

**Media Contacts:**

Michael C. Clark  
American Arbitration Association  
+1.212.716.3978  
[clarkm@adr.org](mailto:clarkm@adr.org)

Laura Simpson  
JConnelly  
+1.973.713.8834  
[lsimpson@jconnelly.com](mailto:lsimpson@jconnelly.com)

**AAA-ICDR Foundation® Responds to Need for Conflict Resolution Amid COVID-19  
Pandemic & Racial Injustice**

*Foundation Awards Over \$655,700 in 2021 Grant Cycle*

**NEW YORK, N.Y.—April 14, 2021**—The American Arbitration Association-International Centre for Dispute Resolution Foundation® (AAA-ICDR Foundation) has awarded \$655,732 in funding to support programs addressing COVID-19 and racial injustice.

The Foundation's 2021 grant cycle focused on initiatives seeking to:

- Make alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes more accessible and generally available, or utilize them to improve traditional options for resolving disputes in the U.S. justice system in the wake of COVID-19.
- Create innovative and additional ways to engage citizens in meaningful dialogue with one another and/or with government authorities, including the police, to address longstanding racial discrimination in the U.S., such as differences in the use of force in interactions with people in communities on the basis of race.

The Foundation's 2021 grant cycle featured a new opportunity to award grants of up to \$250,000 each to programs addressing responses to the above. For more information about the 2021 grant cycle, please visit <https://www.aaaicdrfoundation.org/grants>.

“During this crisis, professionals in the field of conflict resolution can play a vital role in helping all communities across the country by expanding access to ADR processes and services,” said **James R. Jenkins, Chair of the AAA-ICDR Foundation**. “We are proud to support initiatives at a time when they can do the most good through projects that serve those most harmed by the pandemic, or that promote community engagement, dialogue and resolution of historical differences in the administration of justice in the USA on the basis of race.”



The Foundation awarded grants to the following initiatives:

- **Resolution Systems Institute’s Holistic Online Program for Evictions (HOPE) Mediation Program:** The Foundation has given \$156,000 to the HOPE Mediation Program, designed to prepare self-represented tenants for mediation by giving them an overview of the court process, and educating them on what they can expect and what resources are available. Tenants fighting eviction will receive assistance from Resolution Systems Institute’s Eviction Program Coordinator via Zoom or phone to be directed to proper resources. Legal aid and financial counseling partners also meet with tenants digitally prior to mediation, and the program will administer online mediation between tenants and landlords. The Foundation’s grant money will be used in part to develop guidance about eviction mediation, including a robust evaluation of the program’s first year, to more jurisdictions that can use the HOPE Mediation Program as a template.
- **Arizona State University Foundation’s Sentinel Event Review of Police Use of Force & Vulnerable Populations:** The AAA-ICDR Foundation has granted \$250,000 to the Arizona State University Foundation to convene a conference for law enforcement agencies and state policymakers to explain how Sentinel Event Reviews (SERs) would benefit their agencies and the criminal justice system as a whole. Once law enforcement agencies are on board, up to four incidents of police use of excessive force will be selected for the review process, with each SER resulting in its own final report detailing findings and recommendations for systemic improvements. The reports will then be shared with the agencies involved in the reviewed incidents and the public at large—and restorative justice sessions will be held for those involved in each incident, based on volunteer participation. Ultimately, the goal is to be able to propose legislation for SERs to review police uses of force.
- **The RAND Corporation’s Creating Dialogue via a Tabletop Exercise to Improve Community-Police Relations:** The Foundation has awarded \$249,732 to this project facilitating a tabletop exercise testing police and community emergency responses in three communities. After-action and evaluation reports will be distributed in every community, and research briefs based on the final reports will be used to recommend improvements as needed. The project will also create and disseminate an online toolkit hosted on a RAND Corporation webpage to support other communities wishing to facilitate these tabletop exercises.

The AAA-ICDR Foundation has awarded more than \$2.8 million since its inception in 2015. To learn more about the Foundation’s mission to fund high-quality, innovative programs which advance arbitration, mediation, and other ADR processes, visit <https://www.aaaicdrfoundation.org/about-us>.

### **About the AAA-ICDR Foundation**

The American Arbitration Association-International Centre for Dispute Resolution Foundation (AAA-ICDR Foundation) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that is able to solicit donations and provide grants to fund a range of worthy causes that promote the Foundation's wide-reaching mission, which is to support the use and improvement of dispute resolution processes in the United States and internationally.

Its focus includes fostering measures that reduce potential escalation, manage and resolve conflicts; increasing access to justice in and through alternative dispute resolution; and encouraging collaborative processes to resolve public conflicts.

The Foundation is a separate 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization from the AAA®, and the Foundation is not involved in any way in the oversight, administration or decision making of the AAA-ICDR® cases or in the maintenance of the AAA-ICDR's various rosters of arbitrators and mediators.

For more information on the AAA-ICDR Foundation, please visit: [www.aaaicdrfoundation.org](http://www.aaaicdrfoundation.org).

###