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The Massachusetts Community Mediation Centers Program

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The Massachusetts Community Mediation Centers Program

The Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, UMASS Boston The Community Mediation Coalition of Massachusetts

Summary/Abstract

As part of the <u>public service mission</u> of UMASS Boston, the MA Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC) partnered with the Community Mediation Coalition of Massachusetts in compiling a research study and design for a *Community Mediation Centers Grant Program* to <u>increase sustainability, scope and quality of Massachusetts community dispute resolution as a mechanism for increasing access to justice for all Massachusetts communities.</u>

Goals and Objectives

Promote Community Mediation as a cost-effective public service program within higher education through a partnership with the Community Mediation Coalition of Massachusetts by establishing a state-wide grant-making program for mediation center sustainability and independence; legislation; community mediator excellence; and partnerships between UMASS students and community mediation centers, the Massachusetts Trial Court and others.

Results/Impacts

Anticipated Results Include:

- 1. **\$1.25 million annually** for state-funded operating grants to 20 community mediation centers across the state.
- 2. 6126 annual mediations for primarily low income residents of Massachusetts.
- 3. 4430 resolved conflicts annually for state and local government, courts, schools, police departments, businesses and communities.
- 4. The cost-savings and resources leveraged would amount to \$6 million annually.
- **5. UMass Boston Students** will be involved in providing community dispute resolution services at community mediation centers state-wide.
- 6. UMass Boston will become a national leader in community dispute resolution programming and research.

Approaches and Methods

Alignment of community mediation centers, MOPC and UMASS Boston as effective deployment of public resources.

Building on existing state-wide conflict resolution infrastructure eliminates duplication of efforts.

A university-based framework institutionalizes partnerships and through centralization, leverages the benefits of scale.

Conclusion/Next Steps

Securing Funding for the grant program.

Enacting Legislation demonstrating commitment to the public service mission of UMASS Boston.

Building Infrastructure for program administration through MOPC.

Administration of grant-program.

References and Resources

Legislative Study Report:

A Framework to Strengthen Massachusetts
Community Mediation as a Cost-Effective Public
Service compiled by MOPC.

National Association for Community Mediation: http://www.nafcm.org

Additional Partnerships, Interests, Information and/or Contacts

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