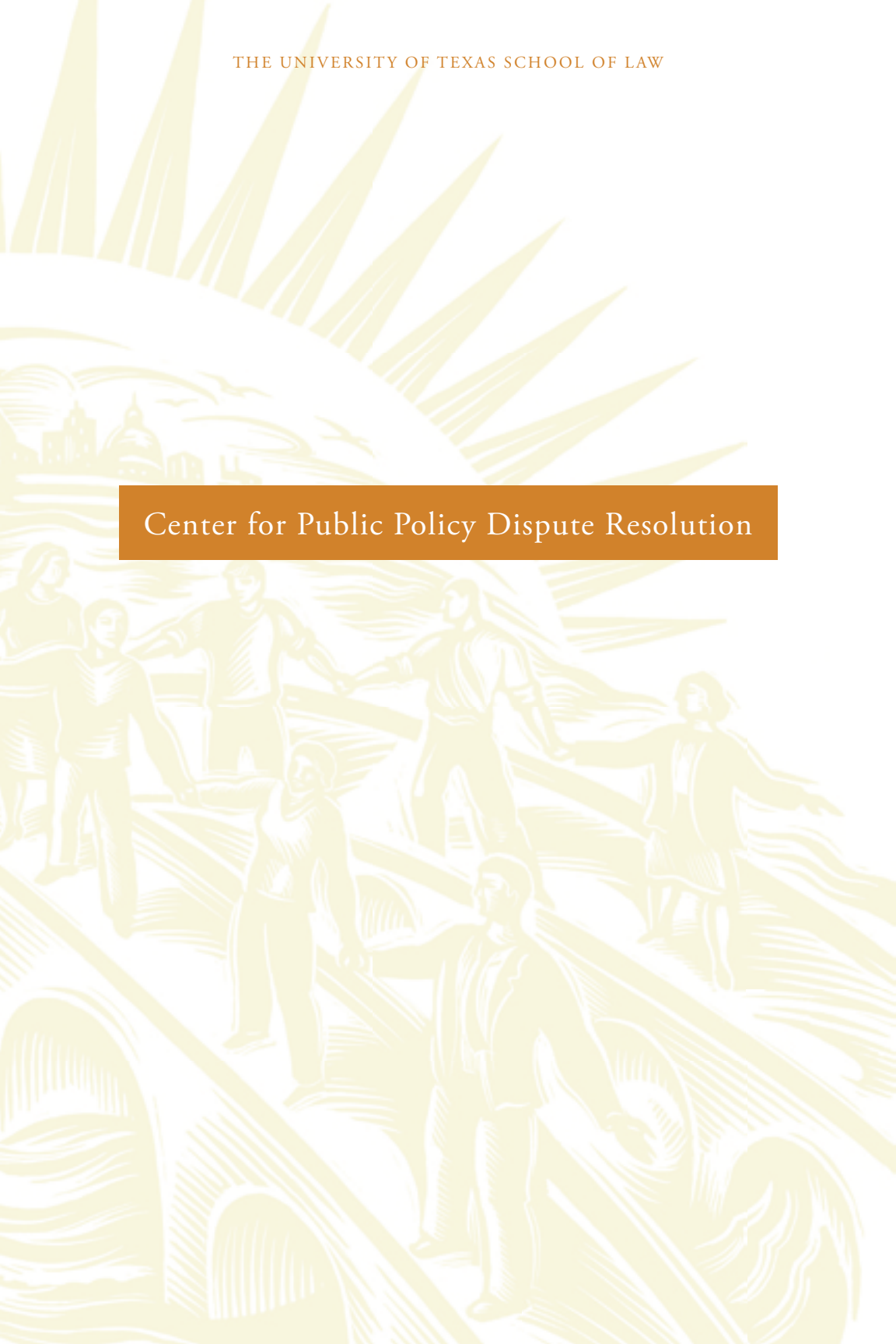


THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF LAW

Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution



**BUILDING BRIDGES, SOLUTIONS, AND TRUST**



## PUBLIC POLICY DISPUTE RESOLUTION

is used by governmental and public interest entities to create a forum in which multiple parties can work together to define and resolve their concerns. The process is also called multi-party mediation or facilitation. In each case, an impartial third party assists participants in bridging differences and empowers them to reach mutually agreeable solutions.



## DISCOVER NEW POSSIBILITIES IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION

**C**REATED IN 1993, THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC Policy Dispute Resolution promotes the appropriate use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) by Texas governmental and public interest entities. For those seeking new ways to resolve conflicts, we provide training in dispute resolution and consensus-based processes, consultation, education, research, mediation and facilitation services.

Located at The University of Texas School of Law, the Center is the only ADR center in Texas focusing on public policy dispute resolution. We provide a neutral forum and are particularly well situated to assist governmental and public interest entities as they explore the use of ADR.

### FACTS ABOUT US

- *We assist governmental and public interest entities in assessing internal and external dispute resolution processes*
- *We offer guidance in designing and implementing new ADR programs*
- *We provide impartial third-party services (i.e. mediators and facilitators) for ADR processes*
- *We educate governmental and public interest leaders and ADR practitioners in dispute resolution through our biennial Fellows Program*
- *We serve as an ADR resource within Texas and network with other state centers nationwide*



## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR SOLUTIONS

**S**EARCHING FOR A lasting solution to a neighborhood problem? Want a more reasoned approach to water rights regulation? Need more options to resolve workplace disputes? Alternative dispute resolution has much to offer you. ADR can be customized to fit your needs and provide an efficient, cost effective, and empowering system. No one likes conflict and even less the looming possibility of litigation. ADR can help you.

When a dispute arises, parties have options:

- *Taking part in an adversarial forum (i.e. court cases or binding arbitration);*
- *Going to “city hall” and presenting their case to individual policy makers; or*
- *Participating in an ADR process like mediation*

ADR processes offered by the Center are beneficial for many reasons:

- *Empower parties to shape their own agreement—courts do not*
- *Provide transparency and accountability—where the realities of situations are presented and discussed*
- *Create positive, lasting outcomes—more buy-in, less incentive to undo what parties have worked so hard to achieve*
- *Enable parties to put time, money, and resources to better use—effective and efficient*
- *Promote communication and dialogue among the parties involved—equity and inclusiveness*



## THE ADR PROCESS AT WORK: A MULTI-PARTY ILLUSTRATION

**A** CITY NEIGHBORHOOD IS IN TROUBLE: PROTRACTED ECONOMIC DECLINE AND URBAN neglect have taken their toll on a part of the city just blocks away from the thriving downtown area. *The city council is under pressure to take action:* it secures funds to invest in the blighted area and creates a non-profit corporation to develop and implement a revitalization plan. *The neighborhood residents* – property owners, churches, businesses, and community groups – *are angry:* they feel left out of the process that will decide how their neighborhood is going to be rebuilt. *The board of the non-profit corporation is in a stalemate:* members are torn between commercial development and affordable housing. The city council wants to avoid a full-blown clash between the neighborhood representatives and the board and the perception that it is dragging its feet on the project. Given these tensions, the city decides to hire a mediator to help design and conduct an ADR process to resolve these issues.

**PROCESS** *The mediator, with the assistance of a team, assesses the situation, largely through individual interviews, and recommends a multi-party dispute resolution process. The city agrees to the process but restricts the time frame to prevent delay. The mediation team is engaged to:*

1. *help form a representative committee, and*
2. *facilitate committee meetings whose purposes are to:*
  - *develop goals, guidelines, and agenda;*
  - *negotiate / seek consensus on identified issues*

**END RESULT** *The process creates a safe environment for polarized groups to come together and negotiate issues critical to them. Individuals previously left out are heard, and all participants gain a better understanding of others' concerns and desires. The city council is seen as innovative by offering an alternative process. Once started, the dialogue has a good chance of continuing, even outside the parameters of the ADR process.*

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