

Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution Advisory Council

April 19, 2022

Senator Kiffmeyer, Chair
State Government Finance and Policy and
Elections Committee
3103 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Representative Michael Nelson, Chair
State Government Finance and Elections
Committee
585 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Sen. Kiffmeyer and Rep. Nelson,

We reach out to you today to express our support for the current budget increase request made by the Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution (OCDR) included in the Governor's Budget Proposal. OCDR, which is housed within the Department of Administration, has repeatedly been a key partner for State, County, City, and Tribal Nation leadership as they have worked to develop solutions to contentious public issues. For example, OCDR recently designed and facilitated a collaborative problem-solving process to develop the State-Local Government Agreement that is required under the National Opioid Settlement. OCDR's process led to a historic agreement between the State, Counties, and Cities which ensures that Minnesota will receive the full nearly \$300 million of settlement dollars for which the state is eligible. This settlement is a top priority for counties, cities, and the State as they struggle to address the still-raging opioid epidemic. The agreement would not have been possible without OCDR's services.

Because of their ability to successfully help the government resolve contentious public issues, OCDR is overwhelmed with requests for services. At this time of growing division, it is essential that Minnesota's Cities, Counties, State, and Tribal governments are able to access these important problem-solving resources. The request to add an additional position to the office is a wise investment as the cost of contracted mediators, litigation, and unresolved conflict for even one conflict far exceeds the cost of an additional staff person who can assist the government in resolving multiple conflicts each year as well as build government's capacity to effectively collaborate and manage conflict. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Select Members of the Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution Advisory Council:

Margaret Anderson Kelliher

Kim Norton

Marian Johnson

Kathy Quick

Tadd Johnson

Julie Ring

Sheila Kiscaden

Dave Unmacht

Roger Moe

Cc: Members of the House and Senate State Government Finance Committees