



Mediation Services

Program Report
2014

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Executive Summary

Jefferson County Mediation Services (JCMS) is a contract program that is dedicated to providing mediation and conflict resolution services to county agencies, the courts and the citizens of Jefferson County. We are also a primary source for the training and education of Denver-area mediators of all levels of skill and experience.

We have saved the County significant money and other resources in a variety of ways, and we continue our efforts to make the best possible use of taxpayer dollars. In 2014, we estimate a cost savings, to specific departments, of more than \$185,198.31 (See Figure 1 on page 7).

Our increasing case load (up 43 percent since 2007) is managed by five staff members and 240 volunteer mediators. Our work supports county agencies by reducing the time they spend dealing with conflict. JCMS tailors its services to the specific needs of individual agencies; some examples of ways we serve include:

- **Child Support Services (CSS):** We help CSS clients negotiate parenting time agreements. This reduces the time CSS technicians spend working through complaints about such issues, according to a study by CSS. It also helps to increase child support collections. We enhanced Child Support Services collections by an additional estimated \$358,020.00 in payments in 2014.
- **Animal Control:** We help quarreling neighbors negotiate resolutions to problems with barking dogs, dogs at large and other animal-related disputes. Successful mediations reduce the time Animal Control Officers spend traveling to investigate recurring complaints, processing tickets and testifying in court, and free them to deal with more pressing issues. In 2014, we saved Animal Control \$1,488.00.
- **Courts:** We provide mediators in several courts to help parties resolve issues prior to seeing the judge or magistrate. Our services help judges and magistrates manage their dockets better, so they can spend their limited time on more complicated cases. Studies find that when people make their own agreements, they tend to comply more readily than when a judge imposes orders. We saved County Courts \$62,069.64 in 2014.
- **Workplace:** We help County employees to resolve topics of concern with each other. When employees become frustrated with co-workers or supervisors, our services help them to address their issues in a constructive manner, so that the situations can be resolved in everyone's best interest. This improves morale and productivity, and frees managers from handling repeated complaints. Our workplace mediations and facilitations saved the County \$81,662 in 2014.

Accomplishments

JCMS is a full-service conflict resolution program, and has become an integral part of the County government's operations since 1994. Services beyond traditional mediation are also available: our facilitators help County departments hold planning retreats or public hearings on important issues, and also help employees work on team building within County departments. Experienced trainers and presenters help to improve communication and conflict resolution skills among school students, non-profit agency personnel and Jefferson County employees. County and Small Claims Courts rely upon JCMS volunteers to help control their expanding dockets. Colorado courts encourage written parenting plans, so the need for mediation between divorcing parents continues to grow. For our citizens who could not otherwise afford mediation, JCMS provides a welcome solution.

JCMS staff members and mediators are an important part of the developing mediation culture in our state. They serve the profession as board members, committee members, trainers, ambassadors, speakers, role models and mentors.

We provide our volunteers with varied continuing-education opportunities. We arrange specialized training in specific types of cases, such as Child Support cases and Protection Order hearings. We invite County agencies to explain their operations to our volunteers and discuss issues likely to arise in mediations. Judges and magistrates clarify legal and ethical issues. JCMS staff members give presentations on how the courts work and how we can assist different County departments. This helps our volunteers to expand their skills, keeps them abreast of advances in the field, and enables them to handle a wider selection of cases for the County. It also helps us to attract and keep the volunteer services of talented, dedicated and experienced mediators.

We have demonstrated clearly that mediation programs can lift a tremendous burden from the courts and County agencies. JCMS is recognized as a leader among mediation programs in our state. We share information, document achievements and results, and offer other counties and cities the benefit of our experiences. We will continue to promote the growth of the economical, ethical and effective use of conflict resolution in Colorado.

“The world needs more people helping in this way! Thank you!”

– Mediation Participant

Mission

To collaborate with government agencies in serving the citizens of Jefferson County by providing effective mediation, communication and negotiation processes, delivered by qualified, dedicated volunteers, in order to foster harmony within the community.

Vision

To provide processes that promote and model peaceful settlement of disputes by offering exemplary, high-quality mediation, negotiation, facilitation, and communication services to the citizens and employees of Jefferson County.

Values

- **For Clients:** To provide a safe forum in which people can be empowered to make decisions affecting their lives.
- **For Volunteers:** To provide continuing education in a mutually beneficial environment.
- **For Partners (Referring Agencies):** To establish and develop a system of collaboration that supports their mission.
- **For the Community:** To provide a model of effective interaction in the face of disagreement, thus enhancing goodwill and community spirit.

Program Areas

Community Mediation: We accept cases regarding animal control, noise, property issues (damage, fences, drainage, etc.), planning and zoning, consumer complaints, landlord-tenant schools, and family conflicts.

County – Internal: We offer assistance with group facilitations (strategic planning, team-building, etc.), workplace conflicts, Child Support Services (parenting time and support modification cases) and ombudsman services.

Courts: We help with Small Claims disputes, Division H, Protection Order Conditions Conferences and Victim-Offender Reconciliation.

Each of our programs is tailored to fit the agency we are serving, so we have different data to report for each program.

County Commissioners

The JCMS staff wishes to express sincere gratitude to the Jefferson County Commissioners, who continue to provide outstanding support to JCMS.

Faye Griffin
District 1

Casey Tighe
District 2

Donald Rosier
District 3

JCMS Staff

Mark S. Loye, Executive Director
Helena Jo Goldstein, Program Director
Julia C. Carter, Mediator Coordinator
Brian S. Beck, Technology Coordinator
Natasha Alizadeh, Clerical Support

JCMS Contact Information

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History and Overview

JCMS was created to deal with conflict. Conflict begins when people believe that they have incompatible interests, values or needs. Conflict can lead to creative change, but it can become destructive when the parties cannot resolve their differences. Responses to conflict can range from informal discussion to warfare. Mediation allows the participants to make their own decisions while a third party facilitates the process. Mediators do not give opinions or make rulings, and have no stake in the outcome, so the parties can negotiate in a safe setting where all concerns, interests, information and ideas can be heard.

The Board of County Commissioners approved the creation of JCMS in 1993 with Mark Loye as director, and mediations began in March 1994. Twenty volunteer mediators handled 69 cases, referred by 10 agencies, during that year. The caseload has grown steadily: in 2014, 29 agencies referred 1,562 cases to JCMS. Any Jefferson County agency, municipality, associated non-profit group or County court can refer parties to JCMS. Services are provided through the dedication of 240 volunteers with an impressive variety of backgrounds and experience. They volunteer with one goal: to provide a safe process that encourages people to make decisions for themselves.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is an informal, voluntary process. A professional, impartial third party helps the contending parties exchange views and explore possible options for resolving the conflict. The goal of mediation is to help parties reach their own mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute. Often, this will solve the problem and usually will at least keep it from escalating. Any decision reached is through the efforts and agreement of the parties themselves. Mediation enhances communication, promotes responsibility and helps people acquire skills that can assist in preventing or resolving future disputes.

Once all necessary parties have agreed to participate in mediation, JCMS volunteers schedule a meeting where everyone involved in a dispute can sit down together to talk about the problem. Our mediators set ground rules to provide a safe and respectful setting. They help the parties to define their concerns, to reduce hostility and to find common ground. They help the parties to generate and evaluate options for resolving the issues. Parties can then reach an acceptable agreement that will meet their needs. Finally, they can make a formal written agreement, such as a Memorandum of Understanding, to record their resolution.

Benefits of the process are significant: mediation can be scheduled quickly, and is usually far less expensive and time-consuming than going to court. In addition, the parties are typically more satisfied with the outcomes. Finally, parties generally comply better with the terms of agreements that they have crafted themselves than they do with terms imposed upon them by someone else.

How We Save Taxpayer Money

JCMS exists to save County resources. The County takes its responsibility to taxpayers very seriously and works to conserve expenditures. JCMS saves costs in many ways.

JCMS saves time for the Sheriff, Animal Control and Planning & Zoning by helping neighbors to resolve their conflicts. When people resolve problems in mediation, County officials don't need to make as many trips to investigate complaints. Each trip has costs, such as the employees' hourly wages, gasoline prices and equipment wear and tear. As these costs increase, the value of our services increases accordingly. When officials travel to unincorporated mountain locations, the costs simply to investigate a single neighbor complaint are staggering. Additionally, in mediation, people can agree to call JCMS if conflict arises again, instead of burdening a County agency. When County personnel refer citizen conflicts to mediation, they can then refocus on their regular duties.

We save costs for the District Attorney's office by settling disputes before trial. This reduces court caseloads and increases efficiency. In court cases, mediation saves hours of court time because the parties have already reached agreement or, even in cases that do not settle, the parties have identified and clarified the relevant issues. In divorce and child-custody cases, mediation typically saves five to six hours of courtroom time per case.

JCMS reduces the costs of conflict in the workplace by mediating among Jefferson County employees. The costs of conflict include lowered productivity, turnover, increased sick time and poor morale (see page 19 for additional information on our Workplace Mediation Program.) By reducing these costs, we can save resources exceeding the savings generated by all of our other programs combined.

Figure 1 shows our cost-saving estimates for each of the major departments we served in 2014. The data below are based on feedback from our user agencies.

Factors that are not shown in our cost-savings chart include trial costs of cases that go to court. Additionally, even when mediation does not resolve the dispute, the parties have had an opportunity to practice their "presentation," so they are more effective and concise in the courtroom, thus conserving the judge's valuable time. The more the agencies use JCMS, the more they save.

"Neither the small claims division nor the county court civil division could function well without the mediators. If the cases which are resolved through mediation at the first appearance of the parties were not resolved, we would need 1-2 additional judicial officers to handle the cases, plus additional staff, courtrooms, etc."

Judge Tammy Greene
County Court Judge

Figure 1: Minimum Cost Savings Achieved for User Agencies in 2014

Department	Cases Settled	Cost Per Trip/Case	Trips/Cases Saved Per Settlement	Cost Savings
Animal Control	6	124.00	2	\$1,488.00
County Attorney	106	\$240.00	N/A	\$25,440
County Courts - All	516	\$120.29	N/A	\$62,069.64
District Court	1	\$406.61	N/A	\$406.61
Juvenile Assessment	2	\$201.95	1	\$403.90
Planning & Zoning	1	\$188.25	2	\$376.50
Human Services	109	\$80.00	1	\$8,720.00
Municipalities	13	\$123.91	2	\$3,221.66
Sheriff	5	\$141.00	2	\$1,410.00
Workplace Cases	7	\$11,666	N/A	\$81,662
Total				\$185,198.31

In addition, volunteers donated 4,835 hours in 2014, realizing cost avoidance for the County of an additional \$580,200. This calculation is based on a figure of \$120 per hour for mediators. The actual cost to hire a mediator ranges from \$120 per hour (Colorado Office of Dispute Resolution) to \$350 per hour and higher.

Furthermore, we helped Child Support Services to collect at least an additional \$358,020 in child-support payments.

The Clients We Serve

Jefferson County agencies, Courts, non-profit family service agencies, R-1 Schools and municipalities refer cases to JCMS. We keep growing as more departments discover that mediation can conserve staff resources, serve the public, and be effective in nearly any kind of conflict. Figure 2 below illustrates the sources of JCMS cases during 2014.

We offer a wide range of services, and some of our programs have been created in response to specific needs expressed by our clients. Examples of such programs include our employee workplace mediation program, our work with child support cases, and our assistance at protection order hearings.

Figure 2: Referring Agencies in 2014

Referring Agencies	Total Cases
Child Support Services	525
County Civil Court	468
Small Claims Court	355
Lakewood	31
Animal Control	28
Arvada	26
Wheat Ridge	19
Sheriff	15
Children Youth and Families	15
Schools	13
Planning and Zoning	10
Juvenile Assessment Center	10
Human Services	9
Jeffco Action Center	9
Mediation Services	6
District Attorney	5
Jefferson Center for Mental Health	5
Parks	3
District Court	2
Gilpin Court	2
Clerk and Recorder	1
Assessor	1

Types of Cases

Our cases reflect the amazing variety of situations in which humans can come into conflict. Figure 3 shows the types of cases we handle, as well as the total number of cases in each category.

Figure 3: Types of Cases in 2014

Case Type	Total Cases
Parenting and Child Support	527
Landlord - Tenant	309
Contract	190
Permanent Protection Order	177
Consumer	72
Neighbor - Neighbor	64
Family	45
Animal Control	42
Liability Claim	31
Vehicular/Traffic	25
Employer - Employee	17
Domestic Partnership	14
Workplace-Employee-Employee	11
School Related	8
Special Projects	7
Ombuds	6
Planning & Zoning	6
Citizen-Law Enforcement	3
Group	3
Victim/Offender Reconc Juv	3
Patient - Provider	1
Truancy	1

We Get Results

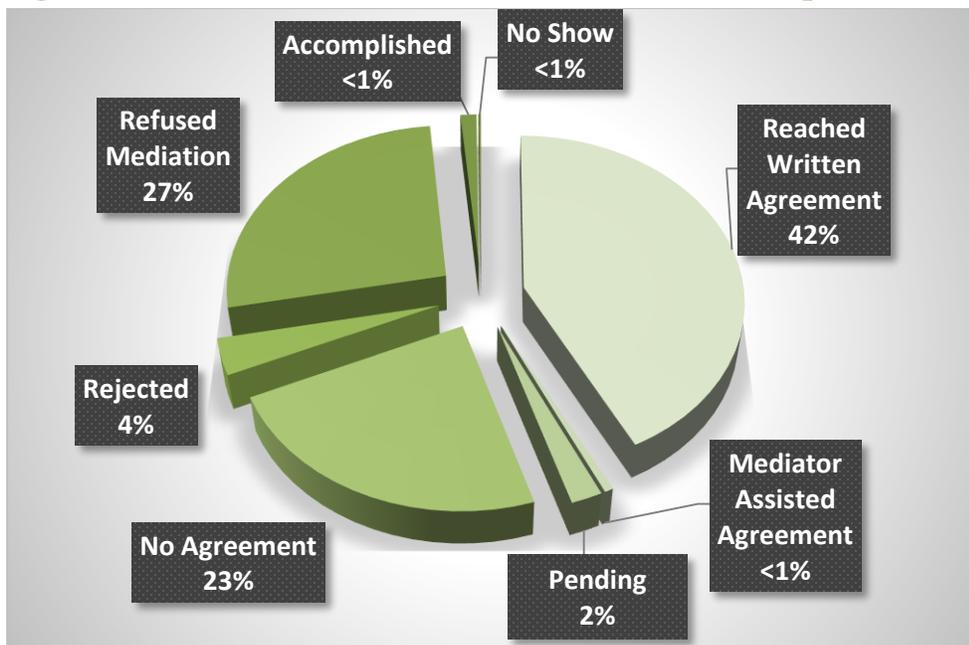
Figure 4 shows the raw data for the 1,562 cases referred to JCMS in 2014 while Figure 5 shows the results in percentages. In some cases, the parties do not go to mediation. We determined that 55 cases were not appropriate for mediation. In 416 cases, at least one party refused to mediate. We closed 3 cases after a party or parties failed to show up at a scheduled mediation. Of the 1,055 cases actually mediated, 692 resulted in written agreements or informal resolution, and 363 resulted in no agreement.

See figure 1 above for the details on the more than \$185,000 we saved the County in 2014.

Figure 4: Results for All Cases Received 2014 – Raw Data

Success	Total Cases
Reached Written Agreement	663
Mediator Assisted Agreement	9
Accomplished	20
No Agreement	363
Refused Mediation	416
Rejected	55
No Show	3
Case Still Pending at Time of Report	33
Total	1562

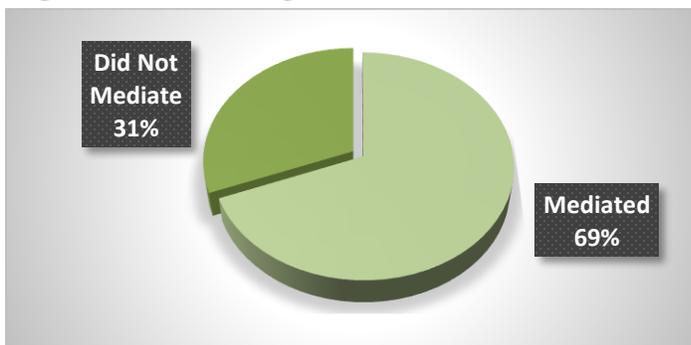
Figure 5: Results for All Cases Received in 2014 – Graph



JCMS staff spends a great deal of time talking to parties about the benefits of mediation. In 2014, in 69 percent of cases, when we contacted people about mediation, all parties were willing to try it. In 31 percent, one or more of the parties chose not to participate in the process, or we rejected the case as inappropriate for mediation. See Figure 6, below.

Mediation is voluntary process and there are many reasons that person might choose not to participate. Often parties do not agree to mediate because we simply were unable to make contact with them about our program. In other cases we hear that people have tried mediation before (either with our program or another resource) and do not feel it will be helpful this time or that they prefer another option over mediation.

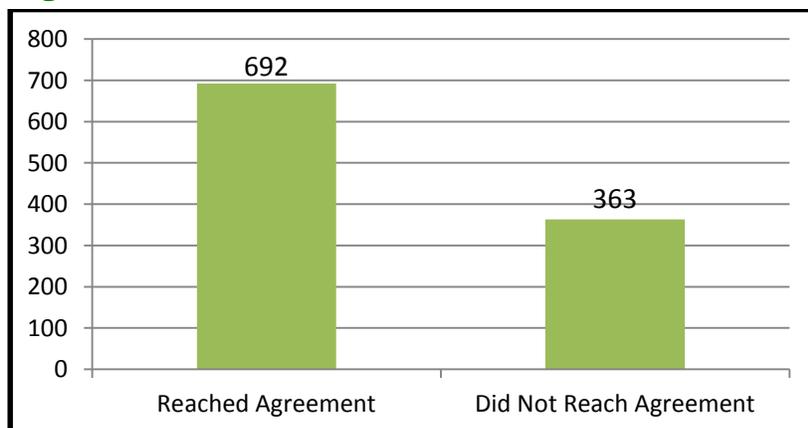
Figure 6: Percentage of Referred Cases that Went to Mediation



Mediation programs around the world report high success rates, and JCMS is no exception. After everyone agrees to participate, we assign the case to volunteers to schedule mediation. In 2014, when people met for mediation, 66 percent reached resolution and made written agreements or informal settlements, as shown in Figure 7.

The success rates varied depending on the type of case. Landlord-tenant cases had a success rate of 78 percent, while 56 percent of child support cases resulted in agreement.

Figure 7: Results of Cases Mediated in 2014



Quick Turnaround Time

Compared to the court system, which can take months to conclude, JCMS cases were completed very quickly. Figure 8 shows the average number of days cases took to move through our process. On average it took six days, from the date we received the case, to contact the parties and assign the case to mediators. Once the case was received by mediators, it took an average of seventeen days for the mediation to be completed and the case closed by our office. For all 1,562 cases received in 2014, whether mediated or not, the average time from the date we received the case to the date we closed the case was twenty-three days.

Figure 8: Case Duration Data

Average Time from Case Received to Case Assigned to Mediators	6 Days
Average Time from Case Assigned to Mediators to Case Closed	17 Days
Average Time-All Cases (mediated or not) Case Received to Closed	23 days

Telephone Contact Data

In 2014, JCMS staff members handled over 3,000 phone contacts with parties, agencies and other interested individuals. Figure 9 shows the monthly tallies of phone contacts. This chart only represents actual contact with individuals.

Figure 9: Phone Call Data

Month	Info Only	Referral List	New Case	Mediator Contact	Party Contact	Other Agency	Totals
January	42	11	3	53	109	15	233
February	34	5	2	33	104	3	181
March	51	11	2	55	172	25	316
April	40	10	6	52	194	23	325
May	36	12	4	53	176	18	299
June	46	5	10	77	163	11	312
July	29	27	35	43	158	27	319
August	70	16	59	13	114	10	282
September	28	21	49	39	126	24	287
October	52	19	53	17	110	10	261
November	46	13	20	9	47	4	139
December	34	11	27	10	57	9	148
GRAND TOTAL	508	161	270	454	1530	179	3102

Codes:

Info Only: Information about mediation or direction to other services

Referral List: Sent list of mediation providers to party who didn't qualify for JCMS case

New Case: Took in a new case

Mediator Contact: Assisted mediators by answering questions, scheduling meetings, etc.

Party Contact: Spoke with parties to discuss mediation or give status updates

Other Agency: Spoke with another County agency regarding mediation info or referrals

Child Support Services Summary

Jefferson County Child Support Services (CSS) is constantly working to increase collections from non-custodial parents who are ordered to pay child support to custodial parents. JCMS offered to mediate these cases, and CSS caseworkers have been delighted that they can offer a resource to people whose issues go beyond payment of child support.

This interdepartmental collaboration has had far-reaching benefits for the County and participants. Fathers may protest, “I don’t get to see my kids, so why should I pay child support?” Now there is some help for them, too. The courts are pleased to be relieved of some parenting-time motions and contempt cases for non-payment. Instead of further crowding the jails, Justice Services diverts delinquent payers to work crews, providing services to the County. Children get to know both parents, and when a parenting plan is filed through CSS, parents do not incur a filing fee. Finally, the custodial parents and their children are receiving much-needed child support, so that fewer families need public assistance.

JCMS received 525 referrals from CSS in 2014. CSS reported that the rate of payment increased 17 percent among the parents who agreed to participate in mediation (88 more paying parents), *even if they can’t reach an agreement or the other parent will not participate* (the custodial parent may be unwilling to alter the parenting time). At an average payment of \$255 per month for child support, the increase works out to at least an additional \$358,020 in collections for CSS.

In 2008, CSS expanded their referrals to include contested child-support modifications. If the custodial and non-custodial parents do not agree on the appropriate amount of child support, mediation can help them discuss a fair amount. If an agreement is reached, it can be implemented immediately instead of after a lengthy court process that increases conflict between the parents. JCMS now provides mediation services for Jefferson County Child Support Services (CSS) in parenting time and child support cases. This helps CSS, the taxpayers, the courts, the parents and the children.

Figure 10 shows the results of the cases referred by CSS in 2014. We received 525 cases, 193 of which were assigned to mediators. 335 did not go to mediation, including 3 cases in which one or more parties failed to show up for the scheduled meeting. Of the 193 cases mediated, 108 cases resulted in agreement and 85 did not result in agreement. Our volunteer mediators met one or more times with parties to these cases, for a total of 228 meetings.

This figure also shows the average number of days cases took to move through our process. On average, it took 18 days from the date we received the case to contact the parties and assign the case to mediators. Once the case was received by mediators, it took an average of 55 days for the mediation to be completed and the case closed by our office.

For all 525 CSS cases received in 2014, whether mediated or not, the average time from the date we received the case to the date we closed the case was 45 days. Additionally, 228 meetings were held by volunteers and 1,886 hours of volunteer time.

Figure 10: Results of Child Support Cases Referred

Total Cases Referred	525
Cases Assigned to Mediators	193
Reached Agreement	108
No Agreement	85
No Show	3
Refused by One or More Parties	279
Rejected by JCMS as Inappropriate	27
Pending at Time of Report	23

One of our caseworkers received a \$15,000 lump-sum arrears payment through our collaboration with Mediation Services. The caseworker said, 'A lot of my lump sums have happened due to Jeffco Mediation. I have really had success with their services.' Excellent! Another family will start the New Year off right.

Debbie Moss, Former Program Director
Child Support Services

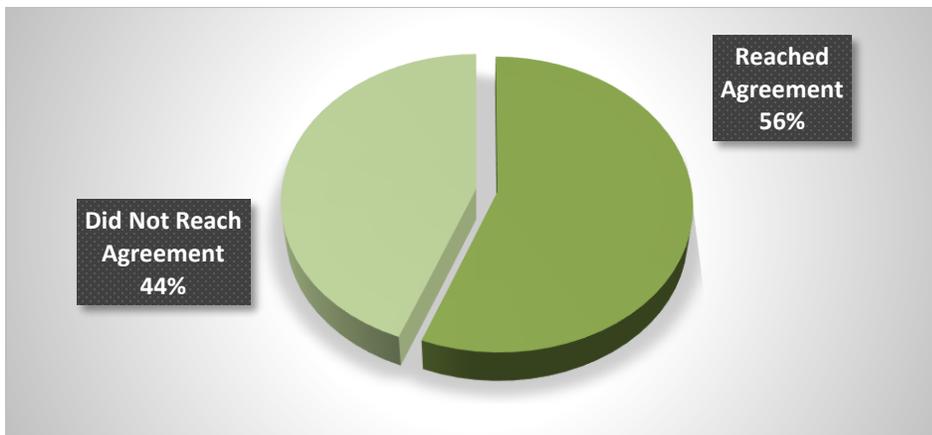
Figure 11 shows the percentage of cases referred by Child Support Services that went to mediation. In 43 percent of cases referred by CSS all parties agreed to mediation. The 57 percent of cases that did not go to mediation includes cases where JCMS was unable to reach one or more of the parties.

Figure 11: Percentage of Child Support Cases Mediated



Figure 12 shows the results of cases referred by Child Support Services. 56 percent of the referred cases that went to mediation reached an agreement.

Figure 12: Results of Mediated Child Support Cases



Protection Order Conditions Conference (POCC) Cases for 2014

JCMS provides trained, volunteer facilitators to several judges on the days that they are hearing requests for permanent protection orders. These facilitators are trained in domestic violence issues, as well as conflict resolution techniques. JCMS strives to provide facilitation teams with a male volunteer and a female volunteer to create a gender-neutral environment. This service is provided without any charge to the court's budget.

Mediators use the Protection Order Conditions Conferences process. Parties are separated into different rooms, and the facilitators coordinate a discussion between the parties in shuttle fashion. This allows the parties to convey their concerns and needs to each other, and in many cases, negotiate the terms and conditions of an eventual permanent or extended temporary protection order, without the direct or implied coercion, fear and intimidation that a face-to-face mediation would potentially entail. Parties can safely negotiate conditions that more precisely meet their needs, with the assistance of trained neutral mediators who use typical conflict resolution techniques.

In domestic cases, the facilitators discuss issues such as retrieval of personal property by the restrained party, exchange of children and parenting time. In neighbor-neighbor cases, the facilitators work on ways for the parties to co-exist, given that they often live next door to each other and will continue to see each other. In student situations, the facilitators work with teenagers and their families to find solutions that will enable the students to continue their high school education peacefully. These discussions often result in a written agreement, which the parties can ask the judge to incorporate in their permanent protection order or in the continuation of the temporary order. The judge usually does not have time, and may not feel it is appropriate, to discuss issues apart from statutory requirements with the parties. The facilitators are often able to foster communication between the parties that leads to agreements that make their lives more manageable.

Figure 13 shows that of the 153 cases assigned to mediators, 94 cases, or 62 percent, resulted in agreements, and 57 cases, or 38 percent, did not.

Figure 13: Results of Protection Order Conditions Conferences

Total Cases		153
Cases Assigned to Mediators		151
Refused/Rejected		2
Reached Agreement	(62%)	94
No Agreement	(38%)	57

Small Claims Court

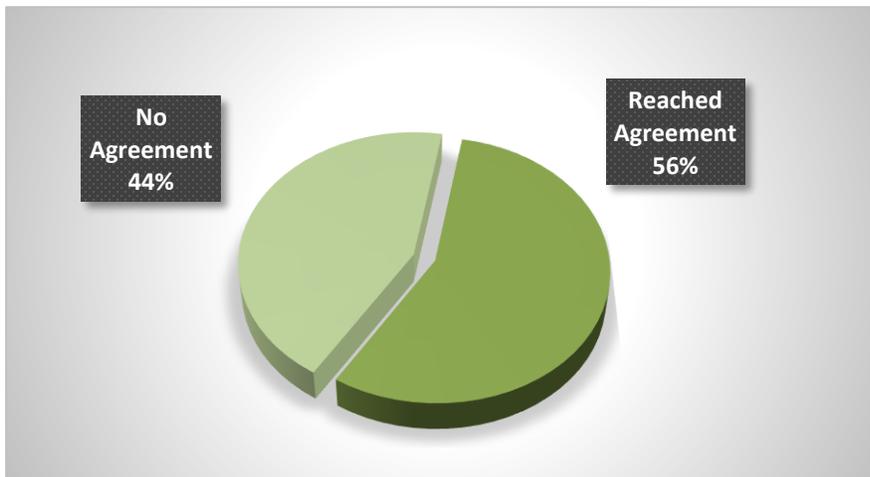
JCMS provides mediators for Small Claims Court. The mediators offer the disputants facilitated settlement conferences. If mediation does not settle the dispute, the parties proceed to have their cases heard by a magistrate. Some people choose to try mediation before they even file a Small Claims case, which saves even more court time.

Figure 14: Small Claims Court Cases

Total Cases	355
Cases Assigned to Mediators	345
Reached Agreement	194
No Agreement	151
Refused or Rejected	9
Pending at the Time of Report	1

Figure 15 shows the results of our Small Claims Court mediations. Fifty-six percent of mediated cases resulted in agreements. This is in line with national averages for such cases.

Figure 15: Success of mediated Small Claims Court Cases



County Civil Court

JCMS provides mediators for County Court cases besides those in Small Claims and Protection Order courts. In Division H court, the type of mediation offered is a “facilitated settlement conference,” which means that mediators are more directive and use more reality checking than in typical mediations. Since the parties are already in the court process, they may be rigid in their positions. The mediators must make relatively rapid assessments as to whether an agreement is possible and, if so, must try to reach a settlement quickly. If mediation does not settle the dispute, the parties will go back to the court to have their cases heard by the judge.

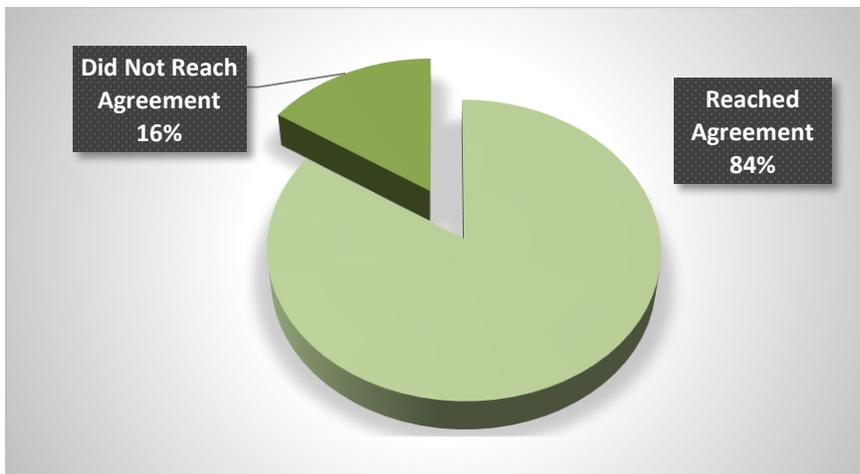
See Figure 1 above for details on how we saved the County Courts more than \$62,000.

Figure 16: Data for County Court Cases Mediated on Hearing Date

Total Cases Referred	218
Reached Agreement	184
No Agreement	34

Figure 17 shows the success rate in County Court Mediations. Eighty-four percent of these cases resulted in agreements.

Figure 17: Results of County Court Cases Mediated



“I wanted to let you know that while we did not reach an agreement during the session with you, your work provided the basis to develop a settlement shortly after. Neither party will be filing a claim.”

- Mediation Participant

Workplace Mediation

Workplace Mediation for Jefferson County Employees

Conflict can stimulate changes and progress, but unresolved conflicts can disrupt how a team functions. Increased caseloads, changes in operations, staffing cuts and personality differences can create stress. Whatever the cause, mediation can improve communication, decrease tension and improve the team's ability to work together.

The costs of employee discord can be enormous. Recent research by various corporations and government agencies shows that:

- An average manager spends 24 percent to 60 percent of his or her time dealing with employee conflict.
- The effects of conflict include wasted time, reduced decision quality, more absenteeism, lowered motivation, higher health costs and inconvenient rearrangement of work groups to separate disputants.
- Conflict is a major factor in employee turnover, but in today's economy, many people are afraid to leave their jobs so they just endure the stresses of conflict as well as they can.

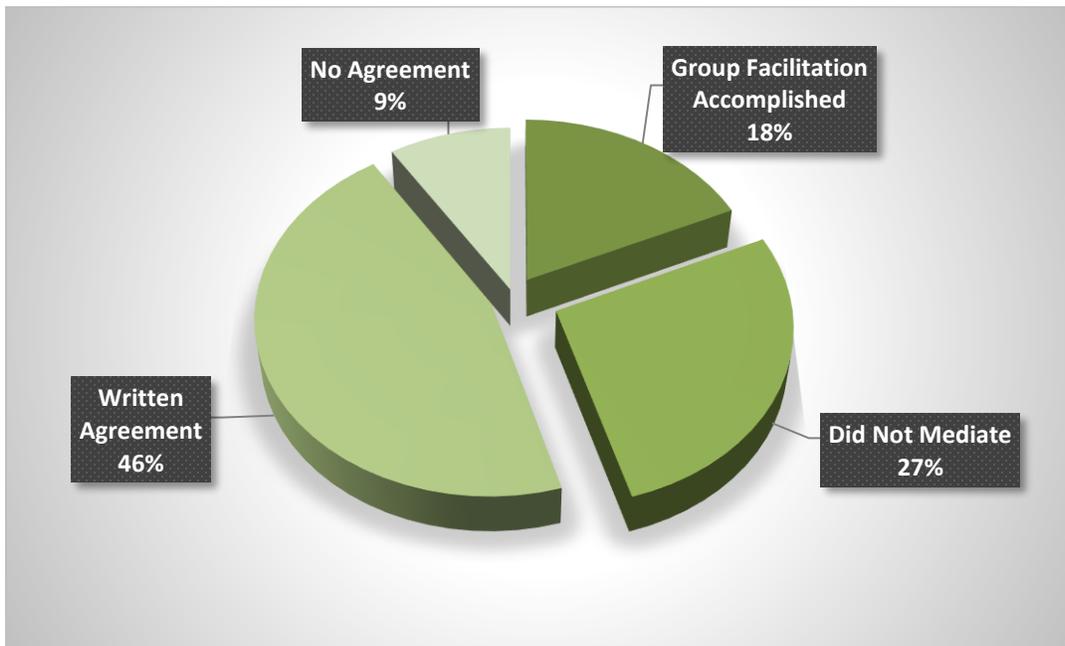
The Good News: Governments and businesses that use mediation show dramatic results. With lower conflict, employees take fewer days for illnesses and absences and improve their morale and productivity. JCMS successfully resolved 7 cases during 2014, resulting in a savings of \$81,662 at a minimum (many cases involved three or more employees, and in a few, the whole team or department was involved). Clearly, significant growth in this area has the potential to save the county vast sums of money.

Example of a Workplace Case:

Average pay for Jefferson County employees is about \$50,000 (about \$25.00 per hour). If two \$25/hour employees spend 10 minutes a day bickering ($1/6$ of $\$25 \times 2 = \8.33 x 5 days per week, x 50 weeks per year), it consumes \$2,083 per year of their pay. Then each spends 10 minutes talking to the manager – another \$2,083. Their manager earns \$40/hour and spends 20 minutes per day listening to complaints ($1/6$ of $\$40 \times 2 = \13.33) - another \$3333 per year. The two also spend 10 minutes talking to co-workers about each other ($1/6$ of $\$25 \times 4 = \16.66), and it costs another \$4,167 per year for the four workers. Conflicts can go on for years, and this one unresolved conflict will cost \$11,666 per year, not including the effect on the department and its service quality. There are about 55 departments and divisions in the County, so just one conflict in each unit will cost the County more than \$641,630 each year. Disputes between employees and supervisors cost even more: leadership may be challenged or passively resisted, and the team's work will suffer.

The 11 workplace disputes in 2014 involved actual or perceived conflict between employees or with a supervisor, and we provided skilled mediators to assist them. Figure 18 illustrates that if the parties are willing to mediate, we can help them to resolve the difficulty nearly every time. Given the costs of continuing conflict, this offers enormous savings to the County and helps to ensure high-quality service to customers by promoting a better work environment.

Figure 18: Workplace Cases Referred



“We continue to be pleased with your mediation services and will certainly recommend your services and utilize them again whenever we find the need for facilitation in the future.”

- Facilitation Participant

Mediation in Jefferson County Schools

What we were hearing from parents, teachers, and assistant principals:

“My son is out of control - he won’t talk to me, and I don’t know what to do with him.”

“She’s really not a bad kid, but she’s so disruptive in class that the other kids can’t learn.”

“Our kids are falling through the cracks, and the parents just don’t want to be involved.”

Principals worry that we are losing our children. Some parents would rather leave the problems to someone else. Judges say that by the time children get to court, it may be too late to help them. Teachers are overloaded, and school administrators may have no option but discipline for children who cause problems.

What we are doing:

We wanted to help these children and ease the burden on schools, so we began our School Mediation program in 2005. The results are impressive: when parties come to the mediation table, they usually resolve their differences.

Our experienced child and family mediators are trained in family dynamics and risk/threat assessment, and they enjoy working on these cases. They love to see children succeed, and they have the skills, talent and time to help people solve problems.

It is in everyone’s interest to help schools do their job well and to relieve them of problems they are not equipped to handle.

We also handle cases involving conflicts between teachers, parents, administrators and other school staff. If it involves conflict, we can help!

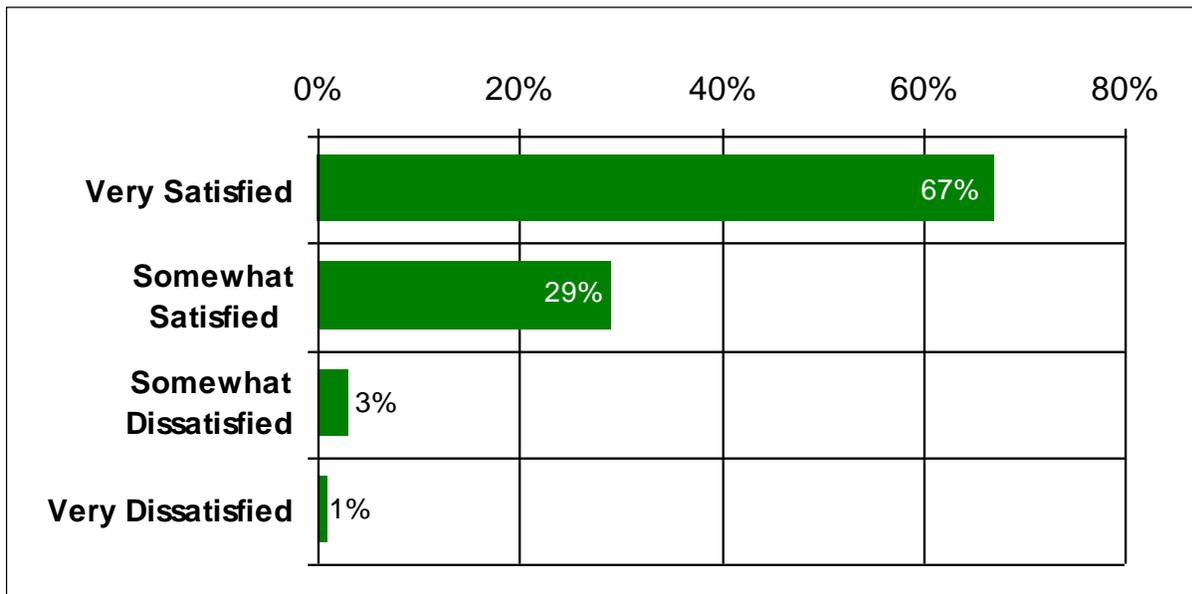
Citizen - Law Enforcement Mediation

Citizens who have complaints about law-enforcement personnel in Jefferson County can now meet face to face with the officers involved. The goal is to provide greater understanding and to improve relations among citizens and officers. Each participant gets a chance to hear how the other felt about the encounter, and the officer can explain that procedures may require certain actions. Internal Affairs officials refer only those cases in which they have determined that there is no actual impropriety by the officer. The citizen who participates understands that any citation or charge against him/her will remain, and that Internal Affairs may choose to drop the complaint against the officer. We have had excellent results with this project, and the City of Wheat Ridge has joined the Sheriff’s Office in sending these cases to us.

Customer Satisfaction

Our clients praise the power of the mediation process. Figure 19 shows their high level of satisfaction: 96 percent reported being either “Very Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied,” only 3 percent were “Somewhat Dissatisfied,” and barely 1 percent said they were “Very Dissatisfied.” A remarkable 92 percent of those who participate in mediation would recommend it to others – even if they didn’t reach agreement themselves. [Analysis of client questionnaires by Cory Stufflebeem and Ian Taylor, 2009]

Figure 19: Customer Satisfaction



Recent Trend:

We are seeing a new development: clients now call because their friends, co-workers or neighbors used JCMS, and said it really helped. Sometimes a phone call from our staff to the other party in a dispute will prompt people to settle a dispute on their own. These new clients never had to burden other County agencies with their conflicts.

Our Mediators

At the heart of the success of Jefferson County Mediation Services are the mediation professionals who donate their time and energy to the program on an ongoing basis. The number of volunteer mediators has expanded from just 20 when the program began in 1994 to about 240 today. In 2014, they gave a total of 4,835 hours to Jefferson County – an average of 3.09 hours per case.

Backgrounds and Qualifications

Our volunteers come from diverse educational and employment backgrounds and provide a large wealth of experience and expertise. They include:

- Lawyers and paralegals
- Businessmen and consultants
- Technicians
- Educators
- Medical professionals
- Psychologists and counselors
- Government workers
- Scientists
- Human Resource Professionals

Because our program is so comprehensive and varied, it attracts volunteer mediators across metro Denver and Colorado. Each mediator brings an individual set of talents, personality and experience. Personal traits, aptitudes, training and life experiences make each mediator a unique asset to this outstanding service.

Each volunteer must complete a 40-hour mediation training course (or equivalent) prior to joining the program, attend our orientation and pass a background check. Background checks are repeated every three years.

JCMS volunteers share a desire to help citizens resolve conflict without violence. They also view the program as a credible way to build skills and experience that are recognized by our state's professional organization, The Mediation Association of Colorado. Mediators commit to serve for one year at a time; however, nearly half of our current volunteers have served for four or more years. Their contributions are immense: without the dedication, skill and hard work of each of these mediators, JCMS could not have attained the remarkable level of quality that it offers today.

The community benefits from an increasing pool of mediators experienced in the variety of cases amenable to mediation. Some of our volunteers have gone on to establish or run community mediation services elsewhere, so the benefits continue to spread, giving citizens a viable alternative to other, more expensive, destructive and time-consuming means of conflict resolution (e.g., litigation).

Our Staff

Our staff consists of a full-time Executive Director and four part-time staff. Together, we handle the myriad details involved in running such a large and varied service. Each week, we answer or return over 50 calls, open and close over 30 cases, provide information and referral lists to people who do not qualify for our free services, and field inquiries from other agencies. We contact parties to persuade them to try mediation, respond to numerous e-mails, schedule mediation sessions and manage our database. With our combined experience and expertise, we serve as a valuable resource for our volunteers, discussing their cases, answering their questions and arranging advanced mediation training. We make presentations to other agencies, attend meetings and schedule volunteers to mediate for various judges and magistrates. It's not just a job to us - we are committed to serving our clients in any way we can.

Mark S. Loye, M.S., M.P.A.

Mark is the Executive Director of JCMS and helped to start the program in 1994. He has over 27 years of professional experience in dispute-resolution, with extensive training and experience in mediation and facilitation. His work has included multiparty environmental and land-use, business, organizational, EEO/workplace, neighbor-neighbor, divorce and child custody, real estate, task force and group facilitation. He has a B.A. in biology from Stanford University and earned graduate degrees in ecology from Cornell University, and in Public Administration from the University of Denver. He is an EEO mediator for the U.S. Postal Service, where he has conducted over 130 cases. Mark is a professional member of The Mediation Association of Colorado, and is a member of the international Association for Conflict Resolution, the National Association for Community Mediation and the Society for Range Management. In early 2011, he was appointed as the Community Conflict Resolution Representative to the Advisory Council for the Colorado Office of Dispute Resolution. He currently serves on the First Judicial District Access to Justice Committee, a group committed to maximizing availability of all aspects of the legal system to all citizens.

Helena Jo Goldstein, Esq.

Helena is the Program Director and has been with JCMS since 2001. She has a B.A. in History from the University of Michigan, and earned her Juris Doctor at Northeastern University School of Law. She was an attorney in private practice in Boston, specializing in domestic law and tax issues, before her appointment as General Counsel for the Cambridge (MA) Housing Authority. Under the auspices of the Council of Large Public Housing Agencies (CLPHA), Helena traveled nationwide as a trainer on EEO issues for housing authorities. She also served on the Massachusetts committee that rewrote the state regulations for housing authorities. After relocating to Colorado in 1993, she pursued a career in mediation. She has advanced training in Workplace Mediation, Team Decision Making Facilitation, and Parenting Coordination and Decision Making. She has co-taught courses for mediators on Intimate Partner Violence. She is a professional member of the Mediation Association of Colorado, and serves as a mentor to many of the JCMS volunteers.

Julia Courtney Carter, Esq.

Julie is the Mediator Coordinator and has been with JCMS since 2000. She has a B.A. in Sociology and Psychology from University of Colorado, and earned her Juris Doctor at University of Colorado's Fleming Law School. After working as an attorney in corporate and securities litigation and business organization, Julie became a JCMS volunteer in 1998, and mediated various types of cases before joining our staff. She received training in Restorative Justice with Longmont Community Justice Project. She has taken advanced training in workplace mediation and serves as an EEO mediator for the U.S. Postal Service. She is a member of The Mediation Association of Colorado and is a past member of the Alternative Dispute Resolution section of the Colorado Bar Association. She has been a co-instructor in Anger Replacement Training for adult paroled offenders, has co-taught several training courses for mediators, and provides ongoing coaching and support to our volunteers. Julie has played a significant role in expanding and improving our programs and increasing our collaboration with other County agencies.

Brian S. Beck, M.A.

Brian has been with JCMS since 2008 and serves as Technology Coordinator. He has a B.S. from Oklahoma State University and earned a Master of Arts degree in Conflict Resolution from the University of Denver, as well as a Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution from the University of Denver's University College. He has been a mediator since 2003 and has mediated victim-offender, civil, divorce and custody cases. Brian has served as President for The Mediation Association of Colorado and is a current professional member of the organization.

Natasha Alizadeh

Natasha has been with JCMS since 2011 and serves as our clerical support. She has streamlined several of our processes, and has significantly improved our efficiency.

The Future of JCMS

What is next for JCMS? We are coordinating with County agencies to increase our services. Employees may be hesitant about trying mediation, so we work to increase employee acceptance and use of our workplace program. Those who have used mediation are pleased with the results, and agencies that collaborate with us are enthusiastic and committed to our joint efforts. Our caseload has grown dramatically over time, and we project that this trend will continue in future years.

We will continue to respond to the needs of any County agency that requests more specialized services. This is how we have become the largest, most diversified community mediation program in Colorado. We will continue to expand our collaboration with Open Space and other agencies through facilitation of major decision-making groups. These program expansions will further the aim of saving resources for the County.

Mediation can become the standard method of managing the conflict inherent in all areas of human activity, and JCMS can lead the way.

Most importantly, for a small annual investment of County funds, JCMS will continue to expand the large payoff in cost savings to governmental agencies and the courts, reduce ongoing conflict both in the community and within the County, and enhance public peace and harmony. JCMS is setting the standard for innovation and progress conflict resolution across Colorado and throughout the Rocky Mountain region.

2014 JCMS Advisory Group

The Advisory Group meets quarterly to consider questions of policy and program direction. On a less formal level, the members serve as a sounding board for new ideas of JCMS staff and volunteers. These representatives of client agencies give us valuable guidance on their conflict resolution needs and feedback on the quality of our services. They also serve as advocates of JCMS to their own staff and agencies. As public managers and decision-makers, they make observations and offer insights that have been invaluable to the growth and vitality of JCMS. The Advisory Group is an evolving body, adding interested members as new client agencies and jurisdictions join those already served by JCMS.

Magistrate Jamin Alabiso, Small Claims Court
Cynthia Ayde, Counselor, Deer Creek Middle School
Rachel Baumel, JCMS Mediator
Janet Bell, Citizen Liaison
Greg Carr, Arvada Code Enforcement Manager
Larry Cerrillo, JCMS Mediator
Agent Michelle DeLeon, Lakewood Police Department
Ray Fleer, Jefferson County Undersheriff
Patricia Gilbert, Assistant County Attorney
Judge Tammy Greene, County Court
Robyn E. McDonald, JCMS Mediator
Nicole Miller, Jefferson County Human Resources
Kathryn Otten, Director, Justice Services Division
Judge Jeffrey R. Pilkington, District Court
Jennifer Rhoads, Deputy District Attorney
Susan Rumley, Asst., Community and Workforce Development
Magistrate Joel Schaefer, County Court
Agent Lee Thomas, Lakewood Police Department
Judge Todd Vriesman, District Court
Tama Wood, Jeffco R-1 Schools
Lindsay Wyrick-Bruner, Family Tree, Women in Crisis
Carla Zinanti, Manager, Animal Control Section

Volunteer Recognition Event

Each year, we hold an event to express our gratitude to all of our volunteers. They usually work with only one other mediator at a time, when handling a case, so this is a chance for them to meet their colleagues and to network and enjoy themselves in an informal setting.

The event also allows our elected officials to express their thanks to these generous people by presenting awards to the outstanding mediators in various categories.

On September 9 we held our Volunteer Recognition Event at Mount Vernon Events Center in Golden. We all enjoyed the lovely setting, good food, and great company.

Recognition Event Sponsors

Special thanks to the following individuals and local businesses that sponsored our 2014 awards event!

240 Union	Mimi's Café, Denver West
Baker Street Pub, Belmar	Morrison Inn, Morrison
Blue Sky Café	Noodles & Company, Belmar
Buffalo Wild Wings, Belmar	Old Chicago
California Pizza Kitchen, Denver West	Olive Garden, Belmar
Café Jordano, Lakewood	On the Border, Denver West
Chad's Grill, Lakewood	Outback Steakhouse, Denver West
Chili's, Applewood	Paciugo, Belmar
Chipotle, Belmar	Panda Express, Belmar
Denny's, 32nd & Youngfield	PF Chang's, Belmar
Egg & I, Belmar	Pizza Hut, Union Blvd
Jason's Deli, Lakewood	Planet Beach, Belmar
Jose O'Shea's, Lakewood	Sir La Table, Bel Mar
Lakewood Heritage Center	Starbuck's, Applewood
Le Peep, 141 Union	Sunrise Sunset, Lakewood
Lucky Strike, Belmar	Wahoo's Fish Taco, Lakewood
Macaroni Grill, Denver West	Woody's Pizza, Golden

JCMS Mediators' 100 Club Honor Roll

JCMS has a large group of dedicated volunteers. Among these are some outstanding individuals who have each mediated 100 or more cases in their time with our program. The list below shows each of those mediators and the total number of cases they have handled for JCMS.

Elaine Rains – 1,317	Karen Tracy - 152
Jerry Schopen – 1,061	Kathleen Schoen - 146
Joel Bogen - 657	Caroline McKinnon - 143
Randy Stein - 468	Julie Carter - 140
Anita Gilbertson - 358	Ginger Matney - 133
Jim Gurley - 346	David Jones - 132
Julie Manning - 338	Mike Cross - 129
Michael McClimans - 300	Daniel Horsey - 127
Francisco Terrones - 267	Kimberly Saviano - 124
Robyn McDonald - 252	David Weinstein - 123
Lawrence Cerrillo - 247	Paul Teven - 123
Richard Fullerton - 218	Tom Hoffman - 121
Kristin Thompson - 217	Jeff Jones - 120
Georgine Kryda - 208	Marietta Kerby - 120
Kitty Pring – 197	*Tonya Dalhaus - 120
Floyd Borakove - 195	Marty Atlas - 118
Charlotte Pavek – 187	Scott Baroway - 112
Helena Jo Goldstein - 174	Karen Hamm – 109
Laura Elliott – 174	*Fiona Lewis - 103
Irnie Pierce - 166	Charles Kall - 102
Steven Shaver - 166	Walter Kowalchik – 102
Billy Harris – 165	*Karen Kail - 102
Janet Hopkins - 155	Lee Saulnier - 100

*Volunteers who joined the 100 Club in 2014

Long-Term Volunteers

Jefferson County Mediation Services has a long history of providing outstanding services to the citizens of Jeffco. Some of our volunteers have been around for much of our journey. The volunteers listed below are currently active and have been with the program for 10 years or more.

Debra Plotkin
Jerry Schopen
Tom Hoffman
Don Jacobson
Lawrence Cerrillo
Jim Gurley
Charlotte Pavek
June Anglin
Suzanne Bryson
Mary Ann Foster
Richard Fullerton
Julie Manning
Robin Rossenfeld
Kristin Thompson
Loretta Koehler
Mike McClimans
Carol Baker

David Jones
Karen Lest
Jan Mickish
Kath Schoen
Rodella Wooten
Janet Hopkins
Laura Karlis
Elaine Rains
Patty Vondra
Marietta Kerby
Madelynn Orr
Anita Gilbertson
Rita Hyland
Patty Lucy
Pamela Ross
Ann Sussman
Patrick Walsh



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