

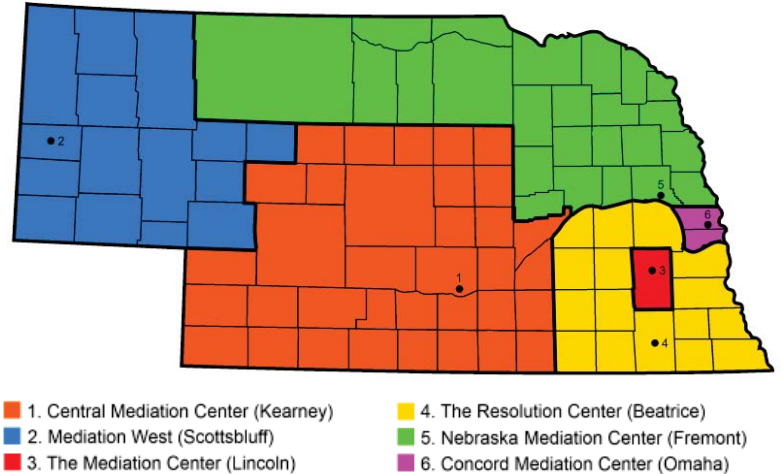


Nebraska Office of Dispute Resolution

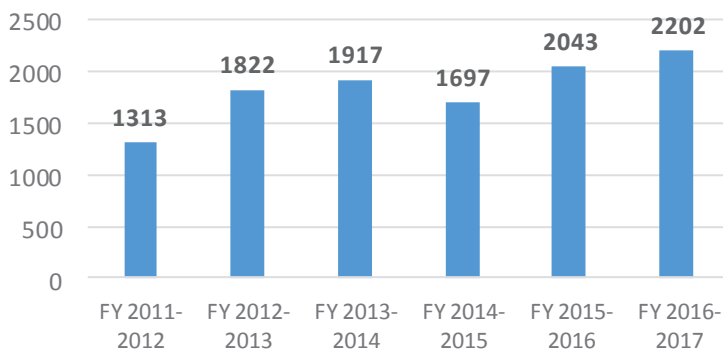
Parenting Act Mediated Cases

Six Years in Review: July 2011 – June 2017

Nebraska's ODR-approved mediation centers (see map) handle a variety of mediation cases, with over half of the cases encountered as parenting plan cases. In 2016-17, 60% (2664/4440) of cases opened were parenting plan cases. Parenting plans include details on how parenting responsibilities after separation or divorce will be allocated to ensure all needs of the children are met. These cases require special attention as each parenting plan formed must comply with the Nebraska Parenting Act. In doing so, mediators help parents keep their focus on the best interest of their children while ensuring a neutral and safe environment for each parent to address their concerns.



Closed Parenting Plan Cases at Nebraska ODR-approved Mediation Centers: 2011-2016



In general, the number of parenting plan cases the centers have handled has been increasing over the last few years. Since 2011 there has been a 67% increase in parenting plan cases closed at the centers. In the last fiscal year (16/17), 626 of the parenting plan cases closed by the centers were mediated resulting in a full or partial agreement, enabling parents to navigate through a difficult transition in their family's future as to how to proceed with parenting their children. Areas which are not agreed upon or cases that come to no agreement are forwarded on to their lawyers or court to complete a parenting plan.

Mediation is informal and confidential; the process strives to help parents work through difficult emotions in order to focus on their children's futures. The process can improve parent communication as well as problem solving skills which benefits both the parents and children in the long run. Parenting Plan Mediation can be approached through two processes: Joint Parenting Plan Mediation and Specialized Alternative Dispute Resolution. Before mediation starts, the mediation centers help parents choose which process best fits their family's needs. In both processes, mediators do not make parenting decisions, but rather work with the parents to do so.

Contact Information:

Central Mediation Center (Kearney): (308) 237-4692

Concord Mediation Center (Omaha): (402) 345-1131

The Mediation Center (Lincoln): (402) 441-5740

Mediation West (Scottsbluff): (308) 635-2002

Nebraska Mediation Center (Fremont): (402) 753-9415

The Resolution Center (Beatrice): (402) 223-6061

Website: www.centralmediationcenter.com

Website: www.concord-center.com

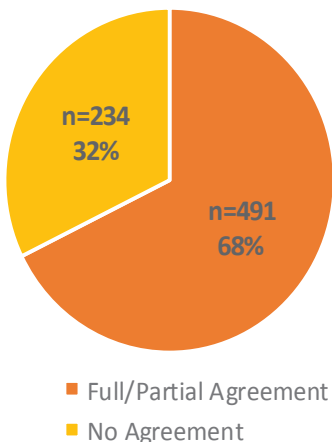
Website: www.themediationcenter.org

Website: www.mediationwest.org

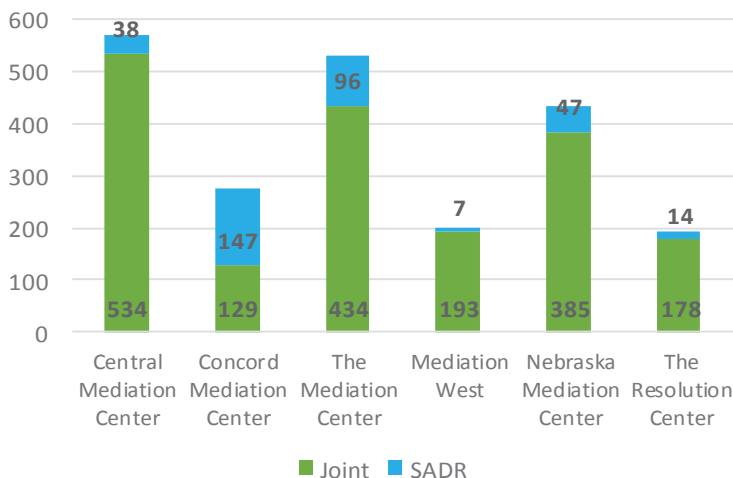
Website: www.nebraskamediationcenter.com

Website: www.theresolutioncenter.org

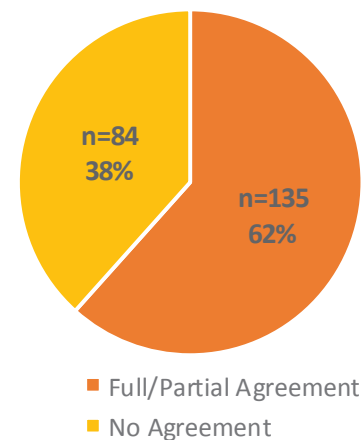
Outcomes of Joint Closed Cases FY 2016-2017



Number of Parenting Act Cases Closed at Nebraska ODR-approved Mediation Centers: July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017



Outcomes of SADR Closed Cases FY 2016-2017



Joint Parenting Plan Mediation

Most parenting plan cases are approached through parenting plan mediations. These mediations allow both parents to sit down and jointly decide what type of plan will best fit their families needs. During mediation, mediators are able to ask the “what if” questions to help prepare parents for situations they might not think of on their own. Mediators also ensure that parents discuss each requirement of the parenting plan set forth by the Parenting Act.

In total, the six centers completed 725 parenting plan mediations with 68% of these cases coming to a full or partial agreement, as seen on the pie chart.

Parenting Plan Mediation Case Study

“This case was referred to mediation by a private attorney. The parents were married with a one-year old child, but had recently separated. Both parents had past problems with substance abuse and Mom had been recently charged and referred to a Drug Court Treatment program. Dad had temporary custody, and Mom had parenting time every other weekend from Wednesday until Sunday. Dad was resistant to giving Mom the additional time she wanted, and trust was very low. During mediation the parents were able to discuss their pasts, their relationship, the structure and accountability of the DTC program, and the needs of the baby who was missing mom and showing signs of separation anxiety. The parents discussed a parenting time schedule that accommodated both parents’ work schedules, the requirements of Mom’s treatment program, and that would also provide assurance of progress for Mom and safety for the child.”

- Central Mediation Center

Specialized Alternative Dispute Resolution

When parenting plan cases are not mediated jointly, they are approached through Specialized Alternative Dispute Resolution (SADR) facilitation. Parenting plan case facilitators meet with parents individually to discuss child-centered wants and needs. They also develop clear and safe plans for future communication and transitions of children. SADR facilitators encourage each parent to express themselves privately while maintaining equal input into the parenting plan.

The six centers have mediated 219 SADR cases altogether bringing 62% of these cases to a full or partial agreement, as seen on the pie chart.

SADR Facilitation Case Study

“[The father] admittedly had a very severe issue with alcohol that had affected all other aspects of his life, including ongoing parental conflict with verbal and emotional abuse towards his wife...”

The mediators identified each parent’s key interests when it came to their children. The dad was focused on being able to spend time with his kids. The mom’s main interest was to avoid dangerous situations for her children while being exposed to their father when he may be under the influence of alcohol. The parents were able to agree upon a Parenting Plan, which permitted both parents time to be a part of their children’s lives, while addressing the mother’s main concerns. The father agreed to not use alcohol while the children were in his presence or for 12 hours leading up to the start of his parenting time... Each parent learned to focus on the best interests of their children, were able to negotiate a plan that met their individual wishes and learned new ways to handle transitions that would avoid in-person contact that could lead to negative, and possibly dangerous, encounters.”

- Concord Mediation Center