



Dispute Resolution Newsletter August 2023

Hello, dispute resolution community! In this quarter's newsletter I will share key information about using the [dispute resolution section](#) of the Kansas judicial branch website. First though, I want to announce the date for the [Dispute Resolution Virtual Town Hall](#) has changed. It will take place from noon to 1 p.m.

Wednesday, November 8, 2023, and registration is required. Registration is through the meeting link above. During the town hall, I will give a live demonstration of how to get around in the dispute resolution section of the judicial branch website and provide an overview of the renewal process. There will also be time for attendees to ask questions.

I hope you find the information in this quarter's newsletter useful. If you have suggested content for future issues, please email adr@kscourts.org. I hope to see you at the virtual town hall meeting!

Thank you,
Amanda Jacobsen

Director of Dispute Resolution
Office of Judicial Administration

Dispute resolution website: Main options

Below are the three main content areas in the [dispute resolution section](#) of the judicial branch website and the important resources on each page.

1. [Find a dispute resolution provider or program](#)

This is for people looking for names and contact information for approved providers and programs. Approved providers decide if they want to be listed on the public website during the registration process, so not all providers are listed here.

2. [Become a dispute resolution provider or program](#)

This is for people who want to become an approved provider and for dispute resolution programs seeking approval. The page includes resources and forms needed for approval, including:

- [approved mentor mediator list](#)
- [mentor mediator evaluation form](#)
- [calendar of approved trainings](#)
- [application for individual approval](#)
- [application for program approval](#)

3. [Information for approved dispute resolution providers and programs](#)

This is for providers already approved and programs that want to maintain their approval status. The page includes applications for [individual renewal](#) and [program renewal](#), the [calendar of approved trainings](#), and the applications for [Approval of Primary Training and Live CDRE Activity](#), [Approval of CDRE Activity: Teaching Credit](#), and [Approval of CDRE Activity: Authorship Credit](#).

How to find dispute resolution content on our website

Steps below describe how to find the dispute resolution section of the judicial branch website if you don't have the URL handy.

1. Type **Kansas judicial branch** in the search engine of your choice or type www.kscourts.org.
2. Once you are on the judicial branch website, select **About the Courts**.
3. Find **Trial Court Programs** in the menu and select **Dispute Resolution** listed below it.



4. After you arrive on the dispute resolution section of the judicial branch website, you may want to bookmark it on your computer so it's easy to find in the future.

Program feature: Eviction Resolution Program

By: Abigail Lessman, Eviction Resolution Program Manager

The [Eviction Resolution Program](#) is an Office of Judicial Administration program available in the 18th Judicial District, which is composed of Sedgwick County. The program was created in 2022 after the Office of Judicial Administration received a two-year grant from the National Center for State Courts to develop a local voluntary eviction resolution program. This program is the first of its kind in Kansas, and Sedgwick County was selected for its location because, on average, this district handles roughly one-third of all evictions statewide.

NCSC established the grant program with the goal of helping courts develop “holistic, sustainable, and community driven resolutions to housing problems.” The Eviction Resolution Program assists both tenants and landlords by providing information about the eviction court process and connecting individuals to available resources, including financial assistance, legal aid, and housing agencies. The program also seeks to facilitate the early resolution of eviction matters to relieve the eviction court docket and help parties resolve cases without prolonged litigation. This may be accomplished through community resources, including mediation.

In the nearly one year the program has been operating, valuable connections have been made with many service providers in the community. Many social service agencies within the United Way Homeless Continuum of Care are part of the referral network the program uses within Sedgwick County. Kansas Legal Services, the statewide legal aid agency, is the main resource for low-income litigants who need legal advice. Their expanded walk-in legal advice times coincide with the initial eviction court docket. The City of Wichita Housing Stability Program is the largest provider of local rental assistance to those who qualify and they prioritize those facing eviction. Representatives attend the initial eviction docket to discuss eligibility with defendants and encourage them to apply.

The Eviction Resolution Program has developed a process for coordinating free mediation sessions between landlords and tenants either before or after an eviction case is filed, along with a network of volunteer mediators. Several approved mediators from the Johnson County area have volunteered to complete mediations virtually through Zoom, and several mediators from the Mediation Center of Wichita have volunteered to complete in-person mediations. To date, four mediations have taken place: two virtual and two in person. The Eviction Resolution Program continues to promote mediation as an option and hopes to expand mediation services to include mediation before some eviction bench trials.

If you are interested in volunteering to mediate issues between landlords and tenants either virtually or in person, contact Eviction Resolution program manager, Abigail Lessman, at 316-660-5659 or Abigail.Lessman@kscourts.org.

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

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