

## Municipal Dispute Resolution Services

# Local Solutions to Local Issues

Is conflict stopping your organization from getting down to business? We can help you find a better way to build win-win solutions.

Municipal leaders face enormous challenges every day in bringing together diverse groups of people to implement projects. Unresolved conflict costs money and can cause significant damage to working relationships.

Alberta Municipal Affairs' Municipal Dispute Resolution Services team helps municipalities find a more cooperative, collaborative way to build successful resolutions – even when it seems impossible to move forward. We believe that all municipalities should be able to access innovative tools to help communities and regions resolve disputes locally.

Our voluntary programs encourage the use of processes that save money, avoid lengthy legal proceedings, and strengthen relationships.

In 1998, the **Let's Resolve** Municipal Dispute Resolution Services program was formalized to foster intermunicipal cooperation and self-directed dispute resolution. We offer several resources for municipalities, including:

- Intermunicipal Dispute Resolution Initiative
- Collaborative Governance Initiative
- Education Workshops
- Peer Mentor Network

## Intermunicipal Dispute Resolution Initiative (mediation)

Designed for those experiencing conflict with their municipal neighbours, the Intermunicipal Dispute Resolution Initiative encourages the use of dispute resolution alternatives rather than referring the issue to a higher authority.

The service is accessible at any time, not just when disputes become challenging or the Municipal Government Board requires mediation

We work with municipalities to:

- Determine the best way to resolve a dispute
- Ensure prerequisites are met to begin the process
- Select a mediator from a list of qualified professionals
- Access funding to cover a portion of costs
- Design dispute resolution training programs

## Collaborative Governance Initiative

The Collaborative Governance Initiative helps local governments explore better options for managing conflict and supports them in designing new systems for their organization.

Collaborative conflict management has proven to reduce tension within workplace relationships, while improving communication between council, staff, and ratepayers.

The Initiative is best suited to:

- public policy disputes
- municipal administration disputes
- organizational and administrative conflicts
- contractual / employment disputes
- intermunicipal cooperation protocols

## Education Workshops

Municipal Dispute Resolution Service offers dozens of workshops in negotiation, public input, and workplace conflict management taught by experienced dispute resolution practitioners.

When municipal leaders, elected officials, administrative personnel, and other groups who work with municipalities learn about alternatives to the traditional rights-based system, these new skills benefit all aspects of municipal government.

## Peer Mentor Network

The Peer Mentor Network puts municipal leaders in touch with a provincial network of respected peers who have real-world experience in resolving tough municipal issues.

Peer Mentors offer advice, suggest alternatives, and provide short-term assistance to help you resolve conflict.

Mentors are chosen by the Municipal Dispute Resolution Services Advisory Committee, receive training, and are appointed on a voluntary basis for two years. More information can be found at <http://www.peernetwork.ca>

## Municipal Dispute Resolution Services

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