.

When you reach CIRP you will talk to a Dispute Resolution Specialist. The DRS will conduct an intake interview with you. During the intake interview the DRS will ask questions about the history of the dispute, the relationship between you and the other person, and each person's willingness to resolve the dispute. Based on this information, the DRS will provide you with options that may help you resolve your dispute. After you select an option, you and the DRS will work out a step-by-step plan of action.

## What types of disputes can CIRP help resolve?

- Consumer – merchant, home improvement, and auto repair.
- Landlord tenant - security deposits and repair work.
- Neighbor disputes - dogs, loud noises, trees and property.
- Family problems - child or spousal support, custody, visitation, and divorce.

CIRP does not handle criminal matters.

## Is the intake interview process private?

The intake interview is a private process. The information you share with the DRS is not a public court record and is not shared with anyone outside of the Multi-Door Division.

## The Dispute Resolution Specialist (DRS)

The DRS is a neutral person that educates you about appropriate options/referrals that may help resolve your dispute. The DRS does not take sides, is not an attorney, and can not give legal advice. The DRS helps you consider the consequences of selecting one option over another. The DRS will suggest the most appropriate option(s), but you choose the option you feel is right for you.

## What are the possible options CIRP offers?

When considering the appropriate option for you, the DRS determines whether CIRP is the best place to resolve your dispute or if it is better to refer you to an outside agency for assistance. Below are possible options that may be available to you through CIRP.

**Phone Conciliation** -The DRS contacts the other person involved in the dispute by phone to try to resolve the dispute informally.



**Pre-filing Mediation** - When appropriate, you and the other person can meet with a mediator before filing a court case. The mediator helps you and the other person to communicate what is important to each of you. The mediator helps you and the other person come to your own agreement about how the matter will be resolved. The mediator does not tell you what to do or make any decisions for you. When you reach an agreement, the mediator will write up your agreement.



**Family Mediation** - Family mediation is a voluntary process that offers you the opportunity to work with a mediator to resolve issues of communication, child support, child custody, visitation, alimony, debt, division of property and other family matters. Before starting mediation, the DRS will ask you and the other person involved in the dispute to participate in a intake interview.



**Information and Referral** - The DRS does not provide legal advice but can provide you with information about services that may be available at the court and other agencies. CIRP has a database with over 300 organizations including legal, social service, government, and other community based dispute resolution program from which you may choose.



## Temporary Restraining Order (TRO)

**Mediation** - CIRP also conducts court referred Temporary Restraining Order Mediation. If you are interested in participating in a TRO mediation, you must have their case referred to CIRP by the Judge in Chambers. If the case is appropriate for mediation, a mediator will be assigned to the case. The mediator is there to help you and the other person involved in the dispute to reach an agreement.

