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The Parent Mediation Program – A Pathway to Cooperative Parenting

Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, University of Massachusetts Boston

Department of Revenue CSE Division

MA Community Mediation Centers

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The Parent Mediation Program – A Pathway to Cooperative Parenting

Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC), UMass Boston
Department of Revenue CSE Division and MA Community Mediation Centers

The Program

The Parent Mediation Program (PMP) is a community-based program for parents who are no longer able to live together but still wish to co-parent. The Program partners with seven community mediation centers.

Funding for the program is provided by the MA Department of Revenue Child Support Enforcement Division through a child access and visitation grant from the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services.

Goals and Objectives

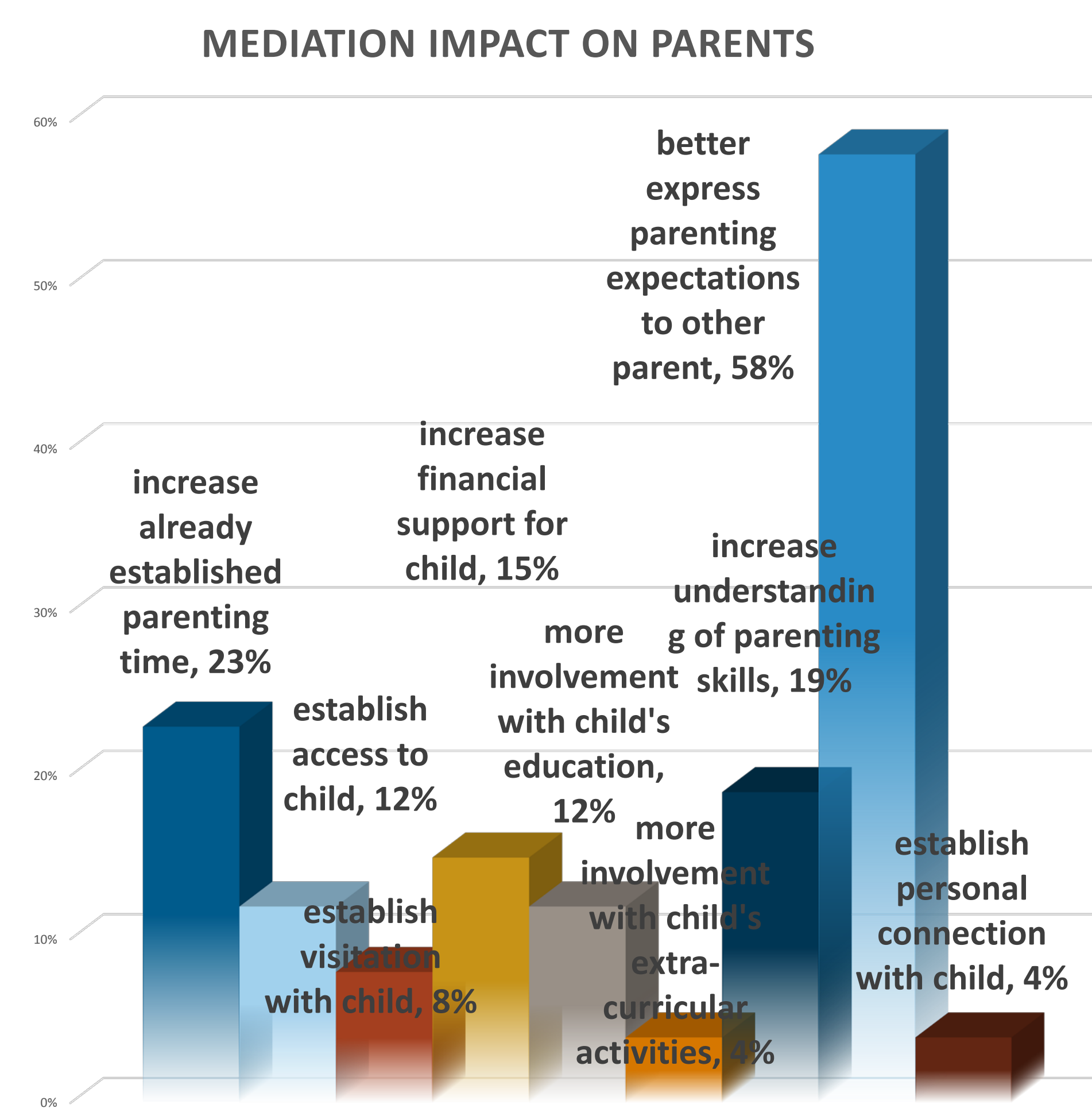
The Parent Mediation Program was established in 2008 as a state-local collaboration to raise awareness of mediation as a viable option for creating workable parenting plans and to mediate parenting issues for never-married, separated, divorced or separating parents across the state.



The program aims to annually provide direct educational services to around 250-300 disputing parents, about 170-220 of whom will also receive mediation services.

Approaches & Methods

Mediation is a process where a mediator assists disputing parents to achieve mutually acceptable solutions by facilitating parents' communication so that their concerns, needs, and interests are heard and considered.

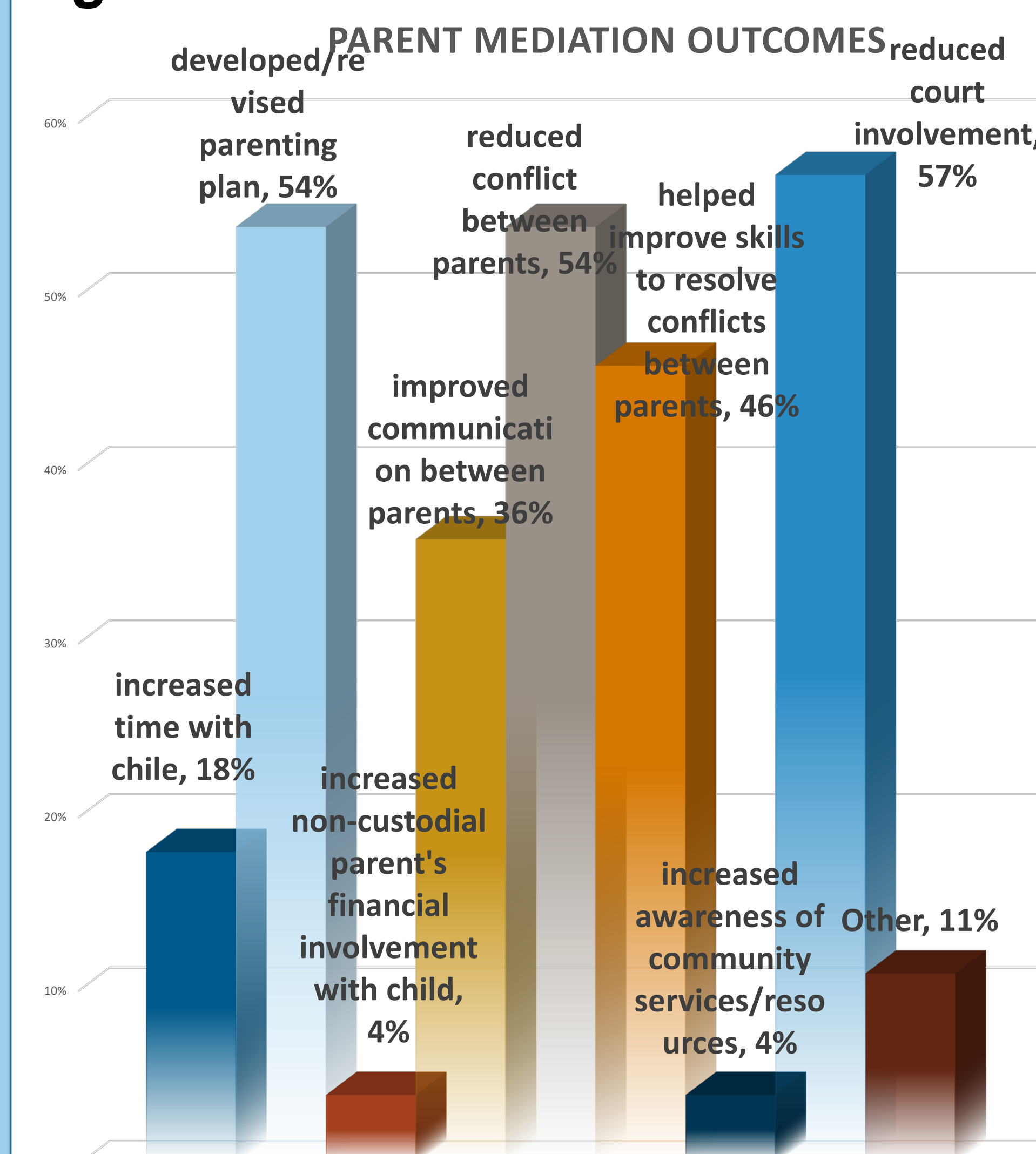


Grant funding supports several hours of free mediation for the parties.

Cases are typically referred to mediation by parents who contact the local community mediation center directly and by the Probate & Family Court and community-based family-service organizations.

Results/Impact

Through mediation participant surveys between July-December 2013 (N=34), the Program learned in FY 2014 that reduction in court involvement (57%) was chosen most often as a mediation achievement. Reduced conflict between parents (54%) and working on a parenting plan (54%), followed by improved communication (36%) were the other most chosen outcomes of parent mediation. The Program has an **agreement rate** of 61%.



Since July 2008, the partnering centers have provided community outreach and education to thousands of parents and direct services to about **1100 parents**, 700 of whom participated in mediation.

Next Steps

In recent years, the Program has seen an increase in the need for community-based mediation due to the recession and slow economic recovery.

The Program will seek additional funding from state and federal sources to accommodate the increasing demand for services and to grow the number of community mediation center partners.

Program Partners & Funder

- MA Department of Revenue CSE Division
- Community Dispute Settlement Center
- Family Services of Central MA
- Martha's Vineyard Mediation Program
- MetroWest Mediation Services, Inc.
- North Shore Community Mediation, Inc.
- Quabbin Mediation, Inc.
- The Mediation & Training Collaborative

Additional Information

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