



## Table of Contents

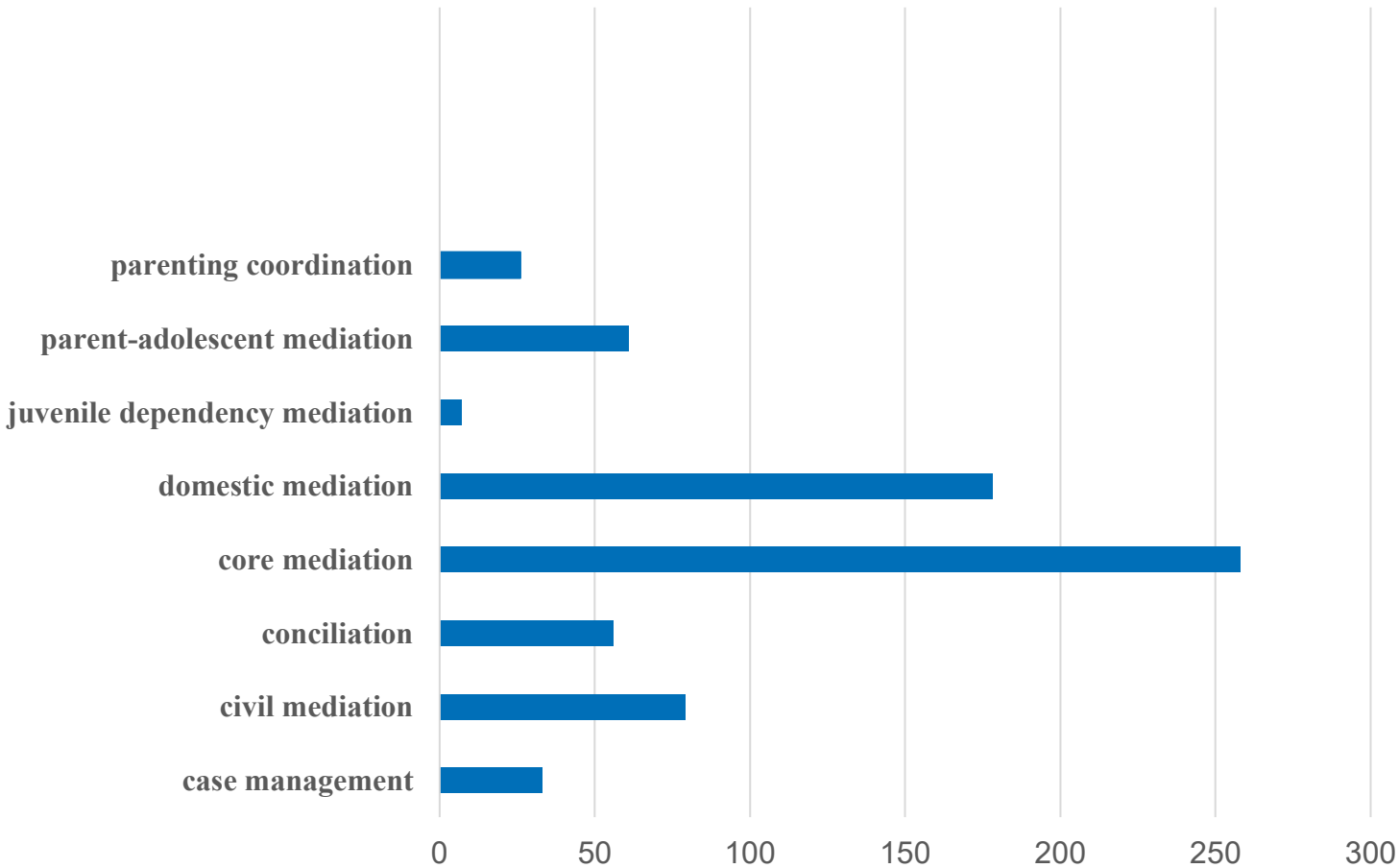
|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 2023 Approval Totals          | 2 |
| Subject Area Comparison Chart | 3 |
| Program Feature               | 4 |
| A Year in Review              | 5 |
| Council Members               | 6 |

This report is submitted in compliance with K.S.A. 5-506(b). It requires the director of dispute resolution to report annually on implementation of the Kansas Dispute Resolution Act. The act establishes an approval process for individuals and programs that practice dispute resolution, which is defined as “a process by which the parties involved in a dispute voluntarily agree or are referred or ordered by a court to enter into discussion and negotiation with the assistance of a neutral person.” Common forms of dispute resolution used in Kansas include mediation, conciliation, and parenting coordination. The act also establishes the Advisory Council on Dispute Resolution composed of knowledgeable individuals trained in dispute resolution. The council advises the director of dispute resolution on administering the act and related topics.

In this report, you will find information on the types of disputes handled by approved individuals and programs, suggestions for program development, statistics concerning the number and resolution of disputes, and other information relevant to achieving the goals of the Kansas Dispute Resolution Act.



# 2023 Approved Providers by Category

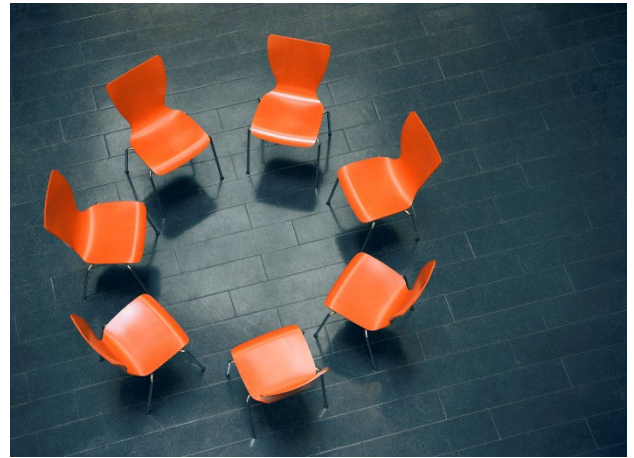


# 2023 Approval Totals

|     |                              |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 258 | dispute resolution providers |
| 11  | dispute resolution programs  |
| 46  | dispute resolution mentors   |

# Three-Year Comparison of Dispute Resolution Subject Areas

| Subject Areas          | 2021         | 2022         | 2023         |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| agriculture            | 7            | 19           | 35           |
| case management        | 3            | 0            | 0            |
| church                 | 24           | 11           | 21           |
| civil rights           | 32           | 27           | 46           |
| community              | 24           | 10           | 33           |
| consumer               | 27           | 33           | 22           |
| custody parenting plan | 2,711        | 2,006        | 2,342        |
| domestic (full case)   | 334          | 357          | 489          |
| domestic property      | 99           | 121          | 104          |
| employment             | 326          | 214          | 172          |
| environmental          | 9            | 3            | 2            |
| family                 | 77           | 80           | 73           |
| group mediation        | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| high conflict          | 0            | 0            | 0            |
| juvenile dependency    | 3            | 2            | 4            |
| limited action         | 9            | 23           | 78           |
| malpractice            | 6            | 9            | 2            |
| other                  | 194          | 274          | 833          |
| parent-adolescent      | 21           | 28           | 42           |
| personal injury        | 42           | 38           | 27           |
| probate                | 27           | 40           | 28           |
| public policy          | 6            | 5            | 7            |
| small claims           | 455          | 543          | 611          |
| special education      | 12           | 16           | 8            |
| offender/victim        | 88           | 95           | 194          |
| workers compensation   | 9            | 21           | 19           |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>4,545</b> | <b>3,975</b> | <b>5,192</b> |



## Six most active dispute resolution areas in 2023:

1. custody / parenting plan (60%)
2. small claims (16%)
3. domestic (full case) (11%)
4. employment (6%)
5. domestic property (4%)
6. victim offender (3%)

Comparison chart at left: Dispute resolution totals in the three-year comparison are taken from the annual renewal applications providers use to report the number of services provided.

# Program Feature: Offender/Victim Ministries

Submitted by: Todd Lehman, Executive Director

OVM (Offender/Victim Ministries) has served south central Kansas for over 50 years! OVM is a community-based restorative justice organization providing justice services to address harms that take place within the community. OVM has three programs through which this work takes place. The oldest and original is Prison Ministries. In 1973, a group of people were inspired to approach Hutchinson Correctional Facility staff to inquire about matching community volunteers with men being held on the inside. This “M-2” program was the first step OVM took into the justice world. Soon after that began the volunteers discovered some of the men felt bad about the harm they had caused and wanted to have a way to express that to the victims. Restorative conferencing soon followed coordinated between OVM staff and the Chaplain’s office at HCF. Eventually, KDOC hired staff to facilitate that process and today OVM only occasionally assists in this kind of service.

OVM eventually shifted focus toward the local community and continues offering restorative justice-based mediation services. Partners include Community Corrections in Judicial District 9 and city of Newton Municipal Court along with many probation officers in the area. In the last two years, county attorneys in both McPherson and Harvey counties have looked to OVM to assist in truancy cases, particularly with students ages 13-15. When a truant student is routed to OVM individual pre-meetings take place with the student, a guardian, and a school staff person. Then a restorative conference takes place bringing together that group with a couple of trained community volunteers and an approved Kansas mediator. The result of a successful process is a Restorative Agreement signed by all parties that 1) outlines the next steps 2) indicates where identified responsibilities lay, and 3) includes a timeline by which each item will occur. Overall early experiences have been positive. There continues to be a sense of amazement at the solutions that come from this group when such a conference takes place in a neutral environment and power dynamics around the table are carefully tended.

Throughout OVM’s history, the intentional placement of ‘Offender’ before ‘Victim’ in the name is symbolic of the effort to not forget about the needs of either, but particularly the offender. It also pays homage to the original concerns for those men incarcerated in Hutchinson. The overlap of the ‘O’ and ‘V’ in the logo is also intended to visually signify the goal of bringing the parties represented by those labels together. Today OVM continues to honor this legacy through M-2, mediation services that utilize Restorative Conferencing, and a Batterers Intervention Program that utilizes restorative justice principles as much as possible.



# A Year in Review

Throughout 2023, the director and the Advisory Council on Dispute Resolution have worked to improve dispute resolution in Kansas. A sample of the projects are listed below.

- **Mediation Video Project**
  - The council filmed six short educational mediation videos addressing frequently asked questions from the public. We anticipate the videos will be available to the public in 2024.
- **Case Management Primary Training**
  - The council and KIPCOR co-sponsored a case management primary training in April 2024 in Hays, KS. The training was offered at no cost to attendees.
- **Rule Review projects**
  - The council is reviewing the Rules Relating to Dispute Resolution to determine if amendments would benefit dispute resolution in Kansas. In addition, the council is discussing adding a new approval category.
- **Domestic Court Service Officer Roundtable Meetings**
  - The director holds quarterly roundtable meetings open to all domestic court service officers. The meetings are approved for continuing dispute resolution education hours.
- **Quarterly Dispute Resolution Newsletter**
  - The director circulates a quarterly dispute resolution newsletter to approved providers and programs. The newsletter spotlights events, addresses common questions, and provides updates on dispute resolution in Kansas.
- **Virtual Dispute Resolution Town Hall Meeting**
  - The director holds a yearly dispute resolution town hall meeting open to all providers and programs. The meeting is free and is approved for continuing dispute resolution education hours.

*To promote, encourage, and facilitate alternative dispute resolution services which are accessible and affordable.*

~Advisory Council on Dispute Resolution mission

# Advisory Council on Dispute Resolution 2023 Membership

**Judge Jacquelyn Rokusek, chair**

**Erin Barnes**

**Adriana Black**

**Sarah Doll Heeke**

**Jenna Esquibel**

**Jessica Gall**

**Retired Judge Jerome Hellmer**

**Randy Hoerschgen**

**Judge Kendra Lewison**

**Amanda Lovell**

**Terrie McCants**

**Melissa Meyer**

**Retired Judge Kevin Moriarty**

**Adina Morse**

**Marvin Motley**

**Janell Murphey**

**Jonathan Olsen**

**Tonya Ricklefs**

**Sheryl Wilson**

Amanda Jacobsen

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[kscourts.org/About-the-Courts/Programs/Dispute-Resolution](https://kscourts.org/About-the-Courts/Programs/Dispute-Resolution)