

November 15, 2010

Dear Community Mediation Service Supporter:

As you may be aware, deep cuts to the City of Vancouver budget have included the loss of Community Mediation Services (CMS) as a government-based program. The good news is that the program will continue as a nonprofit, under the same name and hopes to offer even more valuable service to the community.

There will, however, be a short period of service interruption, while we wind down the City/County program and prepare the new nonprofit for service.

Please be aware that we are no longer accepting new mediation case referrals at this time so that we may focus on closing current cases and winding down the program by November 24, 2010.

We expect the new nonprofit will be open for service in January, 2011.

To minimize the impact on you and potential customers, we will return phone calls during this transition time between the programs, although we will not be able to provide mediation services. Please be aware that our staffing and hours will be reduced during this transition time.

The new nonprofit program will continue to be housed in the City of Vancouver's Esther Short Building for the time being and will still have the same phone number: (360) 619-1140.

We value your support and referrals to this program. We will keep you updated as the new program develops and welcome your assistance in the creation of a dynamic and thriving community mediation program.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns,

Sincerely,

Nancy Pionk

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Budget impacts on Community Mediation Services – A message from Program Manager Nancy Pionk

Dear Neighborhood Leaders:

As you are probably aware, the City of Vancouver is undergoing significant change. On January 26, the City eliminated 66 positions including 44 layoffs to balance the 2010 budget (currently a \$6 million deficit) and to lay the groundwork for sweeping changes in 2011-2012 to address a projected \$10-12 million deficit. Several employees were laid off in all city departments, including police and fire departments.

In addition to these immediate layoffs, we learned that Community Mediation Services will likely be eliminated from the City by the end of 2010 (possibly as soon as September 30). [This budget timeline](#) will hopefully allow CMS to find a new home in the community, either as a stand alone non-profit or combining with another organization.

Our vision is that CMS can emerge from this challenge as an even more effective force in the community than it has ever been. We currently have continued funding from court surcharge fees and two small grants. CMS still has a highly-skilled cadre of experienced mediators who continue to make a positive difference in the lives of people in this community. We believe that individuals and organizations in the community may well support this change with funds as well as volunteer commitment.

Within this new structure, CMS will have an opportunity to explore a whole variety of mediation, facilitation and training options that other non-profit mediation centers offer in communities across the country. We appreciate the support of your neighborhood and hope that we will eventually be able to provide additional services to support the peace and livability in your neighborhood. CMS staff is currently drafting a strategic plan to map out this initiative and contemplates creating a steering group and a stakeholders' advisory group as part of this effort. Neighborhoods are important stakeholders for CMS and we will be including opportunities for you to provide input about your needs and interests in the process.

During this process, CMS will continue to provide the quality neighborhood and landlord tenant mediation services it is known for.

We will keep you informed about the progress of this initiative. If you have any questions or ideas and suggestions, I would love to hear from you. You can contact me at (360) 619-1148 or nancy.pionk@ci.vancouver.wa.us.

All the best,

Nancy

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