
New York Peace Institute

Annual Report

2019 - 2020





New York Peace Institute

Note from our Board Chair, Michael Williams

The last few years have been quite successful for New York Peace Institute, and, as a Board Member since 2011, I have been very excited to see the growth in programs and strength of services we presented throughout 2019 and 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic and increasing social unrest have presented serious challenges to all residents of New York City, and the country more generally, but New York Peace Institute continues to be strong and serve as a critical resource for our communities.

A few highlights from 2019 and 2020 include:

- In 2020, in response to the pandemic, New York Peace Institute launched fully remote mediation, coaching, and training services, and we were the first Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC) in New York to do so;
- We held a successful in-person gala, our annual PeaceRaiser, in May of 2019 and then transitioned the PeaceRaiser to a series of virtual events in May 2020;
- We played a significant role in the implementation of presumptive mediation through courts in New York City and continue to work with the courts during the COVID pandemic;

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- We launched a pilot program in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments in East Harlem to bring restorative practices and conflict resolution services to residents and youth; and,
- We completed a four-year pilot program in schools in partnership with the Brooklyn Community Foundation, which focused on replacing traditional punitive measures with restorative practices.

New York Peace Institute's conflict resolution services are needed now more than ever, and I am so proud of our dedicated staff, board, and volunteers for the work they have done to promote conflict resolution in New York City.



Michael H. Williams

Chair, New York Peace Institute Board of Directors

Mission Statement

As NYC's largest civilian peace force and the State-designated Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC) for Manhattan and Brooklyn, New York Peace Institute (NYPI) empowers people to find creative and durable solutions to their disputes. We provide conflict resolution services—mediation, conflict coaching, community conferencing, and various other restorative justice processes—to thousands of New Yorkers each year, and we advance the field by training and certifying mediators and teaching conflict resolution skills to our community.

NYPI Programs 2019 & 2020

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The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on NYPI Programs

The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in early 2020, has drastically altered the way New Yorkers live, work, and care for and educate their children. In March 2020, New York City entered full lockdown mode, already experiencing some of the highest rates of COVID-19 cases in the country.

Like many non-profits and businesses throughout the country, New York Peace Institute (NYPI) had to adapt its practices and programs to account for new social distancing, masking, and other measures, with little notice. NYPI rapidly transitioned to a remote model, and we were the first City-based CDRC to move our operations online in response to COVID-19; we continue to operate remotely. NYPI's staff members and a large team of volunteer mediators now provide conflict resolution services and trainings by phone or through virtual platforms.

NYPI also created specific programs in response to the pandemic, and the increased stress and incredible financial burden New Yorkers have been experiencing. For example, NYPI responded to the increased needs of those dealing with housing conflicts, particularly those unable to pay their rent, by partnering with the NYC Mayor's Office, Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and Human Resource Administration's (HRA's) Office of Civil Justice to develop and implement the Landlord-Tenant Mediation Project. This program operates exclusively outside of the court system and helps resolve issues while the courts are still closed and reduce the backlog of cases and the burden on courts.

NYPI has also moved our training programs outdoors. We conducted our 5-day Basic Mediation Training program outdoors in the spring of 2020. In addition, we have now moved our Apprenticeships, program-specific Roundtables, in-service training programs, and community dialogues online as well. All our organizational partnership work, which includes coaching, conflict diagnostic tests, facilitation and conferences, have also been successfully moved online.

Because we can reach more people virtually, we imagine that to some degree we may continue to operate in this form, to the extent that it is beneficial to our clients, moving forward. We will have to see what the next few years hold!

Community Program

New York Peace Institute offers mediation and conflict coaching, free of charge, for any disputes that might arise between family members, neighbors, and co-workers living and/or working in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Our Community Program is our oldest mediation program, and, starting in March of 2020 with the onset of COVID-19, we saw a significant increase in Community cases, particularly noise complaints, as many more New Yorkers were confined to their apartments and tensions between neighbors and family members started to rise. Not all requests for assistance result in a mediation; however, for each request, our staff conducts a thorough intake and provides referrals for additional services if needed.

1,499

Total number of Community case intakes
from July 2018 to June 2020

62.5

Average number of
monthly intakes from
July 2018 to June 2020



Civil Court & Presumptive Mediation

“The mediators were very patient, extremely professional and very well detailed.” – 2019 Civil Court Mediation Participant

NYPI works in close partnership with various courts to provide mediation services as an alternative or supplement to litigation. In 2019, we handled 1178 cases, including cases from Brooklyn and Manhattan Small Claims Courts, Civil Pro Se (cases where participants represent themselves), and Supreme Court. Disputes were monetary in nature and included issues of personal property, security deposits, and breach of contract.

In February of 2019, Janet DiFiore, Chief Judge of the State of New York, issued a mandate to courts across the State to include ADR practices in all civil courts and established a protocol for presumptive mediation. Under new guidelines, parties in court are now expected to participate in mediation unless they choose to opt out or are screened out. This resulted in an increase in cases and significant changes to court protocol.

Since October 2019, we have trained over 20 new volunteer mediators in civil and housing court processes and increased mediation cases by over 20%. In addition, in partnership with Judge Cannataro, the Chief Administrative Judge of the Civil Courts of New York City, and the High-Volume Court Sub-Committee, we expanded awareness and the availability of presumptive mediation for many more New Yorkers.

+1,400

Number of cases mediated in Civil
Court program (FY2019 and FY2020)

Housing Court

Beginning in 2019, we began to expand our Housing Court mediation program (which is a part of our Civil Court program) and received an influx of cases. Issues in Housing Court range from eviction, failure to make necessary repairs, harassment, and non-payment of rent, and mediation has been extremely successful in assisting parties to resolve their disputes on their own terms.

In 2020, in the wake of COVID-19, NYPI responded to the needs of those dealing with housing conflicts, and particularly those unable to pay their rent or facing eviction. As noted, we developed and implemented the Landlord-Tenant Mediation Project, which officially launched in July 2020, in partnership with the Mayor's Office and other NYC agencies. This project provides mediation services, outside of the court system, for those struggling with housing conflicts, which has proven to be a vital service as the courts have been closed to most new cases for months. Through this project, NYPI manages case intake, provides mediation sessions, and monitors follow-up and program evaluation for cases referred from City agencies and/or other program partners.

74%

Agreement Rate in Housing-related cases (% of mediations in which an agreement is reached) FY2019

19

Average number of housing-related intakes per month prior to COVID-19 related court closures



Co-Parenting Mediation

Co-Parenting mediation provides a space where parents, who are not together as a couple, can discuss parenting topics, such as living arrangements, pick-up and drop-off times and schedules, as well as decision-making about schooling and medical needs. NYPI's co-parenting mediation are offered independent of the court system and/or prior to a case being filed in Family Court, or, in some instances, Family Court refers cases to New York Peace Institute for mediation.

Co-parenting situations became even more difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic; we had many new referrals after March 2020, and many Co-Parenting mediation participants returned to mediation to discuss changes in written agreements, including working out safe travel and new custodial arrangements.

In addition, online mediation, which allows mediation to occur via phone, computer, or text message, is a new option available to parents to help simplify and streamline the process and address the many needs brought on by the pandemic.

426

Total number of Co-Parenting case
intakes (FY2019 – FY2020)



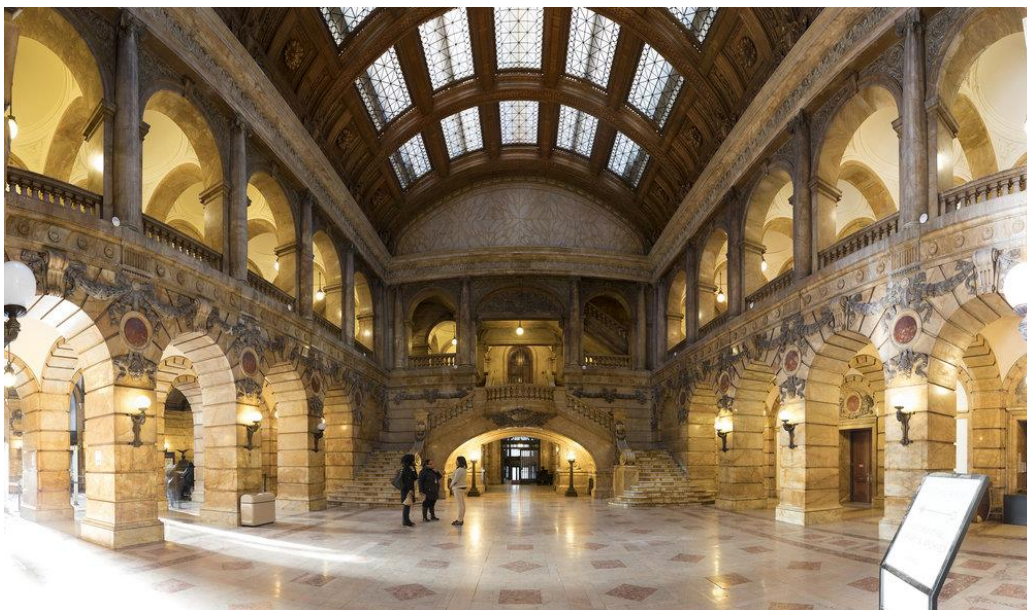
Surrogate's Court

New York Peace Institute has continued to grow one of its newest program that handles referrals from Surrogate's Court in New York County and Kings County. Mediators help settle disputes over issues related to probate, including distribution of assets, wills, estates and guardianship of individuals. NYPI's Surrogate's court program began in 2018, and has subsequently expanded each year. From July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020, we had 34 total intakes. Cases for mediation are either referred directly from Court or are self-referred, and self-referred cases mostly involve guardianship or elder care.

Parties involved in Surrogate's Court matters are often located all over the world. In March 2020, Surrogate's Court mediation moved online (as did many of our programs) because of the pandemic, which has opened new opportunities for increased use of mediation in these matters and reduced expenses for participants.

34

Surrogate Court case intakes
(FY2019 – FY2020)



Criminal Resolve Initiative

The Criminal Resolve Initiative (CRI) launched in 2019 and began as a collaboration between the Department of Probation, the New York State Unified Court System, and CDRCs in New York City. This program is focused on helping remove juvenile cases, now defined as youth under 18 for most crimes, from the Criminal Court docket so that young people don't have to go through the adult court system. Now, cases can be "adjusted" through restorative practices or prosecuted in juvenile court. The goal of CRI is to provide healing opportunities for the alleged offender and the victim. Through this new initiative, NYPI provides restorative services including conflict coaching, circles, restorative conferences, and support to victims to write impact statements. We are also partnering with Safe Horizon, the nation's leading victims' assistance organization, on this project, so victims can have access to additional services.



58

Number of individuals served through the CRI Initiative in FY2020

Special Education & Early Intervention

Special Education mediations support parents and schools in resolving disputes about the appropriate individualized educational plan (IEP) for a student with an educational disability. Mediations address many concerns, including appropriate programs, placements, services, communication, and behaviors, and are designed to rebuild trust between parents and schools.

Early Intervention mediations are designed for parents and the New York City Department of Health to address concerns about appropriate services for children aged 0 to 3 years with disabilities or developmental delays.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made difficulties faced by caretakers for a person with a disability more acute as services were limited and children were stuck at home. In 2020, we implemented Talking Circles, a restorative practice aimed at providing support system for caretakers. We supported 45 parents and educators in Talking Circles with our partners, especially INCLUDEnyc.

60%

Intake sessions held for potential
Special Education cases (FY2019-20)

215

Percent of 215 intake sessions moved to
mediation after intake (FY2019-20)

Restorative Justice

Thanks to support from the Brooklyn Community Foundation, the NYC Department of Education and City Council, in June of 2020 NYPI completed two restorative justice programs, at the Rachel Carson High School for Coastal Studies in Brooklyn and at Urban Assembly School for Global Commerce in East Harlem. Through these programs, NYPI worked to transform the school culture from punitive to restorative, and the impact was evident by: the reduced number of suspensions at the schools; the increased use of mediation, circles, and coaching sessions to manage conflict; a greater sense of community among students; and an ongoing commitment to training and supporting administrators and teachers to rely on restorative practices, instead of punitive measures, to address discipline issues.

In March of 2020, NYPI launched a similar and large-scale project in East Harlem, in partnership with NYCHA's Wagner Houses, which includes: a community-building circle series and a peer mediation training for youth; conflict resolution trainings for community leaders; the provision of conflict resolution tools; and extensive outreach efforts.

New York Peace Institute's Restorative Justice programs are in demand, and we anticipate significant growth in these areas moving forward. In addition, NYPI continues to work on alternatives to incarceration with the Brooklyn DA's office in NYC.



Training

New York Peace Institute's high-quality mediator Training Institute provides Basic and Advanced Mediation trainings, as well as an Apprenticeship Program through which we certify new mediators to practice in the NY court system. We also regularly provide in-house, specialized trainings for our roster of mediators to become experts in our different program areas.

In the spring of 2020, Chris Daly was approved by the State to become our newest State-certified instructor for mediation. Chris ran our first outdoor Basic Mediation Training Program, which was a success, and has been planning to transition programming to a virtual format as well for FY 2021.

In 2019, Ayanna Behin (pictured below) started as NYPI's new Manager of Training and Business Development and continued to provide external trainings for a diverse group of clients.

162

Mediators Trained in Basic
Mediation Skills in FY2019-20



NYPD Partnership

“All the instructors added a lot of useful information and their own experiences with mediation. They gave us the skills to deal with potentially difficult moments in a public setting.” – NYPD Training Participant

As of January 2020, New York Peace Institute had trained over 1,500 Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs), who serve as a liaison between the police and the community. The mediation, communication, and de-escalation training that New York Peace Institute has provided to the NYPD since 2015 represents one piece of the puzzle to improve police and community relations. These trainings are four-days long and include a significant number of role-plays and interactive coaching opportunities.

Our work with the NYPD has undergone an incredible shift since COVID-19. Although we have not been able to conduct as many of our training programs because of staffing challenges at the NYPD and safety protocols, we added to the services that we provide. In the spring of 2020, we implemented a shorter zoom-based training for newly promoted sergeants about mediation and de-escalation, and we also facilitated a number of conversations between the NYPD and the NYC communities in which we work.

+1,500

NYPD Neighborhood Coordination
Officers (NCOs) Trained between July
2018 and January 2020



Organizational Conflict Consulting

NYPI continues to offer trainings and organizational conflict consulting to a wide range of clients and partners. This work focuses on helping groups and workplaces diagnose conflict and provide them with the tools needed to move forward, which might include mediations, coaching, restorative circles to address harm, and/or effective communication trainings. Each engagement with an organization involves an in-depth interview process to help determine the best next steps.

NYPI worked with a wide variety of organizations from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2020, including Open Society Foundations and CUNY. This work has been especially important in light of the economic crisis that launched during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees and supervisors are under stress as they try to manage the challenges of keeping themselves and their families safe and trying to keep their businesses afloat.

68

Number of Organizational Conflict Consulting clients (FY2019 – FY2020)

PeaceRaiser

In 2019, New York Peace Institute hosted a PeaceRaiser at Hudson Terrace, with special guests, including comedians Alington Mitra, Kareem Green, and Amadeo Fusca. It was an incredibly fun and successful event, with a silent auction and street art curated by Queen of Hearts Production and a special recognition of Lisa Courtney, Statewide ADR Coordinator for New York State Unified Court System.

Because of the recent pandemic, in 2020 we held our first virtual PeaceRaiser, which consisted of a number of events via Zoom, including a night of *Comedy & Conflict: A Conversation* featuring Sarah Silverman. While we were disappointed to transition the PeaceRaiser to a remote forum, our month-long campaign and series of virtual events were a success and we raised almost \$60,000. We are so grateful to all of our donors, for the outpouring of enthusiasm and support that PeaceRaiser 2020 and New York Peace Institute received.



And a huge thank you to our sponsors and supporters!

Financials

NEW YORK PEACE INSTITUTE, INC.
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2020 AND 2019

	Year Ended June 30, 2020			Year Ended June 30, 2019		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total 2020	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total 2019
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:						
Grants revenue (Note 2C)	\$ 1,528,537	\$ -	\$ 1,528,537	\$ 1,248,645	\$ -	\$ 1,248,645
Contributions (Note 2C)	114,051	167,500	281,551	45,539	146,000	191,539
In-kind contributions (Note 2H)	367,864	-	367,864	410,990	-	410,990
Special events (net of direct expenses of \$0 in 2020 and \$19,181 in 2019) (Note 2J)	-	-	-	43,451	-	43,451
Training and other program services (Note 2G)	276,751	-	276,751	445,019	-	445,019
Miscellaneous income	6,630	-	6,630	3,102	-	3,102
Net assets released from restrictions (Note 8)	97,500	(97,500)	-	214,700	(214,700)	-
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	2,391,333	70,000	2,461,333	2,411,446	(68,700)	2,342,746
EXPENSES:						
Program Services	1,824,949	-	1,824,949	2,046,433	-	2,046,433
Supporting Services:						
Management and general	226,142	-	226,142	312,977	-	312,977
Fundraising	150,524	-	150,524	101,366	-	101,366
	376,666	-	376,666	414,343	-	414,343
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,201,615	-	2,201,615	2,460,776	-	2,460,776
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	189,718	70,000	259,718	(49,330)	(68,700)	(118,030)
Net assets - Beginning of year	868,627	32,300	900,927	917,957	101,000	1,018,957
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$ 1,058,345	\$ 102,300	\$ 1,160,645	\$ 868,627	\$ 32,300	\$ 900,927

Board of Directors 2019-20

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Hugh LaRoche, Vice Chair
Tanya Goldfarb, Secretary
Elliott Lee, Treasurer
Harleen Anand
Yxa Bazan
Simon Des-Etages
Hal Gessner
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James Boskey Memorial Foundation
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Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
Mother Cabrini Foundation
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
NYC Department of Education
Office of Safety and Youth Development
Unified Court System, Office of Court Administration

* Provided over \$ 25,000 between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2020

LET US GET IN THE MIDDLE.



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