



# Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center Strategic Plan 2023-2027

## OUR MISSION

Provide and promote constructive and collaborative approaches to conflict.

## OUR VISION

For Whatcom County to be a community in which people approach conflict in creative and healthy ways.

## OUR VALUES

equity ~ diversity ~ impartiality  
empowerment ~ collaboration  
communication ~ integrity  
sustainability ~ kindness

## OUR FRAMEWORK:

The Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center was established in 1992 as a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization, operating in the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish Peoples. These waterways, shorelines, valleys, and mountains have been the traditional homelands of the Lummi, Nooksack, Semiahmoo and Samish peoples from time immemorial. As we collectively work to actualize our mission and vision, we will strive to reduce inequalities by promoting and reinforcing the strengths and resilience of all people.

Our goals reflect where we want to dedicate our energy in the coming years - serving our community well, deepening our connections, and ensuring we have ample capacity to fulfill our mission. Through this plan we are committing to wise and meaningful growth, anchored in these beliefs:

- People are capable of navigating conflict in healthy and constructive ways.
- People need to have equal access to impartial spaces, structures, and services for conflict resolution that maximizes self-determination, access to justice, and dignity.
- People are interconnected. We recognize our work exists within the broader societal realities of systemic inequities and marginalization.
- Our community is diverse. We recognize strong relationships and partnerships inform our work, and help us advance our collective vision.
- Our work asks us to create a sense of belonging for all as we consider people's perspectives and interests.
- Our work requires kindness, energy, and investment in the well-being of our staff and volunteers.
- Our work takes time and resources to do well, and we must pace our growth to sustain quality services.
- Becoming an equitable organization is ongoing, iterative, and essential in fulfilling our mission.

## OUR GOALS and OBJECTIVES:

### **Goal: Adapt and respond to our community's changing needs with high-caliber, relevant, and effective services.**

- Calibrate service offerings to respond to emerging trends and changing community priorities.
- Ensure programs and services align with best practices, informed by research and experience.
- Invest in staff training, support, and development to nurture relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Develop effective policies, structure and processes for engaging, retaining and supporting volunteers, mediators, facilitators, and trainers.

### **Goal : Engage an equity lens to effect positive change throughout our organization.**

- Utilize an equity strategy screening tool to evaluate policies, programs, and practices.
- Elevate and engage staff, Board, volunteers, and contractor voices in work related to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility.
- Prioritize learning and practices that will deepen our ability to provide equity and trauma-informed services.
- Expand the diversity of our staff, Board, and service providers to increase representation across a diverse spectrum of identities and experiences.

### **Goal: Strengthen relationships and community connections to bolster access and increase trust as a welcoming community resource.**

- Participate meaningfully in a diversity of community spaces and partnerships.
- Strengthen connections with marginalized communities to ensure we understand needs, reduce barriers to access, and offer relevant and effective services.
- Bolster outreach and service access countywide.

### **Goal: Intentionally foster a culture of staff joy and well-being.**

- Develop and refine policies and practices that promote staff health and satisfaction.
- Nurture staff belonging, connection, and personal growth.
- Balance program activity with organizational capacity to ensure a healthy nexus.
- Invest in staff compensation and benefits to ensure livable wages and promote job satisfaction.
- Improve internal systems and processes to maximize ease and efficacy.

### **Goal: Ensure diversified, balanced, and robust funding sources to strengthen our long-term financial security.**

- Strengthen opportunities for donor engagement and retention.
- Increase unrestricted contributions and grant-based support.
- Establish a planned giving program and explore endowment funds.
- Secure stable State operating and special project funding.
- Identify and strategically invest in resource development tools and techniques.
- Identify and prioritize capital needs.

## OUR PROCESS:

The Board and staff engaged in a collaborative process to reflect upon past goals and accomplishments, current and future needs, organizational values, and the changing landscape of our community. Through a combination of discussion and reflection, stakeholder interviews, and a community survey, we identified three key areas of focus - equity, quality, and sustainability, which are reflected throughout our updated values and within our newly established strategic goals and objectives.

