



# **2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

AUGUST 10, 2022



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# **PART 1:** **WHO WE ARE**

**Your first contact when you need positive communication,  
peaceful resolutions, improved relationships.**

# ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

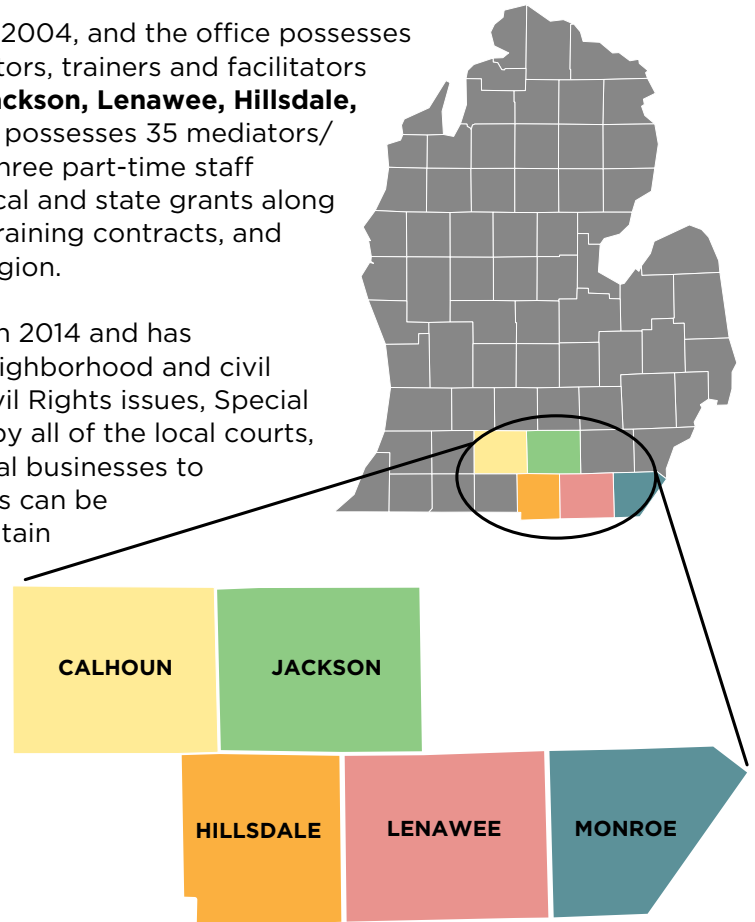


Southeastern Dispute Resolution Services was originally created in 1994 as Michigan court system's Community Dispute Resolution Program began to expand. As the CDRP grew to 26 community mediation centers around the state, the original service plan was to provide outreach and training to interested individuals within each county to help solve conflict where they reside.

The current leadership team as been in place since 2004, and the office possesses a dedicated, professional and skills stable of mediators, trainers and facilitators who are available throughout the service region: **Jackson, Lenawee, Hillsdale, Monroe,** and, as of 2021, **Calhoun Counties.** SEDRS possesses 35 mediators/facilitators, seven trainers, two full-time staff, and three part-time staff persons. The office is funded through a series of local and state grants along with a diverse series of fee for services contracts, training contracts, and fee for services provided throughout the service region.

The office became a stand alone non-profit entity in 2014 and has continued to blossom. Services grew from basic neighborhood and civil court disputes to complex probate court issues, Civil Rights issues, Special Education issues, and more. SEDRS is called upon by all of the local courts, many local attorneys, local school districts, and local businesses to help solve conflicts and provide training so conflicts can be prevented. The volunteers and staff of SEDRS maintain a high level of training and professionalism to keep up with not only the demand and growth of the office, but also with the sophistication of the parties the office deals with. SEDRS is quickly becoming a leader in conflict and dispute management for Southeast Michigan.

SEDRS is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.



## Personnel

### STAFF

Marc Stanley, JD, MPP  
*Executive Director*

Christy Johnson  
*Executive Administrator*

Tiffany Stanley, LLM, PHR  
*Operations Manager*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ben Rock *Co-chair*  
Mallory Martin *Co-chair*  
Hannah Ball  
Thomas Burke  
Dr. Maria Cudowska  
Laurie Sexton  
Karen Sun

**3** full-time employees



**7** board members



**10** contracted workers

## OUR MEDIATORS



From 2020 through 2021, SEDRS worked with 52 volunteer mediators for a total of 3,254 mediation hours. Additionally, our volunteers were involved in over 1,071 hours of additional training, including advanced trainings and working with update training. SEDRS also received many hours donated for attending meetings, planning sessions, presentations, and clerical work.

**52**  
volunteer  
mediators



**3,254**  
mediation  
hours

**1,071**  
training  
hours



Value of in-kind  
volunteer time donated:  
**\$648,882**



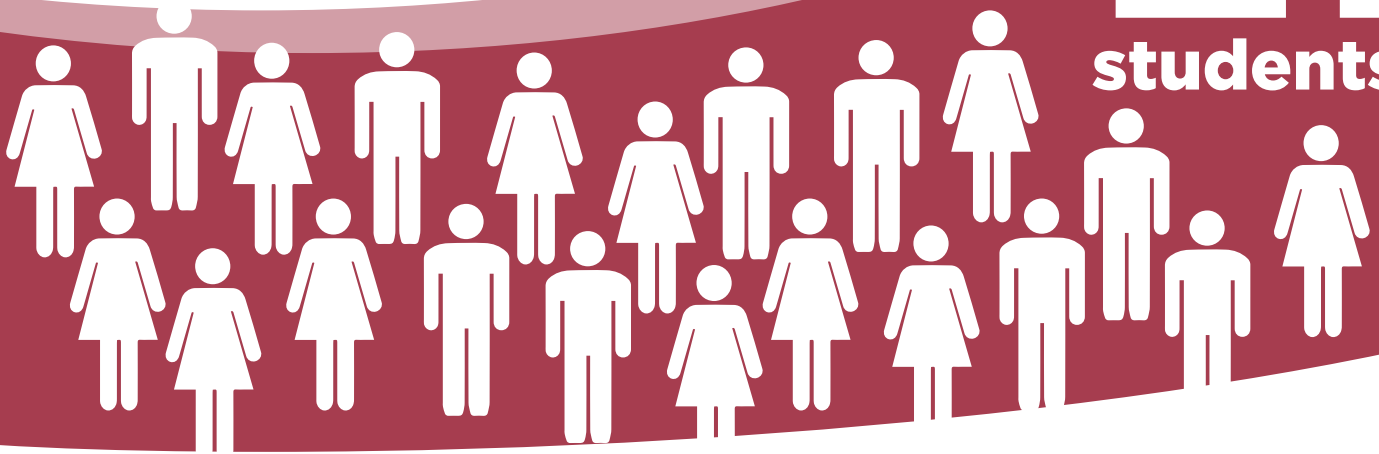
SEDRS Externship program became a strength of the Organization during the pandemic. SEDRS continued to present and recruit students from MSU College of Law and Toledo Law School while also adding University of Detroit Mercy to the growing number of institutions that students choose the agency as an externship destination. During the pandemic, SEDRS hosted 21 students through a formal Externship process or a more informal internship process as well as hosting undergraduate students from Alma College as well.

The Professional Development process was enhanced by Operations Maanger Tiffany Stanley. With her background in human resources and professional development, Ms. Stanley standardized and created a model onboarding process used for all students and volunteers. The students must all become certified mediators and complete a laborious five-week onboarding process in which they learn SEDRS programming, communication process, mediation process and internal paperwork processes. The students are assigned to a mentor mediator and observe and co-mediate with that mentor for several weeks. The students also must attend weekly debriefing sessions so they can discuss cases, observations, new scenarios, problems and mediation techniques.

SEDRS also implemented a weekly professional development speakers bureau, where ADR, legal, judicial, academic and peace keeping professionals from around the world come to share with our volunteer and students. SEDRS works to create a strong foundation in problem solving, as well as exposing the students and volunteers to other experts in the field of ADR and problem solving.

**In 2022, SEDRS already has 17 students signed up to participate with the externship process.**

**21**  
students



## SEDRS Externship Students

### University of Detroit

#### Mercy Law:

Emily Artzberger  
Amir Gareiw  
Meagan Misener  
Navi Bains  
Alexandra Rehill  
Margaret Pettipas  
Fiza Sharma

#### MSU College of Law

Ben Mahoney  
Victoria Hansen  
Bryan Ring  
Anna Henson  
Tori Orent  
Catrina Crane

#### Toledo Law School:

Andrew Brown  
Samantha Ayers  
Nicole Cote  
Brigette Schultz  
Michael LaValley  
Stephen Pietron

#### Alma College:

Bryce Kita  
Prathitha Nath



**PART 2:**

# **WHAT WE DO: MEDIATION**



## WHAT IS MEDIATION?

Mediation is a process in which two or more people involved in a dispute meet in a confidential setting, and with the guidance of professionally trained mediators, attempt to work out a mutually-agreeable solution to their problem. Mediation allows all parties involved to explain their view of the situation in a non-threatening, neutral environment. Mediators have no decision-making authority, and they do not render case evaluations. Instead, they are trained to assist the parties themselves in achieving resolution.

Each year, over 10,000 Michigan citizens who might otherwise bring a dispute before a judge or magistrate will resolve their disputes through mediation services supported by the Community Dispute Resolution Program (CDRP).

Mediation is effective across a broad array of dispute types, including merchant/consumer, landlord/tenant, professional/client, and neighborhood disputes. Increasingly, parties are turning to CDRP centers for the resolution of more complex matters, including complaints arising under the Americans with Disabilities Act, contested adult guardianship matters, juveniles petitioned into probate court, EEOC complaints, and disputes between farmers and federal agencies. Several courts and centers are exploring mediating issues that citizens are attempting to resolve by obtaining a personal protection order.

**SEDRS is guided by the principles of Positive Communication, Peaceful Resolutions, and Improved Relationships**





# OUR PROGRAMS



SEDRS offers a number of mediation and facilitation services across our service areas. These can include general mediation as well as more specialized programs such as:

-  **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INDEPENDENT FACILITATION**

In BHIF, an impartial, third-party mediator works in collaboration with an individual receiving behavioral health services to help guide their care planning process.
-  **EVICTION DIVERSION PROGRAM**

Eviction Diversion Programs work with landlords and tenants to create negotiated conditional dismissals to court cases.
-  **PERMANENCY PLANNING**

Permanency Planning Mediation facilitates discussions related to appropriate short- and long-term placement and stability for minor children.
-  **SPECIAL EDUCATION MEDIATION**

Special Education mediation and facilitation helps parties develop the best intervention plan or educational program for special needs students.
-  **ELDER CARE MEDIATION**

Eldercare mediation engages older adults, their families, and caregivers in facilitated decision-making processes to resolve conflicts and make collaborative decisions that support the older adult's need for dignity and self-governance.
-  **PEACE CIRCLES**

Peace Circles are a versatile, informal restorative practice that teach patience, respect, safety, and calm.
-  **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

Restorative Conferencing is a structured process where a highly trained, neutral third party facilitates a meeting between an offender and (typically) a victim.
-  **ON-SITE/COURT MEDIATION**

Mediation may be offered or ordered through the court system. Examples of cases that might use mediation include small claims, domestic, guardianship, and child protection disputes.



### Evolution of the Eviction Diversion Program

The Jackson County Eviction Diversion program has been a highlight of SEDRS services since 2013. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this program took center stage.

In Michigan, during the initial height of the pandemic, the local court systems were closed. The courts system then moved to a previously unused remote process, incorporating Zoom video conferencing instead of in-person hearings. Thus the local courts struggled to find ways to deal with a back log of cases and hosting new cases.

Also during that time, the Michigan Supreme Court changed court rules relating to how landlord/tenant matters were to have hearings scheduled and how they were to be handled. These new landlord/tenant cases created a vast strain on court staffing and court hearing docket time. One service delivery system that we found successful in addressing these challenges was transforming the SEDRS eviction diversion in-person process into a remote hearing process for all landlord/tenant pre-trial hearings. Beginning in July of 2020, SEDRS began hosting pre-trial landlord tenant matters for Jackson, Hillsdale, and Monroe Counties.

This process created a new system for SEDRS, the Housing Authority, Legal Services, tenants, and landlords to come together and try to resolve housing issues for the Courts. This process allowed for SEDRS to host 2-to-4 cases every 20 minutes for up to 30 hours a week for the local court systems. In this program, SEDRS provides four Eviction Diversion Navigators, six lead mediators, and four-to-ten legal students who all work within the EDP process each week. This new system hosts more than 100 eviction pre-trial hearings each week. This new service system also created a 500% case load increase for SEDRS during the pandemic.

**This new virtual hearing system allowed SEDRS to effectively mediation up to 360 cases per week.**





## Evolution of the BHIF Program

SEDRS's Behavioral Health Independent Facilitation (BHIF) is a program based on "person-centered planning." In BHIF, an impartial, third-party mediator works in collaboration with an individual receiving behavioral health services to guide their care planning process. This is a creative, adaptable process that honors the individual's preferences, choices, and abilities.

The independent facilitator actively explores both the full range of resources immediately available to the individual and resources that are or may be made available in the broader community. The facilitator is not part of any system that provides health services, and therefore has no financial interest in the outcome of the process.

An Independent Facilitator:

- Ensures fewer disruptions, conflicts, and crises during the planning process
- Shares the responsibility of resource allocation and decision-making with unbiased information on available services, community resources, and options.
- Helps build, repair, and maintain trust in relationships

Over the past two years, SEDRS's BHIF programs in Jackson and Hillsdale Counties helped spearhead an expansion in and creation of a new service system. SEDRS worked with leaders of the Michigan Community Mediation Association (MCMA) to draft a pilot program with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). With this pilot program now fully funded, any recipient of mental health services in the state of Michigan can request a mediator to help resolve conflict regarding or arising from their service plan implementation.





## Individuals Served

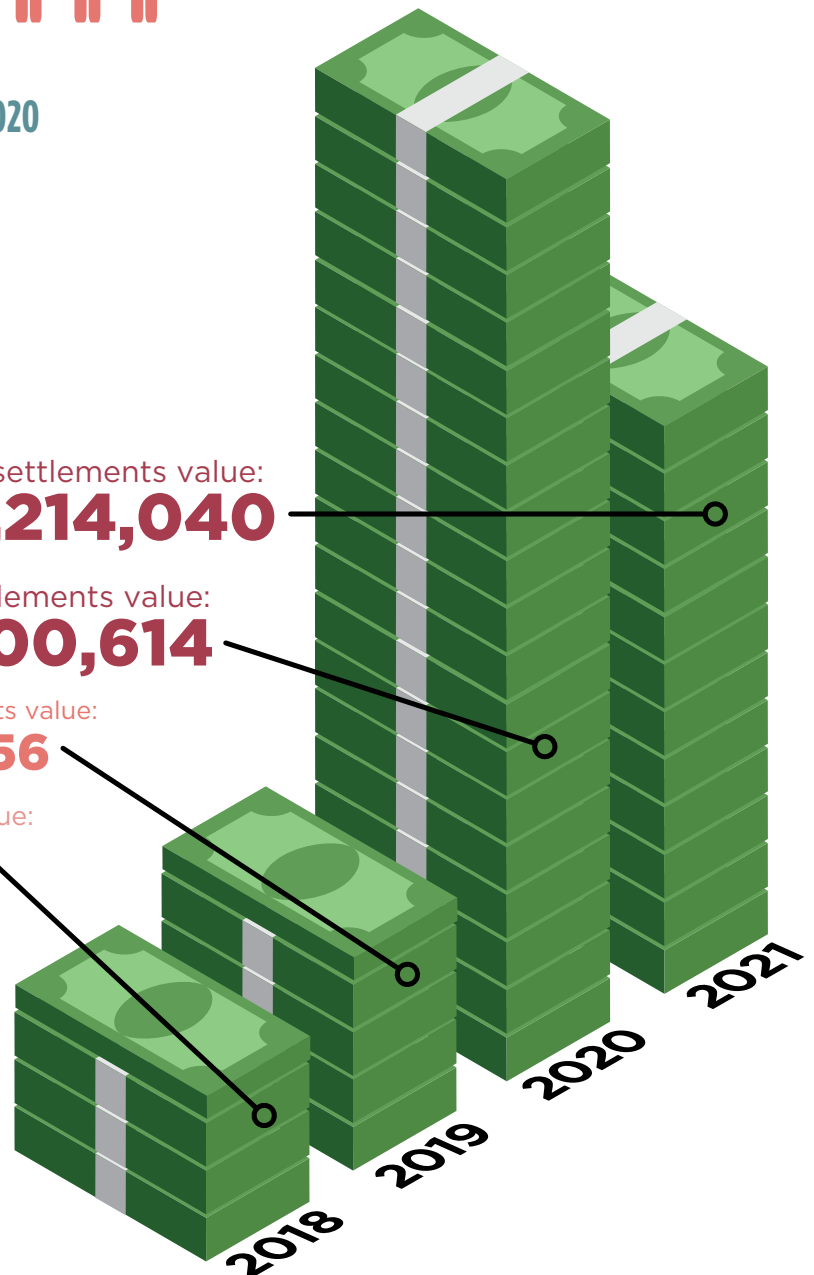


2021 settlements value:  
**\$1,214,040**

2020 settlements value:  
**\$1,900,614**

2019 settlements value:  
**\$425,456**

2018 settlements value:  
**\$372,365**



## Negotiated Settlements

From 2012 to 2021, SEDRS and its volunteers have negotiated almost

**\$6.3 million**

in agreements within the service region.

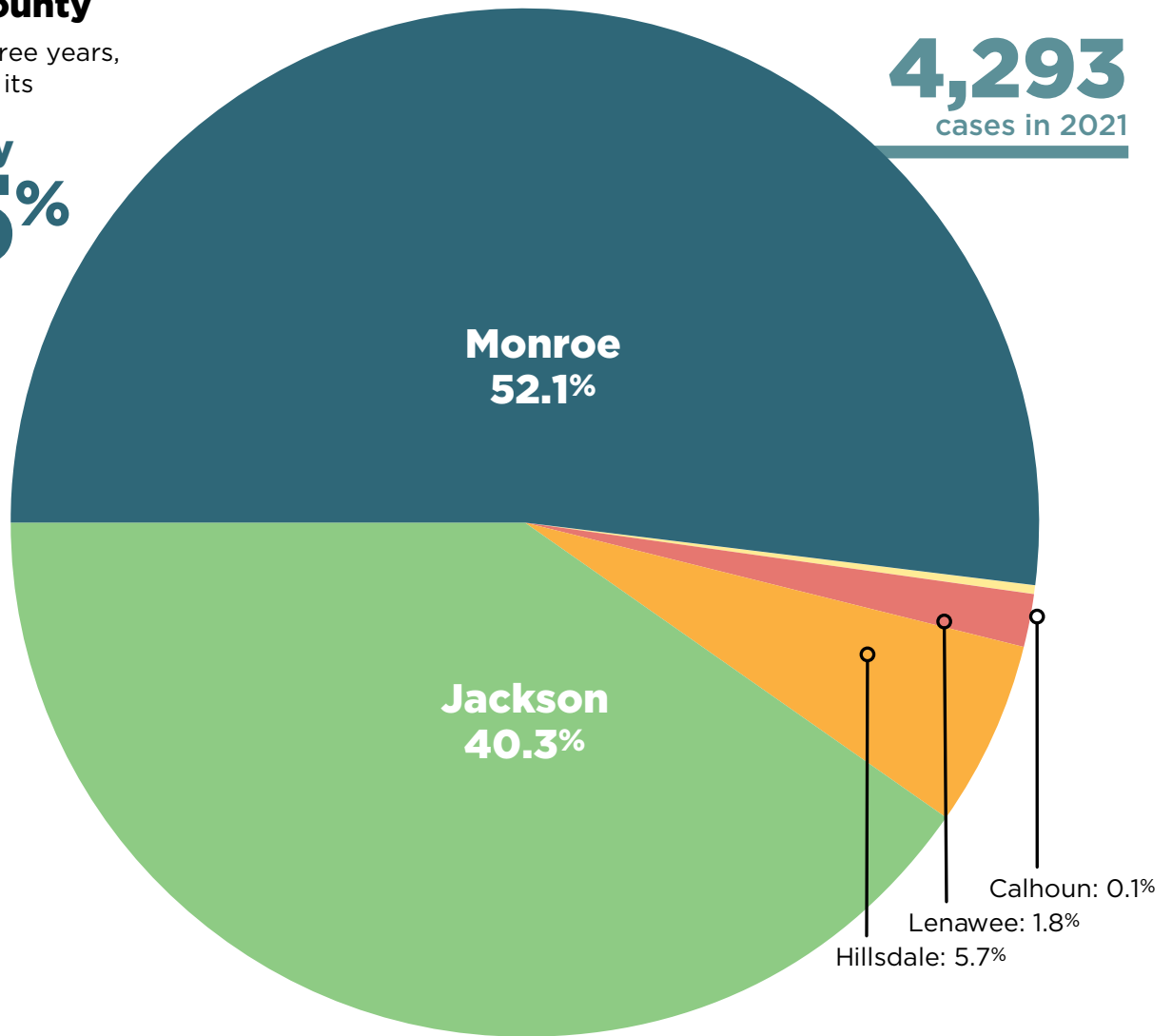


## Cases, by county

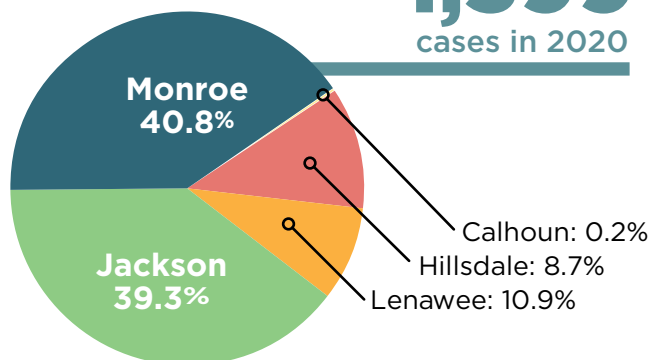
Over the past three years, SEDRS has seen its case load

increase by **535%**

**4,293**  
cases in 2021

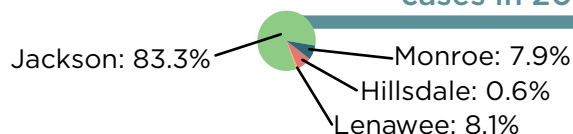


**1,599**  
cases in 2020



**803**

cases in 2019

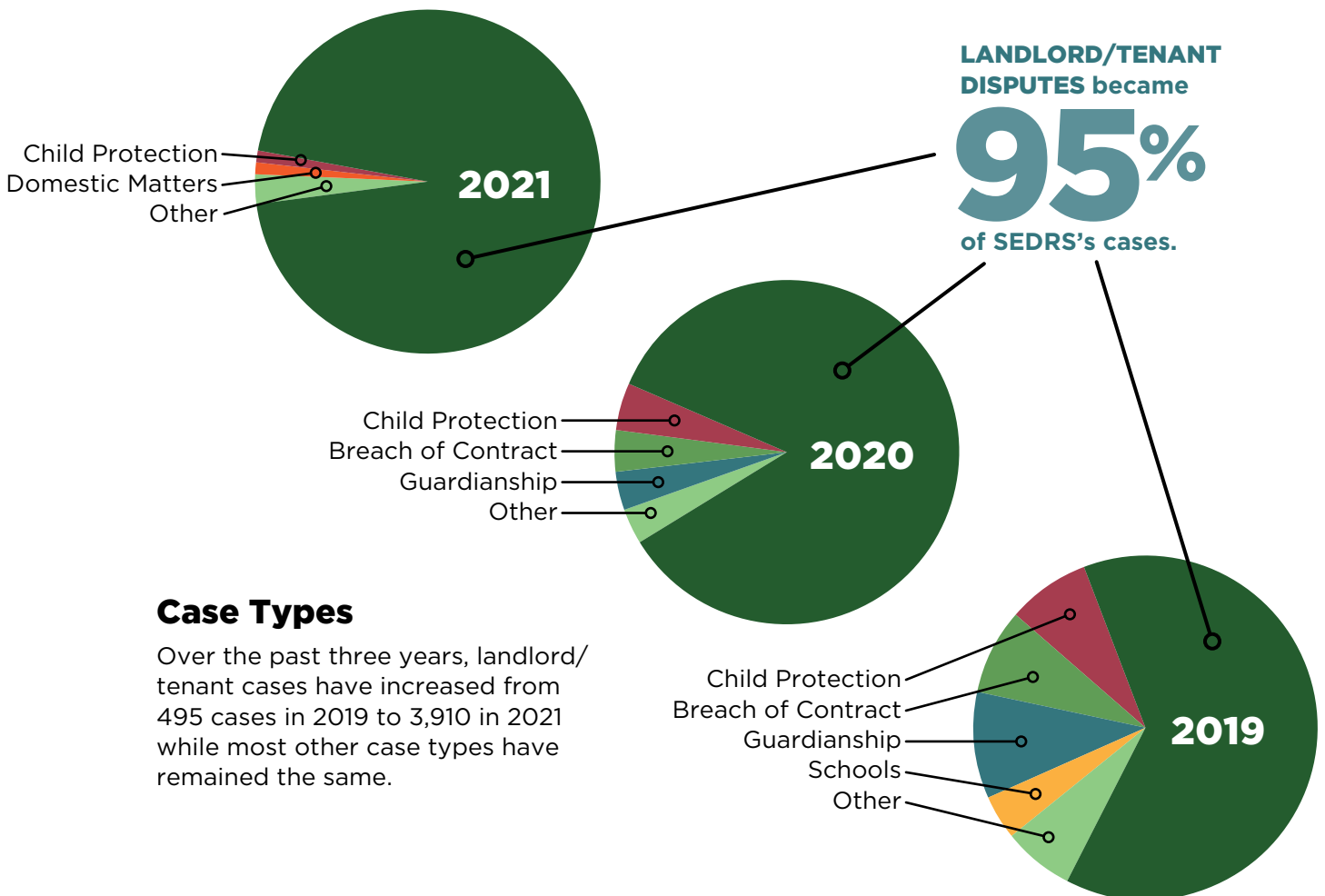
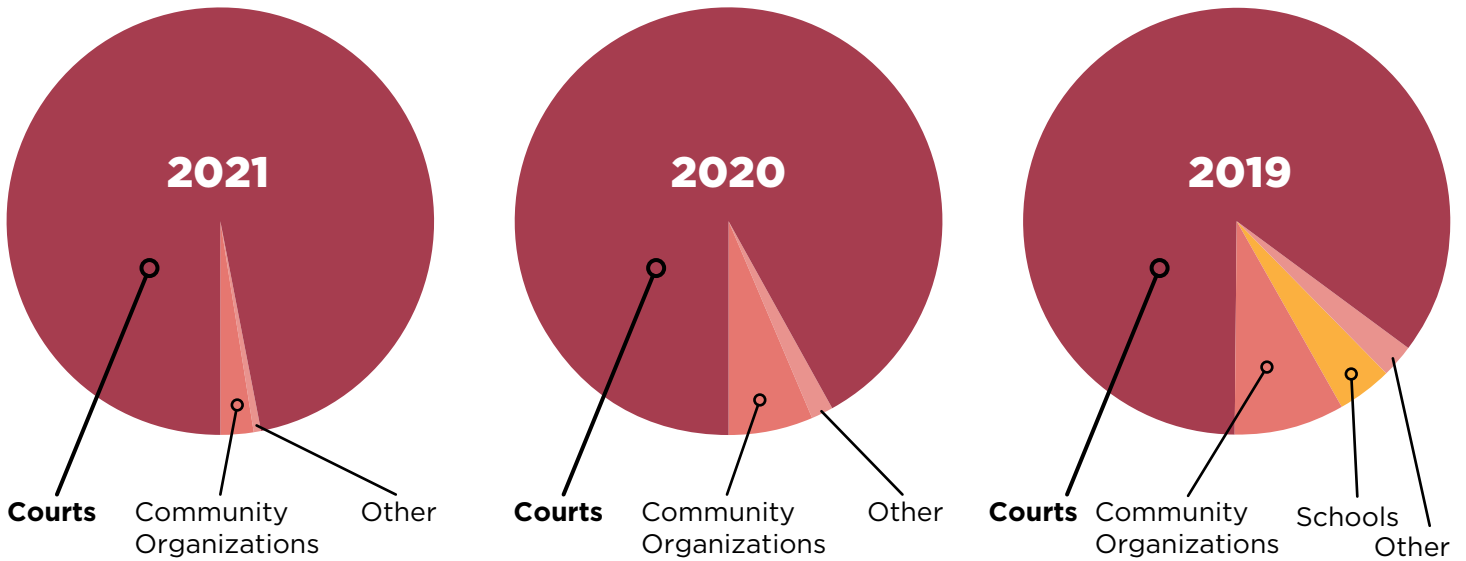


Cases from all counties in the SEDRS service region have increased, but the largest growth has been from Jackson and Monroe counties. The case load from Jackson County **more than tripled** from 2020 to 2021, while cases from Monroe County **quadrupled**.



## Case Referral Sources

With schools and many other community organizations operating at a diminished capacity during the pandemic, cases from the court system have grown as SEDRS's primary referral source.



## Case Types

Over the past three years, landlord/tenant cases have increased from 495 cases in 2019 to 3,910 in 2021 while most other case types have remained the same.



**PART 3:**

# **WHAT WE DO: TRAINING**



SEDRS offers dynamic, interactive training programs for mediators. More than just lecture, it offers participants the opportunity to study and experience new methods for achieving resolution. The training includes learning practical skills, employing immediate “hands-on” experience when applying the principles of successful mediation. SEDRS offers the following training programs:

## General Mediation Training

- General Civil Mediation Training
- Non Verbal Communication Seminar

## Elder Care Mediation Training

- Elder Law Mediation Seminar

## Permanency Planning Training

- CPS/Permanency Planning Mediation Program

## Peace Circle & Restorative Practices Training

- Condensed Peace Circle and Restorative Practices Overview
- Peace Circle Facilitator Training
- Basic Restorative Practices and Introduction to Circles
- Restorative Justice Conferencing Seminar
- Peace Circle Facilitator Train the Trainer
- Peer to Peer Mediation Training







**PART 4:**

# **HOW WE DO IT: FUNDING**

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT



Southeastern Dispute Resolution Services is funded, in part, by the State Court Administrative Office. The Community Dispute Resolution Program was established in 1988 by Public Act 260. SeDRS started providing mediation services on its own in 2015. During that year, SeDRS has received funding from the State based on core cases from the previous year.

Income Source	2019	2020	2021
MI State Court Administrative Office Grant	\$76,174	\$108,404	\$128,472
Hillsdale County Grant	n/a	\$11,670	\$18,950
MI Office of Special Education	\$74,800	\$42,550	\$15,115
Michigan State Housing Development Association c/o Emergency Solutions Grant subcontract via the Community Action Agency	n/a	\$57,026	\$114,117
Behavioral Health Independent Facilitation Program	n/a	\$4,526	\$1,460
Elder Care Program	\$7,000	n/a	n/a
Landlord/Tenant	\$17,933	\$13,595	n/a
Training	\$8,709	\$2,873	\$1,000
Contracts	\$5,000	\$5,000	n/a
Fees	\$5,420	\$2,630	\$3,301
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$195,036</b>	<b>\$248,274</b>	<b>\$282,415</b>

Expenses	2019	2020	2021
Payroll	\$107,282	\$138,271	\$144,169
Outside Contractors	\$54,928	\$61,289	\$97,012
Administrative	\$31,598	\$26,574	\$18,539
Training	\$3,220	\$2,805	\$2,268
Office space	\$5,226	\$5,376	\$4,176
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$202,254</b>	<b>\$234,315</b>	<b>\$266,164</b>

<b>DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>-\$7,218</b>	<b>\$13,959</b>	<b>\$16,251</b>
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SOUTHEASTERN  
**DISPUTE RESOLUTION**  
SERVICES

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