

# COMMUNITY MEDIATION TASK GROUP'S WORKBOOK

## BACKGROUND, CLARIFICATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS AND REQUESTS

- 1) Members of the **Community Mediation Task Group**, include people from community mediation programs and from community conferencing programs. While we recognize that there are differences in these programs/processes, because of the **similarities**, we request that you work together, at least to begin the Summit, profit from each other's wisdom, and deal with the program differences later.
- 2) The **goal** of your **Community Mediation Task Group** here at the Summit, which we are calling **Group A2**, is to **design a year-long (or less) process for a second group**, which we are calling Group B2.
- 3) **Group B2**, is the **statewide group of representatives from Maryland's community mediation programs, to be convened after this Summit** through the Maryland Association of Community Mediation Centers (MACMC), who will collaboratively develop and implement a basically uniform system of evaluation for Maryland's community mediation programs.
- 4) **Group A2 is designing a proposed process for Group B2's collaborative work. Group A2 is also giving Group B2 its best advice/ recommendations for each step of the process.**
- 5) Maryland's community mediation programs strive to meet a **"9 Point Model"** (copies of which are in your notebooks) that generally incorporates the **goals** of the community mediation programs.
- 6) The **goal of evaluating Maryland's community mediation programs** is to help the centers:
  - Understand their programs;
  - Improve their programs; and
  - Capture the benefits of their programs.
- 7) **MACRO** has the additional **goal** of being able to **talk to the Maryland Legislature** about the benefits of community mediation in Maryland **to sustain and increase monetary support** for strengthening current and creating new community mediation programs.
- 8) **MACRO** has funds to bring in needed resources as the community mediation centers' evaluation system is being set up (consultants, software development, possibly a centralized dump/crunch/ analysis function), however, afterwards, the system will probably have to be absorbed and maintained by the centers or MACMC with little or no additional funding.

## **PART I: THURSDAY AM TASKS**

**(TASK ONE)** REVIEW THE FOLLOWING DRAFT 5 PROCESS STEPS AS A POSSIBLE PROCESS FOR GROUP B2 TO FOLLOW TO HELP IT DEVELOP A BASICALLY UNIFORM SYSTEM OF EVALUATION FOR MARYLAND COMMUNITY MEDIATION PROGRAMS.

### **DRAFT 5 PROCESS STEPS**

STEP 1. Group B2 should determine what it wants/needs to know about Maryland's community mediation programs. It should also determine what other Maryland stakeholders (community organizations, referral sources, the legislature, etc.) want/need to know about Maryland community mediation programs. Considering priorities and practicality, Group B2 should reach a consensus about what information all Maryland community mediation centers are going to collect in order to understand, improve and capture the benefits of their programs.

STEP 2. Group B2 should gather information about how community mediation programs, both locally and nationally, are already collecting the information Group B2 wants to collect.

STEP 3. Group B2 should reach a consensus about the methods and instruments all Maryland community mediation centers will use to collect the desired information. In order to create a basically uniform system, Group B2 must address technology and compatibility difficulties inherent in the different centers' information collection systems.

STEP 4. Group B2 should reach consensus about how Maryland community mediation programs are going to extract, analyze and use the desired information once it has been collected. It should determine whether this needs to be done centrally, or on a center by center basis.

STEP 5. Group B2 should reach consensus about how Maryland community mediation programs are going to sustain their evaluation system to ensure that it continues to be useful?

**(THURSDAY AM CONTINUED)**

**(TASK TWO)** KEEPING IN MIND THE NECESSITY FOR PRACTICALITY, IMPROVE UPON THE DRAFT PROCESS YOU (GROUP A2) THINK GROUP B2 SHOULD FOLLOW.

## **PART II: THURSDAY PM TASK**

**(TASK THREE)** TAKING ONE STEP AT A TIME, GO THROUGH YOUR IMPROVED DRAFT PROCESS STEPS FOR GROUP B2, AND BASED UPON YOUR EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE, GIVE GROUP B2 YOUR BEST ADVICE/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH STEP OF THE IMPROVED PROCESS. FOR EXAMPLE, TELL GROUP B2 WHAT INFORMATION YOU (GROUP A2) RECOMMEND A GENERIC GOOD COMMUNITY MEDIATION PROGRAM COLLECT FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES. TELL GROUP B2 WHAT INSTRUMENTS YOU (GROUP A2) RECOMMEND USING, TO CREATE A DOABLE, USEFUL SYSTEM OF EVALUATION, ETC. THE MORE SPECIFIC YOU ARE, THE MORE HELPFUL YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE.

### **PART III: FRIDAY AM TASKS**

**(TASK FOUR)** FINISH GIVING GROUP B2 GROUP A2'S BEST ADVICE/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH PROCESS STEP.

**(TASK FIVE)** IF YOU FINISH TASK FOUR, BRAINSTORM ABOUT OTHER RESOURCES THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO GROUP B2 AS IT UNDERTAKES ITS WORK. DISCUSS WHAT MIGHT GO WRONG DURING GROUP B2'S COLLABORATIVE PROCESS OR AFTERWARDS, AND INDICATE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES.