



# **Mediation Services**

Program Report

2010 – 2011



**Board of County Commissioners**

**Faye Griffin**  
District No. 1  
**John Odom**  
District No. 2  
**Donald Rosier**  
District No. 3

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pride and pleasure that we present the 2010-2011 biennial report for Jefferson County Mediation Services (JCMS).

From its inception in 1994, JCMS has collaborated with government agencies, non-profits and courts to serve them and the citizens of Jefferson County by providing effective conflict resolution delivered by qualified, dedicated volunteers. By resolving disputes that are draining County resources through repeated calls to law enforcement, trips to court, and requests for services, JCMS continues to provide cost savings, cost-avoidance and child-support payment collection assistance to the County on a daily basis.

This comprehensive, in-depth report gives an overview of JCMS, from the many types of disputes we resolve, the impressive cost savings, and the incredible group of skilled mediators who donate their time to JCMS, to the variety of services we offer and the continuing education programs we provide for our volunteers.

This report also gives precise information on the accomplishments of JCMS for this two-year period. It is an astounding example of what a volunteer program of this type can do to manage conflict effectively in the public interest.

In the last 5 years, including projections for 2012, our case load has grown by 80% - an average of about 13% each year over the previous year, and we expect this trend to continue. In these tight budgetary times, we present a program that pays for itself many times over.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Loye, Director  
Jefferson County Mediation Services

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## Executive Summary

Jefferson County Mediation Services (JCMS) is a contract program that is dedicated to providing mediation and conflict resolution services to county agencies, the courts and the citizens of Jefferson County. We are also a primary source for training and education of Denver-area mediators at all levels of skill and experience.

We have saved significant amounts of money and other resources for the County in a variety of ways, and we continue our efforts to make the best possible use of taxpayer dollars. Also, we helped Child Support Services to collect an estimated \$688,800 in additional payments.

Our ever-increasing case load (up 80% since 2007), is managed by five staff members and about 230 volunteer mediators. Our work supports county agencies by reducing the time they spend dealing with conflict. JCMS tailors its services to the specific needs of individual agencies; some examples of how we serve include:

- **Child Support Services (CSS):** We help CSS clients to negotiate parenting time. This reduces the time CSS technicians spend listening to complaints about issues such as visiting time and parental responsibility and, according to a previous study by CSS, this increases child support collections by about 17%.
- **Animal Control:** We help disputing neighbors to negotiate resolutions to barking dogs, dogs at large and related conflicts. When mediation is successful, it reduces the time Animal Control Officers spend traveling to investigate recurring complaints, and frees them to deal with more pressing issues.
- **Courts:** We provide mediators at the request of various courts to help parties resolve issues prior to seeing the judge or magistrate. Our services help judges and magistrates to manage their dockets better, allowing them to spend their limited time on more complicated cases. As a bonus, studies find that when people make their own agreements, they tend to comply more readily than when a judge imposes orders.
- **Workplace:** We help County employees to resolve topics of concern with each other. When employees become frustrated with co-workers, our services help them to address their issues in a productive manner, so that the situations can be resolved in everyone's best interest.

## *Mission*

To collaborate with government agencies in serving the citizens of Jefferson County by providing effective mediation, communication and negotiation processes, delivered by qualified, dedicated volunteers, in order to foster harmony within the community.

## *Vision*

To provide processes that promote and model peaceful settlement of disputes by offering exemplary, high-quality mediation, negotiation, facilitation, and communication services to the citizens and employees of Jefferson County.

## *Values*

- **For Clients:** to provide a safe forum in which people can be empowered to make decisions affecting their lives.
- **For Volunteers:** to provide continuing education in a mutually-beneficial environment.
- **For Partners (Referring Agencies):** to establish and develop a system of collaboration that is supportive of their mission.
- **For the Community:** to provide a model of effective interaction in the face of disagreement, thus enhancing goodwill and community spirit.

Mediation is saving the County some of the huge costs of expanding court space. State projections indicate that we will need more courtrooms, at a cost of millions of dollars. By helping parties to reach agreements before they go to court, Mediation Services allows judges to hear more cases per day in a courtroom, thus reducing or postponing the need to build additional court space.

## **County Commissioners**

The JCMS staff wishes to express sincere gratitude to the Jefferson County Commissioners, who continue to provide outstanding support to JCMS.

Faye Griffin  
District 1

John Odom  
District 2

Donald Rosier  
District 3

## **JCMS Staff**

Mark S. Loye, Director  
Julia C. Carter, Deputy Director  
Helena Jo Goldstein, Programs Manager  
Brian S. Beck, Systems Manager  
Natasha Alizadeh, Clerical Support

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## History and Overview

JCMS was created to deal with conflict. Conflict begins when people believe that they have incompatible interests, values or needs. Conflict can lead to creative change, but it can become destructive when the parties cannot resolve their differences. Responses to conflict can range from informal discussion to warfare. Mediation allows the participants to make their own decisions while a third party facilitates the process. Mediators do not give opinions or make rulings, and have no stake in the outcome, so the parties can negotiate in a safe setting where all concerns, interests, information and ideas can be heard.

The Board of County Commissioners approved the creation of Jefferson County Mediation Services (JCMS) in 1993, with Mark Loye as director, and mediations began in March 1994. Twenty volunteer mediators handled 69 cases, referred by 10 agencies, during that year. The caseload has grown steadily: in 2010-2011, 33 agencies referred 3,310 cases to JCMS, a 17% increase over the previous two-year total. Any Jefferson County agency, municipality, associated non-profit group, or court can refer parties to conflict-resolution. Services are provided through the dedication of about 230 volunteers with an impressive variety of backgrounds and experience. They volunteer with one goal: to provide a safe process that encourages people to make decisions for themselves.

## What is Mediation?

JCMS starts mediation by scheduling a meeting where everyone involved in a dispute can sit down together to talk about the problem. Our mediators set ground rules to provide a safe and respectful setting. They help the parties to define their concerns, to reduce hostility, and to find common ground. They help the parties to generate and evaluate options for resolving the issue. Parties can then reach an acceptable agreement that will meet their needs. Finally, they can make a formal written agreement, such as a Memorandum of Understanding, to record their resolution.

Benefits of the process are significant: mediation can be scheduled quickly, and is usually less expensive and less time-consuming than going to court. In addition, the parties are typically more satisfied with the outcomes and, finally, parties generally comply better with the terms of agreements that they have crafted themselves than they do with orders imposed upon them by someone else.

## How We Save Taxpayer Money

JCMS exists to save County resources! Conserving time and money has become crucial in the County's current tight budget situation, and JCMS is saving costs in many ways.

JCMS saves time for the Sheriff, Animal Control and Zoning by helping neighbors to resolve their conflicts. When people resolve problems in mediation this reduces the number of trips County officials must make to investigate complaints. Each trip has costs such as the employees' hourly wages, and vehicle and gasoline expenses. When officials must travel to unincorporated mountain locations, the costs to investigate a single neighbor complaint are staggering. As these costs grow, the value of our services increases accordingly. Additionally, in mediation, people can agree to call JCMS if conflict arises again, instead of burdening a County agency. When County personnel refer citizen conflicts to mediation, those employees can then refocus on their regular duties.

We save costs for the District Attorney's office by settling disputes before trial. This reduces court caseloads and increases efficiency. In court cases, mediation saves hours of court time because the parties have already reached agreement, and even in cases that do not settle, the parties have identified and clarified the relevant issues. In divorce and child-custody cases, mediation typically saves 5 to 6 hours of courtroom time per case.

JCMS also saves the costs of lowered productivity and poor morale by mediating conflict among Jefferson County's employees (see page 12 for additional information on our Workplace Mediation Program). As it grows, workplace mediation has the potential to save resources exceeding the savings generated by all of our other programs combined.

Table 1, next page, shows our cost saving estimates for each of our major departments served. The data below is based on feedback from our user agencies.

Factors that are not shown in our cost savings chart include trial costs that are avoided when cases do not go to court. Additionally, even when mediation does not resolve the dispute, the parties have had an opportunity to practice their "presentations" which helps them to be more effective and concise in the courtroom, conserving the Judge's valuable time. The more our agencies use JCMS, the more they save!

**Table 1: Minimum Cost Savings Achieved for User Agencies in 2010-2011**

| <b>Department</b>   | <b>Cases Settled</b> | <b>Cost Per Trip/Case</b> | <b>Trips/Cases Saved Per Settlement</b> | <b>Cost Savings</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Animal Control      | 25                   | \$124.00                  | 2                                       | \$6,200.00          |
| County Court        | 934                  | \$120.29                  | N/A                                     | \$112,350.86        |
| District Attorney   | 12                   | \$162.00                  | N/A                                     | \$1,944.00          |
| District Court      | 109                  | \$406.61                  | N/A                                     | \$44,320.49         |
| Juvenile Assessment | 3                    | \$201.95                  | 1                                       | \$605.85            |
| Planning & Zoning   | 6                    | \$188.25                  | 2                                       | \$2,259.00          |
| Human Services      | 372                  | \$80.00                   | 1                                       | \$29,760.00         |
| Municipalities      | 41                   | \$123.91                  | 2                                       | \$10,160.62         |
| Sheriff             | 13                   | \$141.00                  | 2                                       | \$3,666.00          |
| Workplace Cases     | 14                   | \$11,167                  | N/A                                     | \$156,338.00        |
| <b>Total</b>        |                      |                           |   | <b>\$367,604.82</b> |

In addition, 4,351 volunteer hours were donated in 2010, and 5,291 volunteer hours were donated in 2011 (a total of 9,642 hours), realizing a cost avoidance for the County of an additional \$964,200. This calculation is based on a figure of \$100 per hour for mediators. The actual cost to hire a mediator ranges from \$120 per hour (Colorado Office of Dispute Resolution) to \$350 and up per hour.

## The Clients We Serve

Cases are referred by Jefferson County agencies, the Courts, non-profit family-service agencies, R-1 Schools, and municipalities in Jefferson County. We keep growing as more departments discover that mediation can conserve staff resources and serve the public, and that it is effective in nearly any kind of conflict.

Table 2 illustrates the sources of JCMS cases among the County agencies, municipalities, non-profits, and courts in Jefferson County during 2010-2011.

**Table 2: Referring Agencies in 2010 - 2011**

| <b>Agency</b>  | <b>Total Cases</b> |
|--|--------------------|
| Human Services Divisions                                   | 1086               |
| County Courts  | 1052               |
| Small Claims Court   | 454                |
| District Court & Domestic Facilitator                      | 289                |
| Municipalities   | 171                |
| Animal Control   | 78                 |
| Jefferson County - Other                                   | 72                 |
| District Attorney, County Attorney                         | 40                 |
| Sheriff, Juvenile Assessment Center, Probation             | 39                 |
| County Commissioners, Planning, Public Health, Fairgrounds | 18                 |
| JeffCo Mental Health, Action Center, Habitat for Humanity  | 6                  |
| JeffCo/R-1 Schools   | 4                  |

### *Program Areas*

**Community Mediation:** We receive cases regarding Animal Control, Noise, Property Issues (damage, fences, drainage, etc.), Planning & Zoning, Consumer Complaints and other D.A. referrals, Schools, and Family Mediation.

**County – Internal:** We offer assistance with Group facilitations (planning, team-building, etc.), Workplace Conflicts, Child Support Services (parenting time and support modification cases), and Ombuds Services.

**Courts:** We help with Small Claims Disputes, Low-Income Divorce & Post-Decree Issues, Protection Order Conditions Conferences, and Victim-Offender Reconciliation.

## Types of Cases

Our cases reflect the amazing variety of situations in which humans can come into conflict. Table 3 shows the types of cases we handle as well as the total number of cases in each category.

**Table 3: Types of Cases in 2010 – 2011**

| Case Type   | Total Cases |
|---|-------------|
| Divorce, Custody, & Parenting                           | 1294        |
| Landlord & Tenant                                       | 622         |
| Contracts & Employee Wages                              | 432         |
| Protection Order Hearings                               | 312         |
| Neighbor Disputes, Building & Zoning                    | 181         |
| Consumer Complaints                                     | 113         |
| Animal Control Issues                                   | 107         |
| Family & Domestic Partner                               | 88          |
| Liability & Traffic                                     | 85          |
| Jefferson County Workplace Issues & Group Facilitations | 25          |
| School Conflicts, Truancy & Juvenile Offenses           | 18          |
| Other   | 23          |
| Citizen Complaints About Law Enforcement                | 10          |

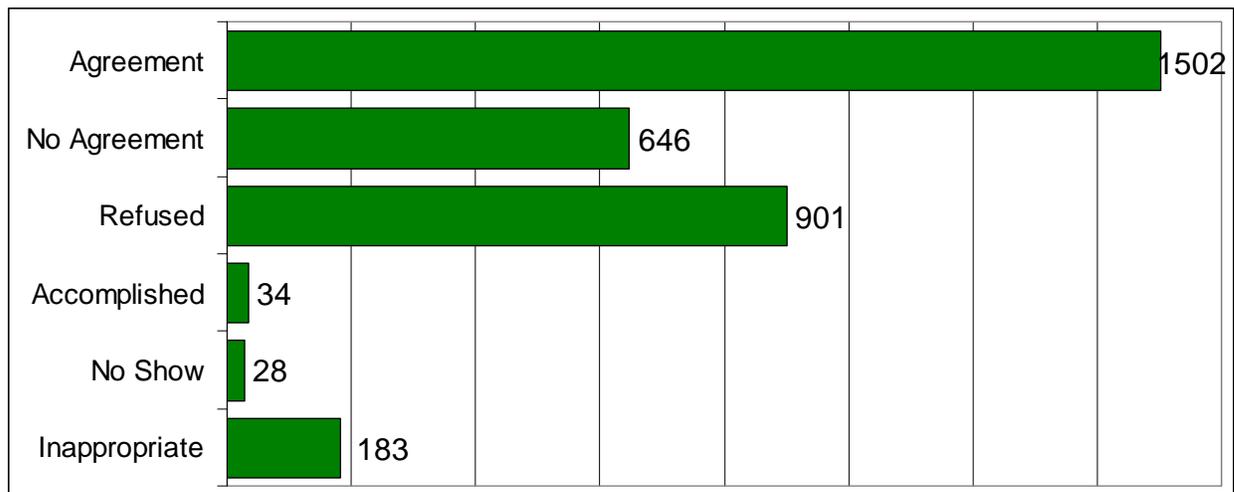
This [successful mediation case] is a great news story since the father had had little or no contact since the child was born. He was in jail for failure to pay child support, and while in jail he attended the fatherhood classes that we offer. He had personally told me that at 27 years of age it would be impossible for him to change. Well, he has. Thanks to the Mediators!

Katie Smith  
Child Support Services

## We Get Results

Chart 1 shows the results of 3,294 cases referred to JCMS and completed in 2010 - 2011. We found that 183 cases were not appropriate for mediation. In 901 cases, at least one party refused to mediate. We closed 28 cases after a party or parties failed to show up at a scheduled mediation. Of the 2,182 cases actually mediated, 1,536 resulted in written agreements or informal resolution, and 646 resulted in no agreement.

**Chart 1: Case Results in 2010 – 2011**

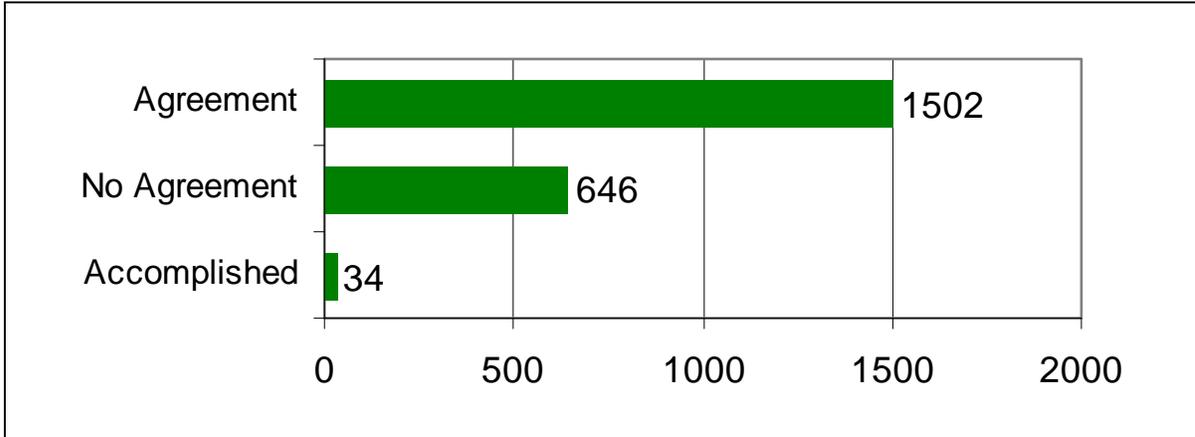


The numerous cases from Small Claims and County Court must be completed quickly, and the parties are poles apart, yet a majority of those who mediate resolve their disputes. District Court provides smaller percentage of court cases (14%), but many of these are divorce, custody, and child support cases, which take much longer to complete. Despite their complexity and the high emotions involved, the District Court cases that went to mediation usually resulted in agreements or, at least, clarification of the issues, which in itself saves a lot of court time. The judge we consulted estimates that it saves 5-6 hours of court time if a divorce case is mediated.

Mediation programs around the world report high success rates, and JCMS is no exception! Most of the people we contact about mediation are willing to try it and, when people try mediation, 70% reach written agreements.

Chart 2 shows the percentage of cases that reached resolution when all parties agreed to come to the table. When parties are willing to participate in mediation, the percentage of cases reaching settlement varies from 60% in court cases to 80% in others. We have a very high success rate with cases referred to us by County agencies.

**Chart 2: Results of Cases Mediated in 2010 – 2011**



I would like to thank you for all the work you do. We have been working with this father and mother for quite some time. There is one lucky little boy who will benefit from his parents working together. This brought warmth to my heart and tears of joy to my eyes today. It's moments like these that make it all worthwhile. Again, I thank you on behalf of the Fatherhood Program and the family. Keep up the good work!!!

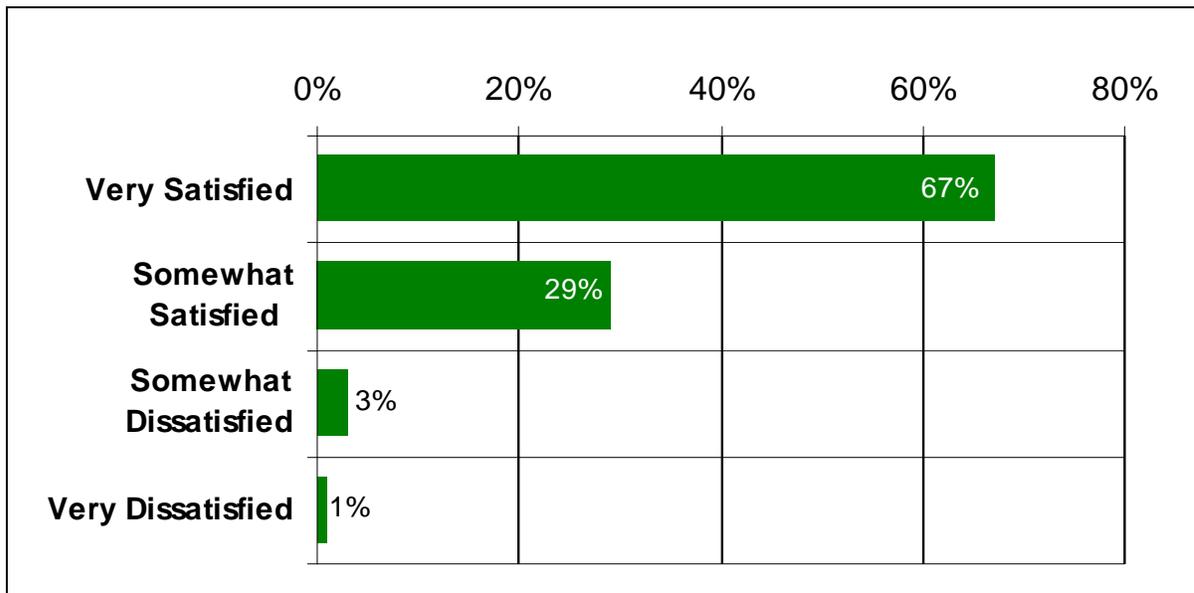
Ray Washington  
Fatherhood Program

## Customer Satisfaction

Our clients praise the power of the mediation process. Chart 3 shows that their level of satisfaction was very high: 96% reported being either “Very Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied,” only 3% were “Somewhat Dissatisfied,” and barely 1% said they were “Very Dissatisfied.” A remarkable 92% of those who participate in mediation would recommend it to others – even if they didn’t reach agreement themselves. [Analysis of client questionnaires by Cory Stufflebeam and Ian Taylor, 2009]

Clients now call because their friends, co-workers or neighbors used JCMS and said it really helped. Sometimes a phone call from our staff will prompt people to settle a dispute on their own. These new clients never had to burden other County agencies with their conflicts.

**Chart 3: Customer Satisfaction**



## Special Programs

We offer a wide range of services, and some of our programs have been created in response to specific needs expressed by our clients. Examples of such programs include our employee workplace mediation program, our work with child support cases, and our assistance at protection order hearings.

### *Workplace Mediation for Jefferson County Employees*

Conflict can stimulate changes and progress, but unresolved conflicts can disrupt the functioning of a team. Increased caseloads, changes in operations, staffing cuts, and personality differences can create stress. Whatever the cause, mediation can improve communication, decrease tension, and improve the functioning of the individuals or the group.

The costs of employee discord can be enormous. Recent research by various corporations and government agencies shows that:

- An average manager spends 24% - 60% of his/her time dealing with employee conflict.
- Conflict is a major factor in employee turnover, but now people are afraid to leave their jobs, so they just endure the stress of conflict as well as they can.
- The effects of conflict include wasted time, reduced decision quality, lowered motivation, health costs, and inconvenient rearrangement of work groups to separate disputants.

***The Good News:*** The use of workplace mediation by government and business has shown dramatic results. With lower conflict, there are fewer illnesses and absences, and better morale and productivity. JCMS received 25 work-related cases during 2010-2011, and mediated 15 of them. We successfully resolved 14 of those cases, resulting in a savings of \$156,338 at minimum (many cases involved 3 or more employees, and in a few, the whole team or department was involved).

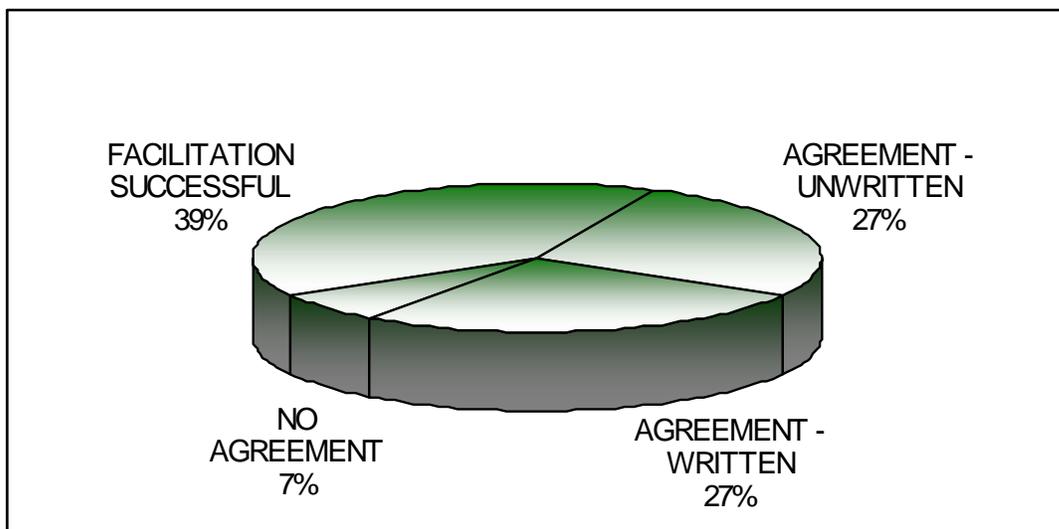
#### **Example of a Workplace Case:**

Average pay for Jefferson County employees is \$53,212, or about \$26.11 per hour. If two \$26/hour employees spend 10 minutes a day bickering ( $1/6$  of  $\$26 \times 2 = \$8.67$  x 5 days per week, x 50 weeks per year), it consumes \$2,167 per year of their pay. Then each spends 10 minutes talking to the manager – another \$2,167. Their manager earns \$30/hour and spends 20 minutes per day listening to complaints ( $1/6$  of  $\$30 \times 2 = \$10$ ) - another \$2,500 per year. The two also spend 10 minutes talking to co-workers about each other ( $1/6$  of  $\$26 \times 4 = \$17.33$ ), and it costs another \$4,333 per year for the four workers. Conflicts can go on for years, and this one unresolved conflict will cost \$11,167 per year, not including the effect on the department and its service quality. There are about 55 departments and divisions in the County, so just one conflict in each unit will cost the County more than \$614,185 each year. Disputes between employees and supervisors cost even more: leadership may be challenged or passively resisted, and the team's work will suffer.

The 15 workplace cases we mediated involved actual or perceived conflict between or among employees, or with a supervisor, and we provided skilled mediators to assist them. 2 of these cases involved work groups that simply needed help in communications or team building. JCMS provided facilitators for those large groups, with impressive results reported.

Chart 4 illustrates that, if the parties are willing to mediate, we can help them to resolve the difficulty nearly every time. Given the costs of continuing conflict, this offers huge savings to the County, and helps to ensure high-quality service to customers by promoting a better work environment.

**Chart 4: Workplace Cases Mediated in 2010 – 2011**



“I think mediation should be discussed more frequently as an option for employee conflict. The mediators were outstanding, and we reached an agreement acceptable to both of us. I am very happy with the process and the results.”

*[from participant follow-up questionnaire]*

## *Protection Order Conditions Conferences*

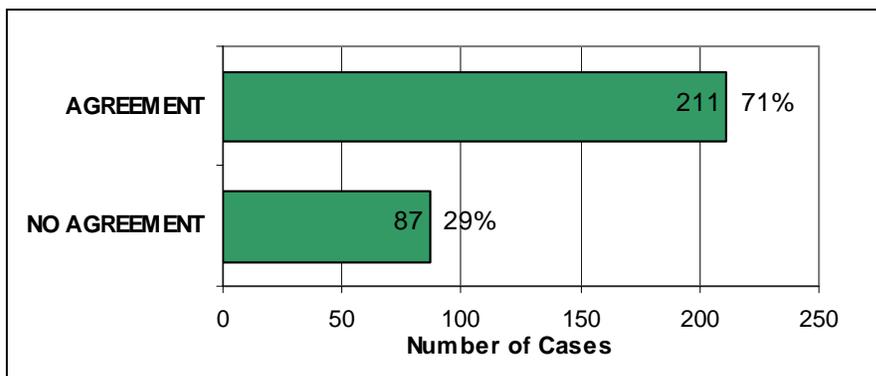
People sometimes come into violent conflict. A person who feels threatened can get a Temporary Protection Order. Within 2 weeks, there must be a court hearing, at which a judge can issue a Permanent Protection Order (PPO). In PPO hearings, the judge hears each person's side and decides whether to grant an order. Parties may be socially unskilled and highly emotional. A victim often feels intimidated and frightened with the abuser standing right there, and may be afraid to state the danger clearly.

The person seeking a protection order may have an ongoing relationship with the other party, (parents, neighbors, classmates or co-workers). If a PPO is granted between two parents, one party is usually awarded care and control of the children for 120 days, but children's needs, and financial and property issues, may not be addressed by the judge. The parties often need help to make arrangements for the future. Parents need temporary plans for parenting time, paying bills, and transferring possessions. They also need to know what help is available to them after separation (victim advocates, anger-management programs, supervised parenting services, counseling, social services, etc.).

We worked with Family Tree's Legal Advocacy Program to create a safe process for these clients. Our facilitators separate the parties and shuttle between them to help them agree on conditions to Protection Orders. Victims can discuss their fears and needs in a safe situation, and can get more needs met in an agreement. Advocates from Family Tree help them with the court process and safety plans, and offer resource information. Defendants (usually male) are afraid of losing their families. Many have been abuse victims themselves, and typically do not see themselves as abusers. Listening to them with empathy can reduce their potential for violence. Family Tree advocates have observed JCMS volunteers in action, and have become enthusiastic supporters of the process.

PPO cases are now 9% of our caseload, with 130 cases in 2010 and 168 cases in 2011. Of these 298 cases, 211 have resulted in agreements reached by the parties (2 verbal and 209 written), for an agreement rate of 71% - excellent given the stress and emotions involved. Chart 5 illustrates the results of our Protection Order Condition Conference cases.

**Chart 5: Protection Order Conference Case Results 2010 - 2011**



**The Beneficiaries:** Many people benefit from the success of these Protection Order Conditions Conferences. JCMS saves time for the court when parties make an agreement and we have paperwork completed and ready for the judge to review. We help to address the children's needs, including time with the non-custodial parent, perhaps under supervision. Parties become invested in the process and they are more likely to comply with the agreements they create. The public at large and law enforcement officers are exposed to fewer loud, violent incidents and have less risk of being caught in crossfire. There are also indirect benefits, such as reduced burdens on taxpayers and on social assistance programs.

Finally, the difficult dynamics of these cases help our mediators to gain valuable experience. PPO work is demanding, but also rewarding. Many of our volunteers take the required training in Domestic Violence Awareness and our shuttle conference process so that they can participate in this groundbreaking program. Other Colorado counties are adopting our model in their own services, and we have had inquiries from other states and even another country.

We at Child Support Services know that if our customers take advantage of the opportunity to have JCMS mediators facilitate their family disputes, the results can mean better interpersonal relationships for them and the best outcomes for their children. Our customers are very fortunate to have this referral process available as an alternative to litigation.

Debbie Moss, Program Manager,  
Child Support Services

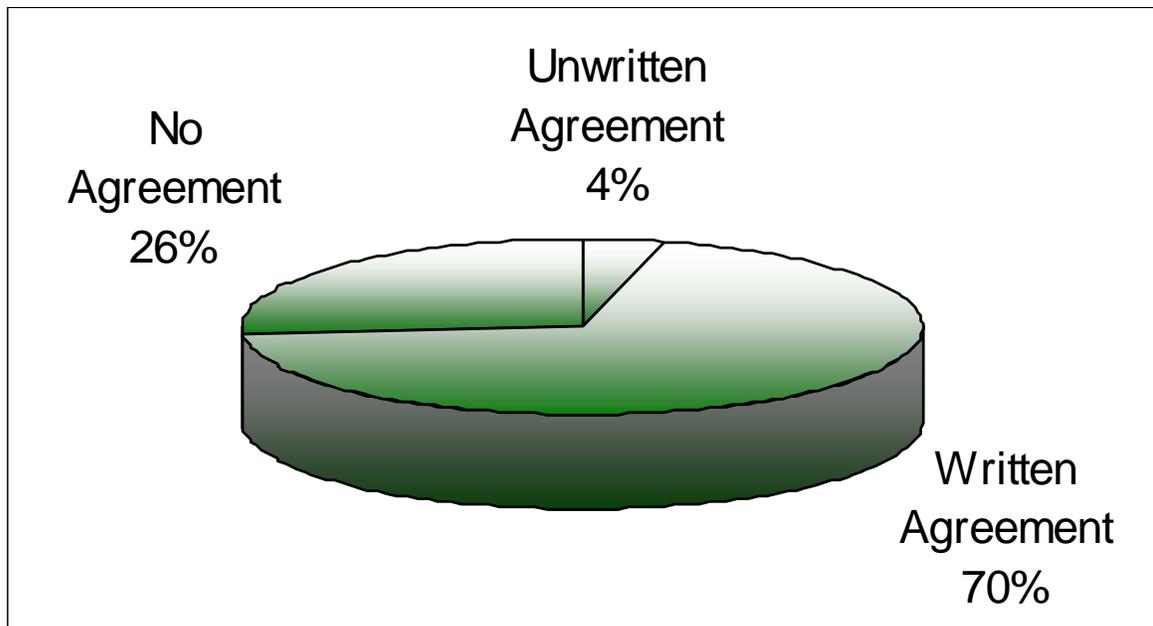
## *Cases Referred by Child Support Services*

Jefferson County Child Support Services (CSS) is constantly working to increase collections from non-custodial parents who are ordered to pay child support to custodial parents. JCMS offered to mediate these cases, and CSS caseworkers have been delighted that they can offer a resource to people whose disagreements go beyond payment of child support.

This inter-departmental collaboration has had far-reaching benefits for the County and the participants. Fathers may protest, “I don’t get to see my kids, so why should I pay child support?” Now there is some help for them, too. The courts are pleased to be relieved of some parenting-time motions and some contempt cases for non-payment. Justice Services diverts delinquent payers to work crews, providing services to the County instead of further crowding the jails. Children get to know both parents, and when a parenting plan is filed through CSS, there is no filing fee charged to the parents. Finally, the custodial parents and their children are receiving much-needed child support, so fewer families need public assistance.

Chart 6 shows the success rates of our Child Support related cases.

**Chart 6: Child Support Cases Mediated 2010 – 2011**



JCMS received 967 cases from CSS (417 during 2010, and 550 during 2011). CSS reported that the rate of payment increased about 17% among the parents who agreed to participate in mediation (164 more paying parents) even if they could not reach an agreement or the other parent would not participate (the custodial parent may be unwilling to alter the parenting time). At an average payment of \$350 per month for child support, the increase works out to at least an additional \$688,800.00 in collections for CSS as part of this collaborative effort.

CSS was so pleased with the results of the parenting time mediations that they expanded their referrals to include contested child-support modifications. If the custodial and non-custodial parents do not agree on the appropriate amount of child support, mediation can help them discuss a fair amount. If an agreement is reached, it can be implemented immediately instead of after a lengthy court process that increases conflict between the parents. This helps CSS, the taxpayers, the courts, the parents and the children.

One of our caseworkers received a \$15,000 lump-sum arrears payment through our collaboration with Mediation Services. The caseworker said, 'A lot of my lump sums have happened due to Jeffco Mediation. I have really had success with their services.' Excellent! Another family will start the new year off right.

Debbie Moss, Program Manager,  
Child Support Services

## *Citizen Complaints About Law Enforcement*

Citizens who have complaints about law-enforcement personnel in Jefferson County can now meet face to face with the officers involved. Based on a program developed in Denver, the goal is to provide greater understanding and to improve relations between citizens and officers. Each participant gets a chance to hear how the other felt about the encounter, and the officer can explain that department procedures may require certain actions. Internal Affairs officials refer only those cases in which they have determined that there is no actual impropriety by the officer. The citizen who participates understands that any citation or charge against him/her will remain, and that Internal Affairs may choose to drop the complaint against the officer. We have had excellent results with this project, and the City of Wheat Ridge has joined the Sheriff's Office in sending these cases to us.

## *Jefferson County Schools*

Schools have problems with children, children have troubles with each other, teachers and parents may disagree, and truants can end up in special schools or the court system. Parents do not know what to do with children who will not talk to them. Teachers worry that when one child disrupts the classroom, it impairs the learning environment for all. Principals worry that we are losing our children, and some parents would rather leave the problems to someone else. Judges say that by the time children get to court, it may be too late to help them.

Teachers are overloaded, and school administrators may have no option but discipline for children who cause problems. We wanted to help these children, and to ease the burden on the schools, so we began our School Mediation program in 2005. The results are impressive: when parties come to the mediation table, they usually resolve their differences.

We have experienced child and family mediators, trained in family dynamics and risk/threat assessment, who enjoy working on these cases - they love to see children succeed, and they have the skills, talent and time to help them solve problems. Children are our future, so it is in everyone's interest to help the schools do their job well, and to relieve them of problems that they are not equipped to handle.

## Our Mediators

At the heart of the success of Jefferson County Mediation Services are the mediation professionals who donate their time and energy to the program on a continuing basis. The number of volunteer mediators has expanded from just 20 when the program began in 1994 to about 230 today. In 2010 & 2011, they gave a total of 9,642 hours to Jefferson County – an average of 2.9 hours per case.

### *Backgrounds and Qualifications*

Our volunteers come from many educational and employment backgrounds and provide a large fund of experience and expertise. They include:

- Lawyers and paralegals,
- Businessmen, administrators and consultants,
- Technicians,
- Educators,
- Medical professionals,
- Psychologists and counselors,
- Government workers, and
- Scientists.

Because this program is so comprehensive and varied, it attracts volunteer mediators across metro Denver and Colorado. Each mediator brings an individual set of talents, characteristics and experience. Personal traits, aptitudes, training and life experience make each mediator a unique asset to this outstanding service.

Each volunteer must complete a 40-hour mediation training course (or equivalent) prior to joining the program, must attend our orientation, and must pass a background check by the Sheriff's Office.

JCMS volunteers share a desire to help citizens to resolve conflict without violence. They also view the program as a credible way to build skills and experience that are recognized by our state's professional organization, The Mediation Association of Colorado. Mediators commit to serve for one year at a time; however, nearly half of our current volunteers have served for four or more years. Their contributions are immense: without the dedication, skill and hard work of each of these mediators, JCMS could not have attained the remarkable level of quality that it offers today.

The community benefits because there is an increasing pool of mediators experienced in the huge variety of cases amenable to mediation. Some of our volunteers have gone on to establish or run community mediation services elsewhere, so the benefits continue to spread, giving citizens a viable alternative to other, more expensive, destructive and time-consuming means of conflict resolution (e.g., litigation or fighting).

## Our Staff

Our staff consists of a full-time director and four part-time staff. We handle the myriad details involved in running such a large and varied service. Each week we answer or return over 100 calls, open and close over 34 cases, provide information, send referral lists to people who do not qualify for our free services and field inquiries from other agencies. We contact parties to persuade them to try mediation, respond to numerous e-mails, schedule mediation sessions, and manage our database. With our combined experience and expertise, we serve as a valuable resource for our volunteers, discussing their cases, answering their questions and arranging advanced mediation training for them. We make presentations to other agencies, attend meetings and schedule volunteers to mediate for various judges and magistrates. It's not just a job to us - we are committed to serving our clients in any way that we can.

### *Mark S. Loye, M.S., M.P.A.*

Mark is the Director of JCMS and helped to start the program in 1994. He has over 24 years of professional experience in dispute-resolution, with extensive training and experience in mediation and facilitation. His work has included multi-party environmental and land-use, business, organizational, EEO/workplace, neighbor-neighbor, divorce and child custody, real estate, task-force and group facilitation cases. He has a B.S. in biology from Stanford University and earned graduate degrees in ecology from Cornell University, and in Public Administration from the University of Denver. He is an EEO mediator for the U.S. Postal Service, where he has conducted 130 cases to date. Mark is a professional member of The Mediation Association of Colorado, and is a member of the international Association for Conflict Resolution, the National Association for Community Mediation and the Society for Range Management. In early 2011, he was appointed as the Community Conflict Resolution Representative to the Advisory Council for the Colorado Office of Dispute Resolution. He currently serves on the First Judicial District Access to Justice Committee, a group committed to maximizing availability of all aspects of the legal system to all citizens.

### *Julia Courtney Carter, Esq.*

Julie is the Deputy Director and has been with JCMS since 2000. She has a B.A. in Psychology and Sociology from University of Colorado, and earned her Juris Doctor at University of Colorado's Fleming Law School. After working as an attorney in corporate and securities litigation and business organization, Julie became a JCMS volunteer in 1998, and mediated various types of cases before joining our staff. She received her training in Restorative Justice from the Longmont (CO) Community Justice Project. She has taken advanced training in workplace mediation and serves as an EEO mediator for the U.S. Postal Service. She is a member of The Mediation Association of Colorado and is a past member of the Alternative Dispute Resolution section of the Colorado Bar Association. She has been a coach in Anger Replacement Training for adult paroled offenders, has co-taught several training courses for mediators, and provides ongoing advice and support to our volunteers. Julie has played a significant role in expanding and improving our programs and increasing our collaboration with other County agencies.

### ***Helena Jo Goldstein, Esq.***

Helena is the Programs Manager and has been with JCMS since 2001. She has a B.A. in History from the University of Michigan, and earned her Juris Doctor at Northeastern University School of Law. She was an attorney in private practice in Boston, specializing in domestic law and tax issues, before her appointment as General Counsel for the Cambridge (MA) Housing Authority. Under the auspices of the Council of Large Public Housing Agencies (CLPHA), Helena traveled nationwide as a trainer on EEO issues for housing authorities. She also served on the Massachusetts committee that rewrote the state regulations for housing authorities. After relocating to Colorado in 1993, she pursued a career in mediation. She has advanced training in Workplace Mediation, Team Decision Making Facilitation, and Parenting Coordination and Decision Making. She has co-taught courses for mediators on Intimate Partner Violence. She is a professional member of the Mediation Association of Colorado, and serves as a mentor to many of the JCMS volunteers.

### ***Brian S. Beck, M.A.***

Brian has been with JCMS since 2008 and serves as Systems Manager. He has a B.S. from Oklahoma State University and earned a Master of Arts degree in Conflict Resolution from the University of Denver, as well as a Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution from the University of Denver's University College. He has been a mediator since 2003 and has mediated victim-offender, civil, divorce and parenting cases. Brian has served as President for The Mediation Association of Colorado and is a current professional member of the organization.

### ***Natasha Alizadeh***

Natasha has been with JCMS since 2011 and serves as our clerical support. She has streamlined several of our processes, and has significantly improved our efficiency.

## Accomplishments

Jefferson County Mediation Services (JCMS) is a full-service conflict-resolution program, and has become an integral part of the Jefferson County government's operations. First-quarter 2012 statistics indicate that over 1,950 cases will be handled in 2012 by about 230 volunteer mediators. Services beyond traditional mediation are also available: our facilitators help County departments to hold planning retreats or public hearings on important issues, and also help employees to work on team building within County departments. We can provide arbitration upon request. Experienced trainers and presenters help to improve communication and conflict-resolution skills among school students, non-profit agency personnel, and employees in Jefferson County. District, County, and Small Claims Courts rely upon JCMS volunteers to help control their expanding dockets. Colorado law requires written parenting plans, so the need for mediation between divorcing parents continues to grow. For our citizens who could not otherwise afford mediation, JCMS provides a welcome solution.

JCMS staff members and mediators are an important part of the developing mediation culture in our state. They serve the profession as board members, committee members, trainers, ambassadors, speakers, role models and mentors.

We provide our volunteers with varied continuing-education opportunities. We arrange specialized training in specific types of cases, such as Child Support cases and Protection Order hearings. We invite County agencies to explain their operations to our volunteers and discuss issues likely to arise in mediations. We ask Judges and magistrates to clarify legal and ethical issues. JCMS staff members give presentations on how the courts work and how we can assist different County departments. This helps our volunteers to expand their skills, keeps them abreast of advances in the field, and enables them to handle a wider selection of cases for the County. It also helps us to attract and keep the volunteer services of talented, dedicated, and experienced mediators.

We have demonstrated clearly that mediation programs can lift a tremendous burden from the courts and County agencies. JCMS is recognized as a leader among mediation programs in our state. We share information, document achievements and results, and offer other counties and cities the benefit of our experiences. We will continue to promote the growth of economical, ethical and effective use of conflict resolution in Colorado.

## The Future of JCMS

What is next for JCMS? We are coordinating with County agencies to increase our services to them. Employees may be hesitant about trying mediation, so we work to increase employee acceptance and use of our workplace program. Those who have used mediation are pleased with the results, and agencies that collaborate with us are enthusiastic and committed to our joint efforts. Our caseload has grown dramatically over time, and we project that this trend will continue in future years.

JCMS will respond to the needs of any County agency that requests more specialized services from us - this is how we have become the largest, most diversified community mediation program in Colorado. These expansions of our program will further the aim of saving resources for the County through proactive conflict management. Our well-organized and expertly-staffed County conflict resolution program can serve as a model for an eventual state program of state-authorized county dispute resolution offices (already in place in several states).

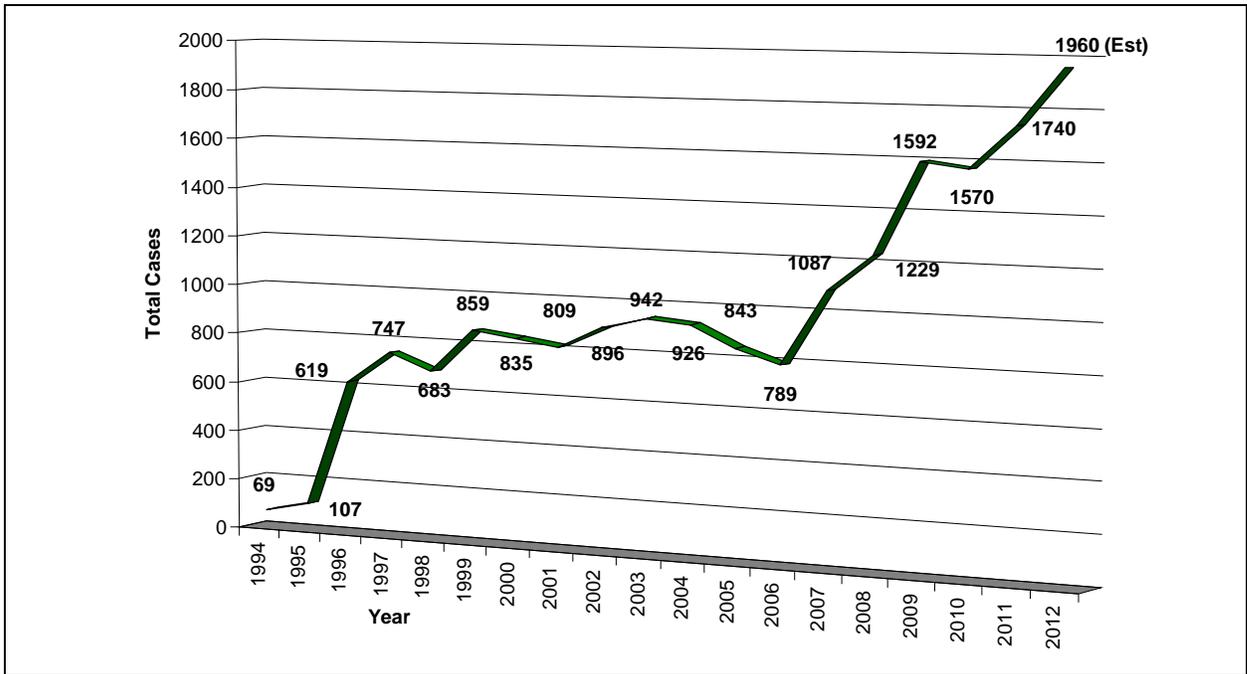
Mediation can become the standard method of managing the conflict inherent in all areas of human activity, and JCMS can lead the way.

Most importantly, for a small annual investment of County funds, JCMS will continue to expand the large payoff in cost savings to governmental agencies and the courts, to reduce ongoing conflict both in the community and within the County government, and to enhance public peace and harmony. JCMS is setting the standard for innovation and progress in the work of conflict resolution across Colorado and throughout the Rocky Mountain region!

## *Caseload Increases:*

Chart 7 shows the number of cases JCMS has managed each year since the program’s creation in 1994 up to our 2012 projected total.

**Chart 7: Yearly Case Totals 1994 – 2011**



From 2007 to 2012, our yearly caseload has grown by 80% - an average of about 13% each year, as illustrated in Chart 8, and we expect this trend to continue.

**Chart 8: Case Growth in 2007 – 2012**

| Year | # of Cases | Percent of Increase from Previous Year |
|------|------------|--|
| 2007 | 1,087      |  |
| 2008 | 1,229      | 13%                                    |
| 2009 | 1,592      | 29.5%                                  |
| 2010 | 1,570      | - 1.4%                                 |
| 2011 | 1,740      | 10.8%                                  |
| 2012 | 1,960      | 12.6% (estimate)                       |

## JCMS Advisory Group 2010 – 2011

The Advisory Group meets quarterly to consider questions of policy and program direction. On a less formal level, the members serve as a sounding board for new ideas of JCMS staff and volunteers. These representatives of client agencies give us valuable guidance on their conflict-resolution needs and offer feedback on the quality of the services we provide them. They also serve as advocates of JCMS to their own staffs and other agencies. As public managers and decision makers, they make observations and offer insights that have been invaluable to the growth and vitality of JCMS. The Advisory Group is an evolving body, adding interested members as new client agencies and jurisdictions join those already served by JCMS.

Janet Bell, Citizen Liaison  
Ray Fler, Jefferson County Undersheriff  
Richard Fullerton, JCMS Volunteer  
Gina Gardner-Wood, Legal Advocacy Supervisor, Family Tree  
Dick Gearke, Sergeant, Lakewood Police Department  
Tom Giacinti, Director, Justice Services Division  
Patricia Gilbert, Assistant County Attorney  
Charles T. Hoppin, Judge, County Court  
Daniel Horsey, JCMS Mediator  
Brooke Jackson, Chief Judge, District Court  
Joyce Knott, Administrative Coordinator, Human Services  
John Livingston, Magistrate, County & District Courts  
Donna Skinner Reed, District Attorney's Office, First Judicial District  
Vicky Reier, Arvada Community Relations Coordinator  
Joel Schaefer, Magistrate, County & District Courts  
Lorie Schink, Human Resources  
Carla Zinanti, Manager, Animal Control

## JCMS Advisory Group 2012

Rachel Baumel, JCMS Mediator  
Janet Bell, Citizen Liaison  
Larry Cerrillo, JCMS Mediator  
Leah DiMarco, Human Resources  
Magistrate Andrew Fitzgerald, County Court  
Ray Flear, Jefferson County Undersheriff  
Sergeant Dick Gearke, Lakewood Police Department  
Tom Giacinti, Director, Justice Services Division  
Patricia Gilbert, Assistant County Attorney  
Judge Tammy Greene, County Court  
Joyce Knott, Operations Manager, Human Services  
Timothy Lane, Deputy District Attorney  
Robyn E. McDonald, JCMS Mediator  
Judge Philip McNulty, District Court  
Judge Gail Meinster, District Court  
Amanda Milner, Legal Advocacy Supervisor, Family Tree  
Vicky Reier, Assistant to Arvada City Manager  
Magistrate Joel Schaefer, County Court  
Cynthia A. Whitlock, Executive Director of Student Success, R-1 Schools  
Carla Zinanti, Manager, Animal Control Section